

THE  
CHRISTIAN FRIEND

And Instructor.

PAPERS FOR THE COMFORT AND EDIFICATION  
OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

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“Hold fast the form of sound words.”—2 TIM. i. 13.

“Exhorting one another : and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.”—HEB. x. 25.

“Building up yourselves on your most holy faith.”—JUDE 20.

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# THE CHRISTIAN FRIEND.



## THE INEFFABLE NAME.

It is apparent, even to the ordinary reader of the Scriptures, that the revelation God has been pleased to make of Himself is gradual and progressive. Now believers walk in the light, as He is in the light; but in a former day clouds and darkness were round about Him, and necessarily so as long as righteousness and judgment were the habitation of His throne. But when Christ had accomplished the work of atonement, glorifying God in all that He is, having been made sin for us, the veil behind which God had dwelt, and which had concealed Him from His people, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and God could righteously gratify His own heart in coming out into the full display of what He is as revealed in Christ, on the ground of redemption. These are cardinal and fundamental truths, and they are stated as preparatory to a brief consideration of the several names of God, under which He revealed Himself in the various dispensations found in the Old Testament histories. That God is the same in nature and attributes both in the Old and New Testaments, that, in other words, He is immutable, is a necessity of the perfections of His divine being; but it is yet true that the aspects under which He is presented in different ages vary, and it

is these aspects which are embodied in His several names.

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ELOHIM is, as often remarked, the common name for God, viewed as the Divine Being with whom men as men have to do, and as the One to whom they are accountable. It is a plural word. The singular is Eloah, and this form is often used, especially in the book of Job. Heathen sometimes used the word for their deities, and doubtless from this fact arises the question in Psalm xviii., "For who is God (Eloah) save the Lord (Jehovah)? or who is a rock save our Elohim?" That is, the true Eloah was Jehovah, and the only rock was Elohim. The reason for the use of the plural word (Elohim) is variously explained. There are those, as might be expected, who contend that it is simply, according to Hebrew usage, a plural of excellence, that the word in this form conveys the excellency or the perfections of the One spoken of; there are others who maintain that it is divinely intended to set forth the Trinity, the unity of the Godhead in the three Persons of the Godhead, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. In support of this the devout reader will not fail to notice the language of Genesis i. 26, "And God said, Let *us* make man in our image, after our likeness." Inasmuch, indeed, as the term expresses all that God is, all the persons of the Godhead must be included.

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It is quite true that this could not be comprehended at the time. It was not indeed until the baptism of our blessed Lord that the whole truth of the Trinity came out. Then God spake from heaven; His beloved

Son was on the earth; and the Holy Ghost descended and abode upon the Son. But now that the full revelation of God has been made, and the Holy Spirit has come, who searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God, we can go back, as led and taught of Him, and discover much that could not have been before understood. It is one of the perils of the present moment that the Old Testament scriptures are being limited to the light possessed at the time they were given. The truth is, that their latent meaning can only be apprehended when looking back upon them from the full shining of the light of Christianity. There is no incongruity whatever, therefore, in affirming that God chose the special word *Elohim* to express the truth of the Trinity. For example, we read in Genesis that God created the heaven and the earth; and in John's gospel it is said of the Word, the Word that afterwards became flesh, "All things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made." We know consequently that the eternal Son is comprised in the word 'God' in Genesis, and as we ponder upon it we learn more of the glory of the person of our Redeemer.

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To the patriarchs God made Himself known under another appellation. The first mention of this is found in Genesis xvii. 1, "The Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God"; that is, *EL SHADDAI*—God Almighty. But the meaning of the word *El* is said to be strength, omnipotence; and *Shaddai* is thought by some to signify the same thing, while others prefer the rendering of all-sufficient or self-sufficiency. The combination of the two words

will, in either case, import divine attributes, as omnipotence and all-sufficiency can only be found in God. These two words are used, for example, in the passage, "And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the Lord: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty [*El Shaddai*], but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them." (Exodus vi. 2, 3. See also Gen. xxviii. 3; xxxv. 11, &c.) When the word "Almighty" stands alone in our translation it generally represents *Shaddai*. There is a beautiful combination of this name with that of Jehovah in 2 Cor. vi., "I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The God who was known to Abraham as *Shaddai*, and to Israel as *Jehovah*, was now declared as Father in that blessed and intimate relationship into which, in His precious grace, He had taken His people in association with Christ.

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From what has been already said, it will be understood that JEHOVAH is the name God specially took in His covenant relationship to Israel. It is not, as the reader may easily ascertain, that the word was not used before God communicated it to Moses, but it was now first employed in connection with the chosen nation. The following remarks may help as to this: "In Genesis ii. 3 it was of all importance to connect Jehovah, Israel's national God, with the one only Creator, God. So in Exodus ix. 30 the God of the Hebrews, whose name was Jehovah, is declared to be *Elohim*. . . . Otherwise Jehovah is a name, Elohim a being; only Jehovah is Elohim, but the former is a personal name"—the



name He took in His dealings and relationship with men, but especially with His people. The word signifies the self-existent One, and is, as another has observed, practically translated, "Who is, and was, and is to come." Derived from the verb "to exist," it expresses the eternity, and, consequently, the immutability, of His being; and it thus brings before our souls the One who eternally *is*, who existed before all time, endures through all time, and continues after all time has passed away. He *is* thus the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last; and the use of these expressions (Rev. xxii. 13) proves, beyond all contradiction, that the Jesus of the New is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.

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*El* has been referred to in connection with Shaddai, and it is also used with ELION, and is then translated the "Most High God." An examination of the various places in which this name is found will show that it is God's "millennial name above all idolatrous gods and demons and all power." It is in this character that God is said to be "possessor of heaven and earth." (Gen. xiv. 18, 19.) Hence it was that Nebuchadnezzar was to lie under God's judgment until he should "know that the *Most High* ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will"; and that this end was accomplished is seen in that, when his understanding returned, he blessed the *Most High*, etc. (Daniel iv. 25-34.) Balaam in like manner uses this title when about to speak of the future glory and supremacy of Israel among the nations. In Psalm xci. it is found in connection with Shaddai (the Almighty). It says, "He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High

(Elion) shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty" (Shaddai), and in Psalm xlvii. 2 it is seen in combination with Jehovah; and it is added, "He is a great King over all the earth." These instances are interesting as proving that it is God, the one God, who reveals Himself to men under these different names in distinct relationships.

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Most readers of the Scriptures are familiar with the term ADONAI as another divine name. It is translated in our English version as Lord, but is generally distinguished from Jehovah, which is also rendered Lord, by the use of small letters instead of capitals. It means, as to the root of the word, Master, Ruler, or Owner; but the form Adonai is only used of God, and of Him as One who has taken power and is in the relationship of Lord to those who call upon His name. It is therefore especially applied to Christ, in His exaltation at the right hand of God. This may be seen from a reference to Psalm cx., and to the Lord's citation from it when confuting His adversaries. "The Lord [Jehovah] said unto my Lord [Adonai], Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." (*v.* 1.) In Matthew xxii. the Lord expressly applies this scripture to Himself, to Himself as Christ the Messiah (*vv.* 42-44), and employs it to demonstrate that David's Son was also David's Lord, that, in a word, He was the Root as well as the Offspring of David. In Genesis xv. 2 Abraham addresses God, not as given in our version, Lord God, but as Adonai Jehovah. This example will suffice to show once again that all these divine names are used of the one God, even that of Adonai, which is specially reserved for

Christ in His exaltation on high. (The full Adonai character of our blessed Lord is displayed in Philippians ii. 9-11.)

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There are other divine titles which it will suffice to mention for the reader's consideration. In the poetic books "JAH" is often employed, and it is this word which is embedded in the term Hallelujah, or "Praise ye Jah." Its significance has not been determined; it is generally supposed to be a shortened, or a poetic, form of Jehovah. Then there are the words God used when sending Moses for the deliverance of His people; the first is given as "I AM THAT I AM," and the second as "I AM." Both of these are forms of the same word signifying existence; the former is sometimes, and perhaps rightly rendered, "*I will be that I will be.*" The thought expressed in both is akin to the meaning of Jehovah (and necessarily so as coming from the same verb), and speaks of unchanging being, or existence. There is yet another term, not in itself perhaps a divine name or title, but one which from its frequent and special application to God is almost to be so regarded. It is ATTA HU, and it is found in such phrases as, Thou art He, etc. The equivalent is employed in Hebrews i., "Thou art the same" (v. 12), which indeed is given as the translation of ATTA HU in Psalm cii. 27. This term speaks also, as will be at once perceived, of the immutability of God, of the One who always *is*, and who is ever unchangeable.

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We need not further pursue the subject, as enough has been said to point out the various ways in which

God has been pleased to reveal Himself under these different names. It is a mark of His tenderness that He has done so; and it proclaims at the same time His unspeakable grace in thus displaying what He is in Himself to His people. He might have concealed Himself for ever in the blissful solitude of His own all-sufficing existence; but long before the foundation of the world, in the far distance of a past eternity, He chose us in Christ that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love. Before however these eternal counsels were communicated, the first man, Adam, was brought upon the scene; and after he, the responsible man, had failed, God continued for four thousand years to wait upon man to see if fruit for Himself could be produced. His trial of man went on until the cross, and then when God had demonstrated that man had lost everything on the footing of responsibility, He revealed all the grace which was in His heart in "the gospel of God . . . concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was 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 the resurrection from the dead." In Him, as we may yet see, God has been fully revealed; and He is also the man of God's counsels, and in Him all the thoughts of God's heart will be accomplished. The partial unfoldings of the Old Testament have passed away before, or rather have been merged in, Him who is glorified at God's right hand; and this is told out in the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

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## A LITTLE OUTLINE OF THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THE blessings of Jewish saints were earthly. The saints addressed in this epistle were once Jews, now Christians. The saints are regarded as the wilderness "companions" of Christ. He is bringing many sons to glory. But what had He when as a man He trod the earth? He said, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head."

All who have accepted His path as theirs are able to count on His sympathy as High Priest. "He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Priesthood is only for our infirmities, not for our sins. The believer should *not* sin. "My little children, these things write I unto you that ye sin not." But a saint cannot avoid the infirmities incident to a heavenly man walking the earth. To know how Christ carries you on, you must accept as your own His path as a Man, and to enjoy it you must be walking in it.

The Lord's intercession as Priest goes on for all the saints alike, because of their infirmities. We only know the value of it in our souls as we seek His path. He sought nothing on earth. "I receive not honour from man."

The Hebrew Christians had declined from the truth of Christianity. They had once given up the attraction of earthly things, now they were again seeking them.

“Ye took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing that in heaven ye have a better and an enduring substance.” He says, “Call to remembrance the former days.”

The present blessing of saints is not earthly but heavenly. The *substance* is there. It is an *enduring* substance, while all here is a shadow, as the former dispensation also was.

As Aaron entered into the holiest once a year, so Christ has gone in for us, regarding our infirmities while in the wilderness. The result is the consciousness (for all who take Christ's path on earth) of His sympathy and His support, and not of weak hands and “feeble knees.” And as Melchizedek met the victorious man of faith with bread and wine, so Christ meets us by a supply of what is heavenly. This last is conditional, and depends on whether in faith as a saint I have overcome the world (Sodom) in its *friendly* character. (It made a great man of Lot.)

What we get then in Hebrew xi. is the *exploits* of faith. If faith thus wrought in saints of the past, leading them to give up the present for the future, if it thus wrought in a people whose blessings *were* earthly, what should it effect in us whose blessings are heavenly, and therefore all of another order? They got *God* and the *future* instead of the present. Therefore “God was not ashamed to be called their God, for He hath prepared for them a city.” The saints are solemnly warned. Esau once sought *present* blessing and lost the *future*. (Chapter xii. 15-17.) We get Christ's present portion (as man) as we give up the present. “As He is so are we in this world.” The soul is led into it.

The effect is seen in these Hebrews, who sought to return to what they had once given up, as it will also be seen in us. They had returned to "infancy," "and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat."

They were not going on to perfection; that is, to the knowledge of those things connected with Christ in glory. (See chapter vi. 1-12.)

The effect *in them* was, their hands were "hanging down," and they had "feeble knees."

The effect on *others* (saints as they) was, that "the lame was turned out of the way."

The Lord took the place of suffering here. "He was in all points tempted like as we are, apart from sin." As having trodden that path, he takes His place with those who are now treading it to lead them and to *sing*: "In the midst of the church will I sing praise unto Thee." It is the opposite of hands "hanging down" and of "feeble knees." But if you refuse the sufferings of a godly man here you cannot join in the singing. He sings in His own individual joy, and you join Him if you are of His path. He is out of it, and his companions are in faith out of it with Him. I do not mean that they are out of the wilderness. They are out of all that depresses—out of all the *pressure* of the wilderness—with Him.

The Lord trod the earth as a perfect Son, and also as a perfect servant. Both places *in measure* are ours. The Father deals with us as with children. (Chap. xii.) As a servant the Lord's language was, "Lo, I come to do *Thy will*, O God," and the epistle closes with the exhortation to us, NOT to seek our own will, but "make you perfect in every work to do *His will*." (Chap. xiii.)

21.) We are going through the wilderness in this epistle supported in all our infirmities, but as Christ was here so we are here to do God's will in the scene, having from above daily heavenly sustainment as we refuse this world. The Lord guide us in this great favour which He has shown us for His name sake.

H. C. A.

## CHRIST IN THE MIDST OF THE GOLDEN LAMPS.

REVELATION i. 12-20.

THE symbolical description of our Lord's person in this passage has often been considered, but we shall not fail to find edification in it again.

It is of actual importance, for by faith we have to do with a living Christ, supreme in power and wisdom; with Him, that is, who became dead, and is living to the ages of the ages. He beholds everything that is passing in Christendom, and nothing that takes place can ever escape His eye. This is a precious resource for us, for the Lord would have us to place all confidence in Himself—"Fear not, I am the first and the last."

Surely divine wisdom and glory are seen here in the Son of man. The Ancient of days of Daniel vii. is identified in this passage with the Man who became dead and is alive for ever; the hair like white wool, and supreme authority vested in Him, both declare His majesty and right to judge.

He is clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and the golden girdle round the breast is as a zone to confine the affections. The love of Christ is there, as we well know by His messages to the churches, but



He is here presented as Judge, and the golden belt of divine righteousness stands out in relief upon the long robe. Looking at the responsible body of Christendom, it is clear that it is not the time for the full and free exercise of the affections (though the Lord speaks of His love to some), but divine justice circumscribes the region of the heart, for there is much to be judged.

What a consolation to know this, and to confide in Him who judges aright. Nothing is more terrible than the history of the seven churches in a certain aspect, because the very worst forms of evil have come in there where the name of Christ is professed. How shocking the iniquities, both of Christianized Constantinople and Rome, to say nothing of other places. Nor is there less injustice at the present time than in earlier phases of history, though it be under the cloak of liberality in religious views.

The golden girdle shines brightly to the eye of faith, and the symbol is received by those who wait on the Lord and love His appearing, as one of happiest augury. Justice is found in the Son of man supreme.

His eyes as a flame of fire denote acute perception, unsparing of evil. How many hidden actions, ecclesiastical plots, concealed sin, simony, cruelty, have those eyes seen in church history? And we must not forget that the penetrating glance of Christ has always seen through that which is outward, down to the very motives and counsels of the hearts, and state of the consciences of all who come under the scope of His far-seeing view. Through the thick walls of inquisition prisons, through the robes of cardinals, through many specious pretexts, the eyes, like a flame of fire, have

seen all, and are seeing all at this present moment, detecting the inmost thoughts of our souls.

The feet, like fine brass as burning in the furnace, denote judgment. There is stability as well as the heat of the fire; and again we can by faith understand a symbol which without it would be incomprehensible. (To understand divine symbols we must be taught of God. When artists, men of genius, try to depict them they fall into lamentable mistakes.) The glowing brass of the feet corresponds to the golden zone above. Divine justice in the girdle, and execution in divine wrath upon earth in the fine brass. One may well tremble for those countries which have received so many privileges, and made such a bad use of them.

The voice was as the sound of many waters. When He speaks all must listen and obey, as we find further on in the Apocalypse. He is to be heard above all the noise and Babel of voices that rise from the field about to be judged. What a sight would be a bird's-eye view of Christendom, from Mexico and South America to solemn northern hypocrisy! But only One can see it, and see through it as we remarked, and He alone can make His voice heard—all shall obey Him.

The seven stars are explained by the divine voice itself, the symbolic angels of the assemblies.

The two-edged sword, which goes forth from His mouth, is clearly the word employed in judgment. As His glance detects, so His word reaches and deals unsparingly with evil, and those who allow it. I suppose that "making war against them with the sword of my mouth" is to be understood as the word applied in judgment.

Supreme authority is seen in the sun shining "in his

strength." It is a well-known symbol, as when our Lord, upon the mountain of transfiguration, was seen for a moment in the sovereign place in the kingdom. His will is paramount, as when a bright eastern sun reigns over the whole landscape; everything feels its power, and his light and heat go to the very border of the circle of his rays.

We are not surprised that John fell at His feet as dead, for who would not be overcome in beholding the judicial majesty of Christ, and perceiving at the same time, to some extent, the state of Christendom?

The Lord raises him, and reassures him, and together with the encouraging word, "Fear not," says that He is the First and the Last, and the Living One. We need to enter into the force of these expressions—there is the characteristic glory of Him who is here presented as Son of man, but how truly a Divine Person at the same time.

Notice too the peculiar expression, "I *became* dead."\* And now as living to the eternal ages the risen Jesus speaks of the keys of Hades and of death. They belong to Him. The whole invisible world is entirely in His power, in His keeping, and we have here a truth which reassures our souls.

To Him, the Resurrection and the Life, the keys of death too are committed, and we may place unmeasured confidence in Him who tasted death for everything, and to whom all power is given.

May we take fresh courage as we look towards Him who can and will sustain the faith of all those who seek to serve Him amidst the field over which judgment is impending. May He be in full view to each one who has ears to hear.

E. L. B.

\* The note in the New Translation is a valuable one.

## THE MEMORIAL, THE FEAST, AND THE WEALTH OF EGYPT.

EXODUS xiv. 36, 43-49.

THE grace of Jehovah, who made provision for Israel's wonderful redemption, provided also for *the memorial* of the same, and that on the same night on which the Lamb was slain (v. 14). Thus, too, the Lord, who "the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread," etc. (1 Cor. xi. 23), thus instituting, in direct connection with eternal redemption, the memorial of His dying love.

The latter verses of this chapter (43-49) furnish us with Jehovah's ordinances as to the observance of the memorial; strangers and foreigners as such were excluded, that is, all who as "strangers" were not identified with the "commonwealth of Israel," or who as "foreigners" had no interest in the country for which they were bound, and to which, according to the purposes of Jehovah, they belonged. The "hired servant," one whose connection with Israel was based upon the gain of stated wages, was forbidden to partake thereof; further, no uncircumcised person was to be included in the entitled company. By purchase and circumcision the servant might take his place, while the stranger, identifying himself absolutely with the nation by circumcision, became "as one born in the land." It is thus evident that when it was a question of participating in the memorial feast, Jehovah defined, with the greatest clearness and precision, who should,

and who should not partake of it. Thus too we are to understand, that the classes represented by these characters have no place, according to the word of God, at the table of the Lord. "Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and *of the household of God.*" (Eph. ii. 19.) "Wherefore thou art no more *a servant* but *a son.*" (Gal. iv. 7.) "Ye are not your own, for ye are bought with a price." (1 Cor. vii. 19, 20.) "For we are the *circumcision* which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Phil. iii. 3.) And even though not yet clear of the "hired servant" spirit, as in the prodigal's case, the assurances of love are at hand to convince us of the full and unclouded relationship of *son* (Luke xv. 20) according to the deep desires of a Father's heart, seeking to lead us in fullest liberty, and clothed suitably to His requirements, into the banqueting-house. In fact the memorial feast belongs alone to the already redeemed household, as verse 46 of our chapter indicates, "Thou shalt not carry forth ought of the flesh *out of the house.*" It is only *the household* that can apprehend or appreciate its meaning, in view of the infinite depths of grace, that provided the substitutionary Lamb; for it is not possible that the memorial of a complete and known redemption, as setting forth the grace of God in the gift of the Son, could be enjoyed or delighted in by those whose hearts and consciences had not been previously bowed under the double sense of personal guilt and holy sovereign grace.

Let us notice too, "*All* the congregation of Israel shall keep it" (v. 47), which, taken with verse 24, "Ye

shall observe this thing for an ordinance to thee and to thy son *for ever*," teaches us that every redeemed one, peace being known, is called to the memorial feast, without exception; and, moreover, to the continuance of this observance, until the moment comes when memorials shall be no more needed; for forgetfulness and indifference to redeeming grace cannot possibly invade the Father's house, though, alas! we are quite conscious of their intrusion here.

This memorial-day was further identified with a period, the whole being termed a feast, which is deserving of some special consideration. "Even the first day ye shall put away leaven out of your houses" (v. 15); and again, "Seven days there shall be no leaven found in your houses" (v. 19).

Jehovah now turns to that which could alone suit His own character of Holiness, namely, the *Purity* of His people. It is important to observe the divine insistence upon *the moment from which* Jehovah's requirements commence: "*Even the first day ye shall put away leaven*"; as well as the specified sphere from which leaven was to be excluded, viz., "*out of your houses*"; and, not the least, the period during which the exclusion was to last—"from the first day until the seventh day."

Here are three cardinal injunctions of the last importance for Christian households, but bearing specially upon the heads of such, viz., responsibility as to separation from evil (typified by the exclusion of leaven) from *the first moment* of coming under the shelter of the blood. The zealous guarding of "your houses" from the working or introduction of evil in every form, and the unswerving *continuance* of a

separation suited to the grace that has wrought, as well as the holiness of the One to whom we are brought. Our God would have the houses of His redeemed ones, according to His intention, earthly shelters from the corrupting influences of all that leavens without. It is further of immense importance to observe that the unleavened condition of *the houses* of Israel effectually secured the unleavened condition of the *nation*. Is this not a matter of extreme moment as a principle for these times? If the houses of the Lord's people be kept free from the working and introduction of leavening influences, the unleavened condition of the whole company is largely secured; possibly the two most subtle agencies in leavening households now are to be found in the literature of the day, and the company entertained in Christian houses. Doubtless the freshly realised sense of the goodness, grace, and delivering power of Jehovah constituted the real spring of obedience to His requirements among Israel. Thus with a true and deep sense of grace, divinely formed and enjoyed, resting upon more wonderful foundations, and fuller revelation, with natures that delight in holiness, are we not as Christians furnished with springs more deep and powerful than Israel of old?

Another point remains to be noted in this remarkable chapter, viz., the wealth of Egypt, that Israel were permitted to take with them, Jehovah had said (ch. iii. 21), "When ye go ye shall not go empty." But why this strange sanction of that which afterwards contributed towards the solemn sin of the chapter xxxii. Upon this question chapter xxv. throws considerable light. The wealth that Israel took away with them

from Egypt was specially destined by God *for His service* in the Tabernacle. There was a legitimate use to which it was to be put; God's claim was upon the wealth that accompanied them out of the Land. *The abuse* of it comes out clearly in the xxxii. chapter, where the golden calf preceded the dancing.

There is no doubt in this a solemn lesson for us; the mammon of unrighteousness, this world's ensnaring wealth, is to be used alone as a stewardship, to be used but not abused—upon all that the believer has the Lord's claim rests; it is Egypt's wealth which we are allowed to take, both for our own needs (in itself a part of our stewardship) and the maintenance of God's interests in the earth. Let chapters xxv. and xxxii. speak solemnly to each one who owns in small or great degree this world's mammon, lest that solemn word should one day be heard, "How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship." (Luke xvi. 2.) While as Christians (not Israelites) we seek to understand that other word in verses 11, 12, "If therefore ye have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the *true riches*," etc.—distinguishing as these do the proper possessions and wealth of the Christian, viz., heavenly treasure, from that which is necessarily connected with his needs and responsibilities while in the body here, but in no sense his true and real object or possession.

Connected with the possession of "jewels of silver and jewels of gold and raiment" (v. 35) is that of "flocks and herds and very much cattle" (v. 38). Of these very specially Moses had said, "Thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God until we come hither" (ch. x. 26), thus including their *property* in that upon



which Jehovah's claim lay ; but it is solemn indeed to note that, like the gold and silver that ensnared them at the commencement of their wilderness journey, these latter were the cause and occasion of failure among at least two-and-a-half tribes, at the end of their wanderings, as recorded in Numbers xxxii. : the hither side of Jordan that which was short of the *purpose* of God, which *lay across the Jordan*, they could plead was "a land for cattle, and thy servants have cattle. . . . Let this land be given to thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan." When the purpose of God, which for us too lies on the other side of death, in the sphere and scene into which a raised Christ has been exalted, is not divinely apprehended and diligently sought, earthly possessions can only furnish plausible reasons for settling down in satisfaction on the world's side of death. Then falling short, as those tribes did, of the full purpose of blessing in the heavenly places, and the full grace that designed that blessing—the language of the heart, that rises no further than its own measured interests and possessions, is "Let *this land* be given to thy servants for a possession, and bring us not over Jordan," thus failing to reach *positive blessing* according to the thoughts of God, or commendation that can go further than negative recognition of being "*guiltless*" (Numbers xxxii. 20–22), and conditional upon conflict. But note, conflict without *possession* of purposed blessing (the unhappy position of their spiritual counterpart in the present day) marks those who, like the two-and-a-half tribes, first yield to the assault of the enemy, and are carried captive into Babylon.

M. C. G.

## TWO ASPECTS.

## PART I.

JOHN xiv. 15-31 ; xv. 26-xvi. 15.

THERE are two aspects of the sending of the Holy Spirit in these two passages—

1. As sent by the Father ;
2. As sent by the Lord Jesus Christ ;

and it may be useful to notice a few important truths connected with each.\*

In the fourteenth chapter of John our Lord promises the sending of another Comforter by the Father ; and I should like to call attention to communion with the Father and with the Son by the Holy Spirit ; and also to the unbelieving, materialistic character of the world, in this part of the word of God.

In the other portion the Lord Jesus speaks of sending the Holy Spirit ; He, the glorified Saviour, would Himself send the Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father. Here we have rather the Lord's glory in the Father's presence, and the opposition of the world to believers. If the true nature of the world in these two passages be considered, we shall find its blind unbelief in the first, and its persecution in the second.

Let us look first of all at the 14th chapter. When our Lord announces that the Father shall send another Comforter, He says that the world cannot receive Him

\* We all remember the dispute, still existing, between the Eastern and Western Churches as to this subject. How much better it would have been to have read the Scriptures, and to have gathered from them the true signification of these immense facts !

because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him. The world is like a huge city with an inscription over the principal gate: "*No admittance to God!*" We are living in a time when materialism has been fully developed, when men assure us that they have analysed everything, and that nothing but matter is visible; we must not be surprised if they cannot see, or know, the Holy Ghost. But *we* know Him; we are not left as orphans in the world; we are brought, by the precious gift of the Holy Spirit, into a knowledge of the divine person of the Son, of the full position of the whole family of God, and of our happy privilege of being here to represent the Lord Himself, He being in us by the Holy Ghost. (v. 20.)

Then we come to the 21st verse, where Jesus no longer speaks collectively, but to individuals: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." Here is Christian obedience, and love to the Lord shewn in keeping His commandments. How important the preceding verses, where we are brought into the very place in which He was when upon earth; and given to know the full joy of communion with the Father, by the Holy Spirit: "Because I live, ye shall live also."

Now comes the question, for each one, of true obedience—not of submission to an imposed rule, which was impossible to man in the flesh—of a new nature which delights to obey. Here is one who keeps the Lord's commandments in the very midst of the world that surrounds him; he has full and blessed direction, and the Father makes His love known to

him as to an obedient child; the Lord too manifests Himself to him. I shall never forget an old and experienced believer saying to one who had to walk amongst his own relations who understood nothing of these things, "Take care that they see that you have a high principle!" They would not understand the Father's love, or Jesus' manifestation to a faithful soul, but the effect of this obedience of the very highest order would surely be seen.

The point, though, here is the manifestation made to the obedient one, that true and deep knowledge of the blessed Lord, without which there can be no true Christianity; and this leads to the question: "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Keeping His word involves more than keeping His commandments; for the word includes all His blessed will as expressed here, and our Lord's reply to Judas announces very high blessing to him who shall keep it.

Even in ordinary life we cannot take up our abode with those with whom we are not on very good terms; and a small thing may be an impediment to *staying* anywhere. I have often used as an illustration the case of those who, in the French Alps, take their flocks during summer to the higher parts of the mountains. There are certain thus and small houses in the heights which can be inhabited in summer, but which are left during the winter, when the flocks are brought down. During this time foxes and other animals sometimes choose to instal themselves in the mountain dwellings; and a proprietor going up after the winter to take possession of his house, might see a fox or two looking through the window, which he

would have to drive out before being able to live there. The illustration is a poor one, but may help us to understand verse 22, where the word is kept, and the Father and the Son come to dwell by the Holy Spirit with him who keeps it. It is that full perfecting of the love of God in the keeper of the word (1 John ii. 5), where the affections are wholly right in the power of the Spirit, and there is the true inward delight to do His will.

It is not merely said that the Lord will manifest Himself to such an one, but that the Father and Son will make their abode with him, and truly nothing could be more blessed. It has often been remarked that such a privilege is a very high one; and so it is, but it is the privilege of every Christian, and we are called to it. Christian privileges *are* high, and the Holy Spirit has been given to us so that we may go on in the full enjoyment of even the highest of these most precious blessings.

The Holy Spirit, whom the Father would send in Jesus' name, would teach them all things, and bring to their remembrance all things which the Lord had spoken. His peace, too, is given; and we may in these days of unbelief, trouble, and excitement in which we are living, possess a peace in communion with Him who is gone to the Father, which the world can neither know, nor understand.

Thus then in the midst of an infidel world we have the living power of the Holy Spirit as sent by the Father, and the deepest joy in an obedient walk. It may be well to leave the second part of our subject (the sending of the Holy Spirit by Christ) for another time.

E. L. B.

## CHRIST ALONE.

PSALM lxxiii. 25.

WHOM have I, Lord, in heaven but Thee ?  
 In that blest place, who could there be  
     But Thou alone,  
     And there for me ?

But here on earth my restless heart  
 Has often sought another part  
 - Than Thee alone,  
     And all for Thee.

But who the longings deep can tell  
 That in the human bosom dwell ?  
     None, Lord, but Thou,  
     Thou knowest well.

And still in Thine unwearying grace,  
 Within this heart Thou seek'st the place  
     Which Thou canst fill,  
     And Thou alone.

Then, Jesus Lord, so let it be,  
 My heart is satisfied with Thee,  
     With none but Thee,  
     And Thee alone.

W. S.

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“How can I be turning my heart to the joys of one, and the sorrows of another, unless I am living close to Christ and getting my heart filled with Him instead of self?”

## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

## I.

MATTHEW x. 1 ; LUKE ix. 1.

It is very interesting to notice the addition of a word in Luke in describing the mission of the twelve. To understand this rightly it is necessary to give the original words. In Matthew then it says that the Lord gave His disciples power (*ἐξουσίαν*) against unclean spirits, etc.; in Luke, that He gave them power and authority (*δύναμιν καὶ ἐξουσίαν*). As to the force of these words respectively the following note will explain, "Authority, *ἐξουσία*, not *δύναμις*. More than authority, but not simply *δύναμις*. More than *δύναμις*, as it includes the right to exercise this. Hence 'power' is nearer to it in English. *δύναμις* is the ability to do a thing." From Matthew then we learn that the Lord bestowed upon His disciples authority, and "the right to exercise it," over unclean spirits, and from Luke we gather that He gave to them besides this the "ability" to exercise this authority over all devils and to cure diseases. That faith was a requisite condition for wielding the power with which they had been entrusted, is plain from Matthew xvii. 20. But what, it may be enquired, is the significance of this gift of power and authority in relation to the Lord? It may first be remarked that it is in the gospel which especially presents Him in the aspect of the dependent Man that the enlarged account of the entrusted power is found. This is in harmony with the usual way of the Spirit of God in guarding, jealously guarding, the truth of the person of Christ. In the very scenes of the greatest humiliation of Christ, for example, there the rays of His divine glory are most strikingly

displayed. So it is that in our scripture from Luke language is employed which can leave no possible doubt as to WHO it was that thus commissioned His disciples. As another has remarked, "We have in this sending a most important exercise of divine authority and competency to communicate divine power."\*

## II.

## GENESIS xxiv.

Abraham's servant may be looked at as a type and as an example. Typically, he plainly sets forth the work of the Holy Spirit in coming into this world, consequent upon the death and resurrection of Christ, to gather out a bride for Christ, and to conduct her across the wilderness to the true Isaac. As an example, he displays the characteristics which should ever distinguish a servant of God. Some of these may be mentioned. First, he is commissioned by his master; he does not run before he is sent. Then he is endowed for the service to which he is called: all the goods of his master were in his hand (*v.* 10). Next, he is guided solely by his master's instructions; his own thoughts have no place or influence (*vv.* 2-9). Further, he is in entire dependence; he looks to the Lord to act for him (*vv.* 12-14). Further, he acknowledges the Lord's guidance and interposition at every step (*vv.* 21, 26, 27). He is, moreover, completely devoted to the accomplishment of his master's will; he will not eat until he has told his errand; and he will not remain after the Lord has prospered his way (*vv.* 33, 56). Finally, he glorifies his master and Isaac (*vv.* 34-36). There is therefore abundant food for meditation in this beautiful picture, whether regarded in its figurative or its practical aspects.

\* *Notes and Comments*, part xxiii., p. 226.



“THOU SHALT CALL HIS NAME JESUS.”

MATTHEW ii.

WHEN the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made\* of a woman, made under the law; and it is of this mystery, the groundwork of redemption, that Matthew writes in this chapter. There are indeed other characteristics of the divine and holy Child here mentioned. As this gospel specially presents Christ as the Messiah, in the fulfilment of promise to the Jewish nation, His lineage, as born into this world, is traced down from the two great roots of Jewish promise, Abraham and David. Not only therefore does Matthew show Him to us as “come” of a woman, and “come” under law, but also as the promised seed of Abraham, in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, and as Son of David, and hence as heir to David’s throne and kingdom. It is thus a chapter in which both the divine and human glories of our blessed Lord are mingled and displayed. By “mingled” we simply mean that the character of the Person of Christ is such that all that He is as God and man is told out in His name and in His work. For example, if we think of Him as the offspring of David, we are at once reminded that He is also David’s root, that David’s Son is also David’s Lord.

This will be very clearly seen by a consideration of the meaning of the name Jesus, which Joseph was

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\* “Come” or “born” would be a better rendering. The word used signifies the commencement of the existence of anything, or becoming anything, or happening, etc.

instructed to give to the Child when He should be born. As may be seen from Hebrews iv. 8, Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, or Jehoshua, which signifies "Jehovah is salvation," or "whose salvation is Jehovah." There is therefore ample justification for the common observation that the name Jesus means Jehovah the Saviour. But if so, what a subject for contemplation, yea, and for adoration, is thus brought before our souls! A child born into the world, of lowly parentage in man's esteem, is declared, divinely declared, to be Jehovah the Saviour! Yes, the God who heard the groaning of His people Israel in Egypt, who saw their affliction, heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters, knew their sorrows, and came down to redeem them out of Egypt, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; He who said unto Moses, "I am JEHOVAH: and I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by [the name of] God Almighty, but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known to them" (Exodus iii. 6-8; vi. 2, 3); it was He, the same God, the same Jehovah, the El Shaddai known to the patriarchs, who now came into this world as a Babe. But if a Babe, He came, blessed be His name for ever, as the Saviour of His people. Surely we may say that the shadows were fleeing away, and that the darkness which had hitherto shrouded God from His people was fast disappearing. It was indeed the blessed dawn of the day of grace.

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The moment we speak of the birth of Jehovah the Saviour, the mystery of the incarnation constrains our attention. It had long been foretold, and, so far from

its being veiled under dubious language, it was exactly and minutely described, so that Matthew could write, "All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us." Even the very place of His birth had been foretold: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto Me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Micah v. 2.) Moreover, the holy nature of His humanity was by no means dimly shadowed forth in the type of the meat-offering, especially in the unleavened cakes of fine flour mingled with oil, telling out as it did the truth communicated to Mary by the angel, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." (Luke i. 35.) It is the miracle of miracles, and for that very reason the revelation of the heart of God, when looked back upon in the light of the purpose of His coming into the midst of sinful men.

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Before entering upon the purpose of His advent, it may be profitable to dwell upon some of the circumstances of His birth. There was the greatest contrast imaginable at the time between heaven and earth. All heaven (and what wonder?) was astir and in movement; but the whole earth, save a few pious souls, was still and almost unexpectant. The angel of

the Lord sped on his joyful way to apprise, not the governing powers or the great of the earth, but a few godly shepherds, of the marvellous event: "Fear not," he said unto them, "for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all [the] people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," etc. The angel of Jehovah was not alone, for as soon as he had announced the glad tidings, a multitude of the heavenly host praised God and said, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill [or "pleasure," or "delight"] toward [in] men." As has been strikingly said, "God had so manifested Himself by the birth of Jesus, that the hosts of heaven, long familiar with His power, could raise their chorus . . . and every voice unites in sounding forth these praises. What love like this love? and God is love. What a purely divine thought that God has become man." And yet this stupendous event had nothing in it to compel the observation of men. Busy with their own thoughts and objects, they did not even perceive it, though it took place in their midst; and so absorbed were they in their self-seeking that there was no room for the infant Saviour in the inn! Such are men, although among them were the objects of God's eternal counsels in grace, which He was about to accomplish through the One who, while the Creator of all things, was yet born into the world a homeless stranger!

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The name Jesus was given in connection with His work, "for," it was added, "He shall save His people from their sins." The term "His people" will un-

doubtedly mean Israel in this gospel; and indeed, in the angelic announcement to the shepherds in Luke, it says that the good tidings of great joy were for all *the* people; *i.e.*, for the Jews. Not that the object of the Lord's coming into the world is in either case to be limited to the chosen people, but in these scriptures they only are in view. The wider aspect is stated by John when, in allusion to the prophecy of Caiaphas that "Jesus should die for that nation," he adds, "And not for that nation only, but that also He should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." This makes it plain, moreover, that the death of Christ, His finished work, which He accomplished in, and through, His death, is the alone foundation on which He will save His people from their sins. We thus read in Leviticus xvi., after the details are given concerning the rites and sacrifices, together with the confession of the people's sins by the high priest on the great day of atonement, "For on that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord." (v. 30.) Nor can this foundation truth be too constantly insisted upon; for as it is written concerning sins in the old dispensation, "Without shedding of blood is no remission," so now it is equally true that the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, alone cleanseth from all sin.

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When, therefore, the angel said, "He shall save His people from their sins," he looked onward, or at least the mind of the Spirit in the words had respect to a time beyond the cross. For Israel could not be saved, as the prophets plainly testified, apart from

repentance and the efficacy of the atonement. Simeon, when he enjoyed the unspeakable privilege of holding the Lord's Christ in his arms, plainly foretold also that the glory of Jehovah's people Israel would be accomplished through the rejection of the holy Babe on His presentation to the people. The sufferings of Christ must precede His glories, whether in heaven or on the earth; even as He Himself said to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" It was this fact that tested the hearts of men, and called forth their determined enmity. If they could have taken Jesus by force and made Him a King, and if He would but have placed Himself at their head and led them, all carnal as they were, against their enemies, and delivered them by His power, they would gladly have hailed Him as their Messiah, even if they had immediately after rebelled against His authority. But He who came as Jehovah the Saviour must first stand in, and repair, the breach which the sins of His people had made between them and their God. And so fully did He take up their cause and responsibility that, as in their place, He cried, "O God, thou knowest my foolishness; and my sins are not hid from Thee." Blessed Lord, we cannot fathom Thy sorrow and grief, but we can thank Thee in that Thou madest the sins of Thy people Thine own, and hast borne them away for ever!

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Considering then this scripture in its application to Israel, it will refer to the salvation of the earthly people from their sins—from their sins and their consequences—and to their restoration and blessing in

a future day in the land of promise. It is indeed in one aspect what Zacharias prophesied, when his tongue was loosed at the circumcision of his child, "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people, and hath raised up an horn of salvation for us in the house of His servant David . . . that we should be saved from our enemies, and from the hand of all that hate us . . . that we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life." (Luke i. 68-75.) First, then, Jesus will save His people from their sins before God; for a part of the new covenant runs, "I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more" (Jeremiah xxxi. 34); and, moreover, He will save them from the consequences of their sins in delivering them out of the hands of their enemies, in gathering them out from every land where they have been scattered, and in establishing them in their own land in blessing under His own peaceful and glorious reign. All this would have been fulfilled to them at once had they but received their Messiah; and even after they had crucified Him, had they but owned their guilt, and bowed in heart to the testimony of the apostles, their sins would have been blotted out, and the times of refreshing would have come from the presence of the Lord in connection with the return of Christ (Acts iii.); but, alas! through their unbelief they forfeited all these blessings, and they have now to wait until, wrought upon by the Spirit of God, they will cry, in the gladness of their hearts, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord."

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Still, beloved reader, while it is true that this promise refers primarily to Israel, let it not be forgotten that the same glorious work, which constitutes the foundation on which their sins will be removed, is the only ground on which any of us can know forgiveness. Through Israel's fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles, and hence it is that the apostle could write to the Corinthians that it was delivered to him that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. Well then may we praise God continually for His wondrous grace, the grace which took occasion through the unbelief of Israel to reveal all His purposes concerning those who should be heirs of God and joint-heirs of Christ; and well too may our hearts be filled with gratitude at the mention of the name of JESUS, for He it is who has secured everything for us.

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## CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE.

### I PETER i. 2.

It is my desire, with the Lord's help, to look a little into the place and character of the obedience which this passage shows to have been in the thoughts of God for us from eternity. There is nothing I fear, if one may speak for others, that we enter so little into. Yet it involves the whole principle and blessedness of the Christian position, and the life which belongs to it. In the passage the words "obedience" and "sprinkling of the blood" equally depend on "of Jesus Christ." This at once brings out the distinct character of the



obedience. Peter, writing to the believing "strangers [or "sojourners"] of the dispersion," connects their position with the counsels and foreknowledge of God the Father; and in terms that, while I doubt not conveying an analogy, are intended to suggest the great contrast between this position and that of the Jew nationally. If Jehovah had chosen Israel as a nation, to be a special people unto Himself, above all peoples that are upon the face of the earth (Deut. vii. 6), these Christians from among them were chosen individually of God the Father, which at once gives a far more intimate relationship. If for the nation there had been an outward sanctification by ordinances (Lev. xviii.—xx. see especially vv. 24—26 of chap. xx.), theirs was "through sanctification of the Spirit"—an effectual work of God that, applying the truth in power to their souls, had separated them to Him, thus carrying into effect His counsels. (Compare 2 Thess. ii. 13.) Then as to the object of these counsels and work—"unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ." For the nation, from Sinai, the condition of entrance into blessing was obedience to the law, to which they were bound by the blood—the penal sanction of death—which Moses sprinkled upon the people. (Exodus xxiv. 6—8.) For the Christian it is a wholly contrasted character of obedience—"of Jesus Christ"; that is, in other words, to obey as He obeyed. For this the heart is set free, by His blood-shedding having met every question of sin for the glory of God, and purged our consciences. The blood of Jesus Christ, instead of establishing the authority of the law by a death penalty on disobedience, becomes the delivering power for an obedience after the only pattern of His own, by

His meeting the penalty in infinite grace. The verse presents the beautiful contrast of the Christian position in every particular. And the place it gives obedience, and that so totally new in character, as the end and object of God in the blessing we have been brought into, commands the deepest interest and the subjection of our souls.

The first great thing to apprehend clearly is, the difference in the whole principle of it between the obedience of Jesus Christ and that which the law claimed. The law was addressed to man in the flesh, giving the perfect rule of what he ought to be for God. But now that the full character of the flesh has come out, we know that it is "enmity against God," "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." So that "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." Thus the flesh is in its nature opposed to the rule imposed upon it; and a law given to it must mainly consist, as in fact it did, of prohibitions—"thou shalt not"—"thou shalt not"; or if it be considered in its most positive requirements, what a state of things is revealed that necessitated God's demanding His creature's love! Yet how inoperative, save to condemn: God unrevealed to be loved ["Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was" (Ex. xx. 21)]; no giving of a nature capable of loving Him. Nor was love ever produced by commanding it; or, if thus produced, of what value would it be? Yet it will be found in dealing with souls, that the ordinary idea of obedience does not go beyond what the law claimed, but was ineffectual, flesh being what it is in fallen man, to produce; and the serious thing is, that wherever the idea obtains it shuts out any true conception of what the obedience of the Christian is.

Nor is it only the law that accustoms us to the thought of an obedience wholly different in principle to that of Christ's, but even that which we constantly, and rightly, look for from our children. I say to my child at its play, "Go and do your lessons"; and the child gives up its play and sets to work, and we say that is an obedient child. But that is, that the child having a will to do what was pleasant to it, has given up its will to do mine, however distasteful; and the more the thing was distasteful in itself, the more the child's obedience would be shown. It is in principle that of the law's claim; only that the child's known relationship, and the affections flowing from it, are a power to lead to obedience that the law had not. Now in what total contrast to all this is the obedience of Christ, as the word presents it? Come (*γενόμενος*) of woman, *come* under the law, He obeyed it perfectly; He magnified and made it honourable in submitting to its obedience, but not as having to be forbidden what *He* desired. "Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I *delight* to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is *within my heart*." Neither was it any way the character of His obedience that He gave up His own will before the authority of the Father; for, He says, "I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me." As thus come, we see One whose only will was to do God's will.

It is of such a character of obedience that the epistle of James speaks (chap. i. 25), "Whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein." The revealed mind of God is what is referred to; but first (*v.* 18) it is "the word of truth" by which we

have been *begotten* of God, so that we have received the nature of Him whose word it is. To the child of God then the word only comes to direct a nature he possesses in that in which it already delights. It is thus "a perfect law"—a law of liberty upon which the mind becomes fixed objectively—the law and the nature going together; or, as if I said to my child, "Go and play," bidding just what pleases it.

But that the word should be this to us, far deeper principles are involved, connected with a state subjectively suited to the revelation found in the word. And first there must be *deliverance* out of a state wholly contrary to it. For if the nature we have received in being born of the incorruptible seed by the living and abiding word of God, delights in what is revealed therein as His will, there is the flesh within that is, as we have seen, diametrically opposed. But when the condition of the flesh has been learned *experimentally*, as it must be learned, and we know by fruitless efforts under law, after good in it, that it is nothing but evil—if it is not I, but that it is too strong for me—and the point of "O, wretched man that I am" has been reached; the neck of the flesh's will has been broken, and the soul thankfully bows to the absolute necessity of God's way of dealing with it, so long before intimated: (Gen. vi. 13.) "The end of all flesh is come before me." Then I learn that "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin [*i.e.* "as a sacrifice for sin"] condemned sin in the flesh." But this condemnation having taken place in the death of Him who gave Himself that I might live, I see that I am entitled to count all that took place in His death as having happened to me.

Thus we know that "our old man," that is, all we were as characterized by sin and the flesh, "has been crucified with Him, that the body of sin"—its whole system and power—"might be annulled, that we should no longer be slaves to sin." (Rom. vi. 6.) Then in the diligence of faith, reckoning ourselves to be dead to sin and alive to God, of which position in both its parts Christ is the wonderful pattern (v. 10), we tolerate the will of the flesh no longer. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the passions thereof." We have died to the law too, that was the "strength of sin" (1 Cor. xv. 56)—instead of being any strength against it—"by the body of Christ that we should be to another, to Him that is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. vii. 4, 5.) And not being under the law we are led of the Spirit (Gal. v. 18), and the righteousness (*δικαίωμα*, full sum of what it required) of the law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh under law, but after the Spirit as the power of life in Christ. (Rom. viii. 4.)

But the truth goes farther still. It is not merely that, by death to sin and the power of the Spirit, there has been a positive deliverance from the dominion of sin, the flesh in the man condemned; but the *man himself must go*. The Epistle to the Colossians leads us into this deeper aspect of the death of Christ (chap. ii. 11, 12); "*ye have died*" (chap. iii. 3); and this becomes so real, as God presents it to faith, that the practical consequence can be pressed (ii. 20), "Wherefore if ye have *died with Christ* from the rudiments of the world, why as though living in the world, are ye subject to ordinances?" Why go and falsify your place as a Christian by subjecting yourself

to ordinances that suppose the *man* to be alive ; whereas the truth is that we have died with Christ out of our whole place and living status as such, to have it in a totally new sphere, risen with Him, now to know Christ as our life, and to be directed to objects where He is, to form the life practically by Him here, where we have been left to represent Him.

Yet there is another point, touched on indeed in this epistle (ii. 13), but not further developed there, that has to be reached in the faith of our souls, in order that we may apprehend our full place in Christ, from which it flows that His path is ours ; not now death and resurrection with Christ to clear us out from all that was connected with man in responsibility here, his guilt and state closed, but what has resulted from the full disclosure of that *state* in the long, patient trial of the ages, ending in the rejection of Christ ; namely, that he is *dead in sins*. The Epistle of Ephesians brings us to this proved universal condition of the first man (chap. ii. 1-10). In 2 Cor. v., added light from the cross is thrown upon it ; for if God had to give up His Son to death that any might live, it was the plain proof that man was given up of God as dead ; and this in contrast to dealings with him *up to the cross* that supposed him to be alive. "For the love of Christ constraineth us ; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." Now into this scene of universal death of man by and in sin, and where Christ was dead in grace for sin, God came in power to form a new creation, "If any man be in Christ there is a new creation" ; raising up Christ as the first act of His power to be the beginning and head of it, and then

quickenings us together with Him. This involves His whole position as seated in the heavenlies, a position revealed to faith that we might know and enter into it now. To Paul it is given to develop this new creation on the side of our place in Christ according to the eternal counsels of God; while in John's epistle (all we have learned through Paul as to the divine clearance made of the first man in judgment being assumed) it is brought out on the side of Christ as our life, involving participation in the divine nature, John being thus in teaching the complement of Paul. If in Paul the full Christian position has been seen to be of a new creation of God, in John our condition is viewed as wholly of the same; and by the teaching of the Spirit through both apostles, He also being given to dwell in us, we know that the Son is in the Father, and, in marvellous association of thought, that we are in Him and He in us. (John xiv. 20.)

In 1 John then it is not the believer now looked at as with a war of two opposed principles within him, the flesh of which he has been born into this world, and the divine nature as born of God (though "if we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us"); but now, all that is of the first man gone in the death of Christ, God sets before us the characteristic privileges and nature of the life we have been brought into in the second Man, as if we never had another—a life which, according to the three-fold testimony (chap. v. 6-12) of the Spirit come from the glory of Christ, of the water for purification, and of the blood for propitiation (that alike flowed from His side in death, the end of man in judgment), is absolutely God's gift to us in His Son.

It may seem to have been a long digression, but the truths that have been before us are necessary in order that we should enter into our having been set apart for the obedience of Christ; so that no lower character of obedience may be seen to belong to the Christian. The Epistle of John puts it into its full place for us, the introductory part (chapters i. ii. to v. 11) bringing out the great principles of the epistle. Chapter i. 1-4 teaches us the wonderful privilege of the life we have been brought into in "fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ" that our joy may be full; verse 5 to the end characterizes this fellowship by the principles of God's own nature as light, going on in grace (chap. ii. 1, 2) even to divine resources for its practical restoration if absolutely interrupted by sin; verses 3-11 add tests of the two great principles of the divine nature in man, as manifested in Christ—obedience and love, by which false pretension to the possession of the privilege is judged. Thus the essential principle of the Christian position in its deepest privilege is disclosed. The life that was true in Him alone when He was here, shining as the light of men, but in darkness that apprehended it not, is—now that He has closed that state in the judgment of the cross, and taken His new place as man in the glory of God—"true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing and the true light now shineth." The commandments and word, that were the full expression of the life in Him—as He says, in answer to the question, "Who art thou?" (John viii. 25.) "Altogether (or "essentially" τὴν ἀρχὴν) that which I also say to you"—I am in nature what I speak—are now given to form and direct that life in us; wonderfully "new" in such application to



us, but really the "old commandment which ye had from the beginning." Thus whatever blessed traits of that life are seen as expressed in Christ's path here, become His word, with divine authority over me as His commandment too, to indicate what alone is true as the expression of the same life in me. Hence the intimate links that constantly connect the gospel and epistles of John. Thus wholly contrasted in principle is the obedience of Christ to anything known or presented to man before. Instead of a law acting from outside upon a nature wholly foreign and opposed to it, it is the revealed will of God, livingly expressed in the commandments and word of Christ, coming home with authority by these to a nature which, as His own in us, responds to and delights in that will, and knows no liberty but in obedience.

Sweet it is then to turn to the lowly life of Jesus, where that obedience is seen in all its perfection; even though the incomparable glory of it humbles us, and we feel more and more the utter poverty of all our thoughts of Him. The Psalm (xl.) from which I have already quoted brings us to His entrance into the place of it, where for the first time it was possible for Him to obey. All the Jewishly-ordained sacrifices are set aside as having nothing in them for the heart of God, now to find its entire satisfaction in Him who says, "Mine ears hast thou opened," or, more literally, "Ears hast thou digged for me." But as this necessitated His becoming man, the Spirit accepts the paraphrase of the LXX. translators, in quoting it in Hebrews (x.), "A body hast thou prepared me."\*

\* Note that in Hebrews the delight of the Lord Jesus is omitted as not so much the point of the Spirit's testimony, but the perfection of the work for God, the contrast of what gave Him *no pleasure* being brought out strongly. (Chap. x. 5, 6, 8.)

In Isaiah l. we find Him come, and in the path—“When I came was there no man? When I called was there none to answer?” But who was it that came? He who had power to redeem and to deliver, who had all nature at His command as its Creator and Lord. In what character then did He come? “The Lord Jehovah hath given me the tongue of the instructed, that I should know how to succour by a word him that is weary: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the instructed. The Lord Jehovah hath opened mine ear.” He who was Jehovah came, a man to be dependent and obedient; for this was man’s perfection suited to the place He had taken: instructed, out of His own deep experience of human sorrow in that place, how to succour the weary by a word, but as Himself looking for direction to God, with His ear wakened morning by morning to receive it. What a study for our hearts! What an obedience is thus foreshadowed—of One to whom alone as man will of right belonged, but become man only to carry out the Father’s will, and so waiting upon Him in that blessed communion in which He ever walked for the instruction of it. In the Gospels we trace the actual footsteps of the path of the Lord Jesus.

But before we turn to them, the doctrine of the Epistles comes in largely to increase our apprehension of it—I refer especially to Philippians and Hebrews. In both we find the same wonderful truths of who He was and of the place that He had taken, which are indeed inseparable. In Phil. ii. the mind that was in Christ Jesus is to be now in us—a mind that, instead of reaching up as the first Adam to be as God, reached

down until He could go down no lower. And there were two great steps in this stupendous stoop; for "subsisting in the form of God" it was no question of usurpation of what did not belong to Him "to be equal with God"; but He "emptied\* Himself, taking a bondsman's form, becoming in the likeness of men, and, having been found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." As God He emptied Himself, as man He humbled Himself; and His obedience in that place went on up to death, even that of the cross, in which it was put to the last possible test, and proved perfect—all He was thus entering into and giving its character to every step of His path. For it was nothing that man as such should be dependent and obedient; it was his apostasy that he departed from it. But that He, in whom "all the fulness was pleased to dwell," should take man's subject place, to glorify God by answering to it perfectly and never leaving it, gives the humiliation, and dependence, and obedience displayed in it their only measure and infinite glory.

The same great elements of the truth come out, only if possible, with greater fulness in the Epistle to the Hebrews. For in chap. i., while fixing the eye of faith on Him who as man, having by Himself made purifica-

\* We can appreciate the hesitation that our English translators may have felt in rendering literally, in such a connexion, the most wonderful word they had before them, *ἐκένωσε*. (v. 7.) From Tyndale down (Wycliffe had "lowered himself") they adopted the paraphrase "made Himself of no reputation": and there is this to be said for it, that if "emptied" necessarily involved the thought of something "of which" He emptied Himself, the paraphrase would be truer to the sense; for the word refers, as the participial clauses following shew, to the place He assumed rather than to that from which He came.

tion of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high, leads us by ever-ascending steps to the full, divine glory of His Person—*from* being born Son of God into this world (*v.* 5), object of angels' worship (*v.* 6), addressed as God by God according to Ps. xlv. (*vv.* 8, 9), *to* being owned as Jehovah by Jehovah, and this when in the lowest depths of His humiliation according to Ps. cii. (*vv.* 10–12)—chap. ii. brings out the reality of His manhood, and the purposes of God accomplished in it, not merely as necessary to His having the place of universal supremacy marked out for man by Ps. viii. (*vv.* 5–8), but for far deeper reasons connected with God's glory and the state of those, with whom He became man to identify Himself, and conduct them as the sons of God to glory. (See for four such reasons, *vv.* 10, 14, 17, and 18.) All in *this* chapter then depends upon, and is brought out to be the proof of, His true humanity. Only as man could the Sanctifier and the sanctified be "of one," and He "not ashamed to call them brethren." Yet the corn of wheat must fall into the ground and die, else He must have abode alone in His humanity; it is as the *risen* Christ that He is able to associate us with Him, as we hear Him say, according to the words of Ps. xxii., "I will declare thy name unto my brethren," and "in the midst of the assembly will I sing praise unto thee"—*opening* the wilderness for us with a song of redemption more wonderful by far, through such association, than that of Moses and Israel. (Exod. xv.)

"It is finished! It is finished!

Who can tell redemption's worth?

He who knows it leads the singing,

Full the joy, as fierce the wrath."

Then He has set us the example of dependence for *all the way*, "I will put my trust in him" (from the LXX. of Isaiah viii. 17); until the last quotation, in the same connection in the prophet, brings us to the *end* of the path—the remnant of the house of Jacob displayed with Him as His children in glory. Thus the mystery of His humbled place as man, the stumbling-block of Israel's pride, is solved; and we have Him fully in the path of man: suffering being tempted, but thus able to succour the tempted ones: learning obedience by the things that He suffered, thus able to sympathize; and the epistle does not close without bringing Him in as the last of the long line of witnesses to the principle of faith as the power of the just man's life, if in this as in all things He must have the pre-eminence—"the beginner and completer of faith." (Chap. xii. 2.)

But obedience is the special point before us in the blessed unfolding of the Lord's place as man, that the epistle gives us. See then how if, in contrast to Israel's priests, who being taken from among themselves could exercise forbearance towards the ignorant and the wanderers, we have a great High Priest that is passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God; and if His very exaltation and glory as such *seems* to take Him out of the range and reach of human need to be able to sympathize, the Spirit of God can recall to us (v. 7) "the days of His flesh" in which "when He had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him out of death," He was "heard for His godly fear" [ἐὐλαβεία, compare chap. xii. 28, His reverent submission to the will of God]. Thus what full capacity, albeit He is in glory,

to enter into all that connects itself with human weakness! What are our deepest distresses as compared with His, who, "though He were a Son, *learned obedience* by the things which He suffered?" But what could surpass the grace that presents Him to our hearts as having passed through our school? He entered it indeed in a very different way, and for wholly different reasons than we who have to learn obedience—it is the great lesson God is teaching in all His ways with us—because, alas! too long accustomed to disobey; He, because ever accustomed to command. He had never before been in circumstances in which obedience could be rendered. Not that there was anything in that holy nature contrary to obedience; as we have seen, He became man only to obey, and never did anything save in obedience. But thus He learned it. Only that the Spirit would now lead on the Hebrews addressed, from a side of things, unspeakably precious in itself, but connected with what He was down here, "unto perfection," connected as this always is with His place as man in glory according to the counsels of God. (Chap. v. 9–14; vi. 1.) There only all His precious sympathy and succour is now to be found; thither He would lead up our hearts: and thus the great object of the epistle is carried on, that those whose religious relationships with God had been earthly in Judaism, should be weaned from them to wholly new and heavenly ones.

J. A. T.

(*To be continued, D. V.*)

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IF we let Christ practically out of our hearts, it costs a deal to bring Him back again.

## ALPHA AND OMEGA.

WE have in the Book of the Revelation three distinct occasions in which God deigns to place Himself before us as the Alpha and Omega—as being, therefore, both at the start and the finish of all things; and striking it is to notice that each occasion is marked by an increase of expression and a growing fulness.

First we read in chap. i. 8, “I am Alpha and Omega.” These are, as it is well known, the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet, and, as that language was in much usage at the time when our New Testament was written, the letters themselves would be well known. The Lord God declares in this passage that He is the Alpha and Omega.

Our version adds, “The beginning and the ending”; but these words are omitted in the Revised Version, having been borrowed, without doubt, from our second passage, to which reference will presently be made.

The wording here is simply “Alpha and Omega,” without any addition or explanation. It is a grand and lofty announcement of God’s being. Our verse gives us the first utterance of God’s lips in this wonderful Revelation. The seven previous verses are prefatory—an inspired communication through the Apostle John; but verse 8 bursts upon us, in deep and divine solemnity, as the veritable accents of the Lord God, the Almighty. He is the *Alpha*—the grand source and originator of all things; and He, too, the *Omega*, by whom all shall be wound up and completed. Hence we read not such words as “I am Alpha and Beta”

(the second letter) as though it were His design to present to us the commencement and continuance of His work. That may be true; but if Alpha gives the beginning, Omega would indicate not only a perfect continuance, but the seal being placed on the end of all. It implies the finish of the road, and the completion of the work. And how becoming an intimation, in view of all the fearful course of judgment, detailed in the book that follows! how solemn a declaration of His ability to begin and carry to a conclusion each of its dread, but certain, events! He proclaims Himself the Omega as much as the Alpha.

Second, in chap. xxi. 6 we read, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end." Here there is no redundancy; the last sentence is correctly rendered, and is supplementary to what we had in chap. i. 8. Why then have we this addition here? It is because we have reached the end of the long prediction of judgment—the end, one may say, of the book of the Revelation.

No doubt more than a chapter follows, but this consists largely of a detailed description of certain facts already stated; and, in point of fact, our verse begins, "And He said unto me, 'It is done,'" words which seem to announce the dropping of the curtain when the grandly awful panorama has passed before the eye—then follows the declaration, "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end," for the end has arrived—"it is done!" The last seal had been broken, the last trumpet blown, and the last vial poured out! The power of Satan had been crushed, the folly of man awarded, the kingdoms of this world had become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, the false



prophet and the beast had received their doom, Satan had been cast into the Lake of fire and brimstone, the Great White Throne had pronounced its irrevocable sentence on the wicked dead, and Death and Hades were cast into the Lake of fire.

God then makes His tabernacle with men, redeemed and delivered from sin and all its many ills—He makes all things new.

“It is done!” He is seen to be the Omega as the Alpha—the end as the beginning. The mighty Hand that began the task is the Hand that gave the finishing stroke. Its power survived every shock and overcame all opposition. To-day that Hand is one of patient grace—stretched out all day long in mercy. Then how different! Its grace, all so winsome, may be spurned; but its retribution who can withstand? Happy the soul who through grace anticipates the necessary judgment of sin, and flees from the wrath to come. “Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and ye perish from the way, when His wrath is kindled but a little. Blessed are all they that put their trust in Him.” (Ps. ii. 12.)

Third, and lastly, in chapter xxii. 13, we have “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.” This is the fullest of all—“the first and the last” is added.

It has been well said that “God is the last of everything.” He remains when man—proud, boastful, yet short-lived man—has closed his little day. God dwells in His own eternity, in which time is but a moment; and, as time to eternity, so is the life of man to that of God.

Still, as our horizon is circumscribed, and the range of our vision limited to things beneath the sun, it is but natural that we should feel the prevalency of evil, and

think at times that its final triumph is sure. To-day sin is in the ascendant, and truth and righteousness are at a discount. We realize the terrible power of Satan, and we discern the innumerable workings of sin. Each department of life—national, social, commercial, domestic and ecclesiastical—is permeated by sin, whilst the witness borne to truth and holiness is admittedly disproportionate and feeble. All this is seen, felt and realized, and the heart may tremble.

Nevertheless, God is the last as He is the first; and this earth—so long the haunt of sin, and the playground of Satan, the theatre of human and diabolical enmity against God, the place too where His blessed Son was crucified and slain—shall yet become the fair and glorious platform for the display of abiding righteousness, as of the vindication, of our Lord Jesus. The action of Calvary shall yet be reversed, and the lips that said, "Away with Him; crucify Him!" shall yet own Him Lord of all.

Is patience needed meanwhile? Well, read the verse preceding—"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." What encouragement! Ours is but a moment of trial and testing, but our glorified Lord and Saviour is well aware of His people's sorrows, and He it is who says, "I come quickly." He promises many a bright reward, and cheers us with the gladsome hope of His coming in person to take us hence to be with Himself for ever. May we learn to take the side of God in a day when the current sets all the other way, and may our hearts be directed into His love, and into the patience of Christ. (The words in chap. i. 11—"I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last," are omitted in the R.V.)

J. W. S.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

## I.

## GENESIS iii. 10.

THE key to the interpretation of the term "naked" in this and the following verse is found, we judge, in verse 21, where we read that "Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them." From his fall, his transgression, therefore, until he was clothed in a coat of skin, Adam was naked before God. The term "naked" will thus express his moral condition consequent upon his sin—his moral exposure, so to speak, before the all-searching eye of a holy God. While in a state of innocence he was happy, surrounded as he was with every token of the goodness of his Creator; but as soon as he had eaten of the forbidden fruit his eyes were opened (*v.* 7), and knowing now good and evil he obtained a conscience, and, alas! a condemning conscience. The result was that he knew he was naked, could not conceal his moral condition (*v.* 7), and forthwith—as many of his descendants have continued to do ever since—attempted to cover up his state by a human expedient. But the moment God drew near, Adam felt the vanity of his subterfuge, and sought to hide himself from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. He knew, we repeat, that as a sinner he was naked, and could not screen himself from the just judgment of God, of which he had been forewarned. (Chap. ii. 16, 17.)

But grace wrought, and grace provided what Adam could not, by any efforts of his own, obtain: God clothed him in his nakedness, and clothed him with the skin of an animal upon which death had been brought. The meaning of the skin may perhaps be gathered from Leviticus vii. 8, where it is said that the priest that offereth any man's burnt offering, even the priest shall have to himself the skin of the burnt offering which he hath offered." The coat of skin wherewith Adam was clothed was surely, therefore, a figure of the fact that only Christ can cover our moral nakedness before God.

## II.

COL. iii. 16.

In the judgment of many the sense of this passage is better seen with a different punctuation. Thus: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another; in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Nor can we doubt, because of its harmony with the teaching of Scripture in other places, that this sets forth the correct interpretation. As to what were the psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, there is no means of knowing with certainty. But of this we may be sure—that they were different channels through which joy in the Lord ascended to Him in praise and adoration. They might have been—at least some of them—compositions, inspired for the occasion in the first energy of the Spirit, or they might have been, as now, the meditations of pious souls flowing out in psalms, hymns, or songs.

## “THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME EMMANUEL.”

It has already been pointed out that the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem was in fulfilment of this prophecy. Not that the birth in, and by, itself contained its accomplishment: it was rather its pledge and guarantee. The meaning of the name, as divinely interpreted, is “God with us”; and this enables us to see that it looks forward to the full consequences for Israel of the introduction of their Messiah into this world; that, in other words, the Emmanuel name of our blessed Lord will only be realized in connection with the establishment of His glorious throne on earth, when He will make good all that God is in government, and when, as with His people, “His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.” It carries with it therefore the fruition of His death for “that nation,” and the promise of His personal presence with His earthly people. It is of that time the prophet speaks when he says, “Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.”

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A reference to the prophecy itself, together with its context, will make this abundantly evident. Ahaz, the father of Hezekiah, was at that time upon the throne of Judah. He “did not that which was right in the sight of the Lord his God, like David his father. But he walked in the way of the kings of Israel, yea, and made his son to pass through the fire, according to

the abominations of the heathen, whom the Lord cast out from before the children of Israel." (2 Kings xvi. 2, 3.) However, notwithstanding his wickedness and apostasy, God still waited with much longsuffering, and forebore to deal with his guilty servant. Yea rather, on Ephraim and Syria entering into a confederacy against the house of David, and going up to besiege Jerusalem, Jehovah sent His servant Isaiah with a message of encouragement, assuring Ahaz that the designs of his enemies should not prosper. The prophet added, at the same time, the warning word, "If ye will not believe, surely ye shall not be established." Ahaz might be delivered from the present peril, but unless he turned to, and stayed himself upon, the word of the Lord, he should not escape his merited chastisement. (See 2 Chron. xxviii.)

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Yet again the Lord sought, in His tender mercy, to reach the heart and conscience of the offending monarch. God would condescend, if Ahaz requested it, to give him a sign, either in the depth, or in the height above, to certify him of the sure fulfilment of His word. The heart of Ahaz had turned to false gods, and thus hardened, he refused, though under the pretext of piety, he offered intervention, saying, "I will not ask, neither will I tempt the Lord." The Searcher of hearts was not to be deceived, and, after a solemn admonition, the prophet announced that the Lord Himself would give a sign. "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel." It is in this that the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God, is unfolded. David's house might fail in their responsibility, as they

grievously did, and forfeit everything; but, thereon God, acting from His own heart, and according to His purposes, could step in, and through the advent of Jehovah the Saviour—through His rejection, death, and resurrection—accomplish all the counsels of His grace. The birth of Immanuel would thus change everything. Those who were false to their trust would be punished as was Ahaz; but Immanuel would secure everything, and vindicate and glorify the name of God in government on the earth.

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But there lies a long, weary path for Israel, because of their unbelief, between the birth of Immanuel and the glory of the kingdom. This was plainly foretold by the prophet in connection with the very prophecy under consideration. The careful reader will observe that the first invasion of the land by the Assyrian, bringing in utter desolation in its unchecked success (Isa. vii. 17), does but shadow forth another assault in the last days, when he and his confederates shall be utterly broken in pieces. They may take counsel together, but it shall come to nought; they may speak the word, but it shall not stand; "for God is with us" (Immanuel). Before that time—the final destruction of Israel's enemy—He who is born of the virgin, and named Immanuel, is seen in rejection. The transition to this is exceedingly beautiful. The prophet was instructed of the Lord not to "walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread." (Chap. viii. 11-13.) But this instantly

brings in separation, distinguishing as it does a remnant from the mass of the people. Accordingly we read, "And He shall be for a sanctuary" (for all those who sanctify and fear Him); "but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." As indeed Simeon prophesied, "This Child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against . . . that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

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Immanuel came. The sanctuary of those who had waited for Him, He is the true centre around whom His people are gathered; and here, for the first time, He Himself speaks, and calls them "my disciples." And He names them such in connection with "the testimony," and plainly states that the truth of that day, the law as well as the testimony, is entrusted and confined to the remnant, now His disciples. It was so also in the day of David's rejection. In the cave of Adullam, when every one that was in distress, and every one that was in debt, and every one that was discontented, had gathered themselves unto him, and he became their captain, we find that the prophet Gad was also there, and immediately after Abiathar the priest is driven to the same company, which now possessed all the forms of God's testimony in the persons of the king, the prophet, and the priest. In like manner Anna the prophetess is with the few who looked for redemption in Jerusalem. It must be ever so, that those who are in separation from evil, and are in communion with the mind of God concerning His Christ, and concerning the state of things round about



them, should be the depositaries of the testimony for the times in which they are living. The reason is that Christ Himself is with them. He loves all His people; but He only identifies Himself with the separated remnant, as in verse 18 of this chapter. That here and there much truth may be found outside of them is unquestionable; but only with them will be seen God's special teaching for the moment, or the truth held and presented in its due proportions. The testimony will be bound up, and the law will be sealed up amongst the Lord's disciples in an evil day, because, as already said, He Himself is in their midst.

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The state of things at the time of which Isaiah speaks is unfolded in the following verses; and let it again be recalled that it is Christ Himself who is the Speaker. He says: "And I will wait upon the Lord, that hideth His face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for Him. Behold, I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel from the Lord of hosts, which dwelleth in Mount Zion." In the Epistle to the Hebrews parts of these two verses are quoted to show the Lord's complete identification as Man with His people, with the true remnant gathered out from among the Jewish nation (chapter ii. 13); and this as preparatory to the object of His death, viz., to "destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." But we will not pursue these interesting circumstances, further than to call attention to the wondrous fact that the One who was thus as regards God in perfect dependence as Man, and hence waiting

upon Jehovah, and as regards men despised and rejected, was, at the same time, no less a personage than the Immanuel of Isaiah's prophecy; and that, in this path of rejection, He was experiencing some of those sufferings which must precede His glories.

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In chapter ix. the people that walk in darkness see a great light, and "they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." For the fulfilment of this glorious prophecy, Matthew records that Jesus left Nazareth, and came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim. (See Isaiah ix. 1.) The moment Isaiah proclaims the appearance of the Messiah as light in the midst of darkness, he contemplates its full consequences in the results of the deliverance which Messiah will accomplish in the last days. The yoke of the Assyrian being broken, all the brightness of the glory of the divine person of the Messiah shines out in the blessing of His people. And all this blessing is connected with the birth of Christ into this world. "For unto us," the prophet says, "a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." All these names are given in connection with His kingdom in this world, for the prophet proceeds: "Of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever." (Chap. ix. 6, 7.)

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It is evident, therefore, that Immanuel, "God with us," is the name belonging to our blessed Lord in connection with the earthly people, and that they will not enter into its full and blessed significance until after He has taken His great power, and when He shall reign in Mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before His ancients gloriously. Who, then, is Immanuel? His birth is predicted in Isaiah vii. 14, and, after detailing the circumstances of His rejection in the following chapter, the prophet foretells the establishment of His kingdom in chapter ix. Together with this he takes occasion, in a passage already quoted, to present a series of titles or names which are expressive of the infinite and divine character of Immanuel's Person. Let us pass them briefly under review. The first is "Wonderful," a word used oftentimes for that which excites astonishment or admiration. Sometimes it is employed to denote a miracle, and nothing so awakens the attention as a miraculous display of power. And what miracle is so great as that of the Incarnation? What could produce such wonder as the fact that Immanuel could be born of a virgin? Then He is called "Counsellor." Divine wisdom is indicated by this word, as, for example, where it says, "The Spirit of the Lord shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord." (Isaiah xi. 2.) The appellation "The mighty God" proclaims its own significance, for there could not be a more distinct declaration of His Deity; nor does the following term, "The everlasting Father," or "The Father of eternity," speak less plainly, inasmuch as it sets forth the eternity of His being. Finally, He

is "The Prince of Peace," a title which indicates the Solomon character of His reign, so admirably described in Psalm lxxii.

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It may be permitted to us, in conclusion, to enquire why such a number of names should be combined. The answer surely is, that it is only by the contemplation of the rays of Immanuel's glory separately and singly that any conception can be formed of the truth of His person. However He may be presented, in whatever aspect or relationship, all that He is is there under the special aspect; and we are reminded of this by such passages as the one under consideration. It is indeed one of the fatal mistakes of these modern days to take some one feature of the life or Person of our blessed Lord, and to regard it as the whole truth. He is the living Word, and it is only in all that speaks of Him that He can be fully discovered; and it is because of our feebleness that the Spirit of God calls our attention now to one aspect, and now to another; now to one feature, or trait, or attribute of His Person, and now to another. But He is still beyond all our thoughts, seeing that He is Divine, "very God and very Man"; and hence it is written, "No man knoweth the Son, but the Father."

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### THE CHILDREN OF THE BRIDECHAMBER.

"WHY do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but Thine eat and drink?" (Luke v. 33.)

The question proposed regarding these three companies of disciples is deeply interesting, and—with the

answer of the Lord to it—will well repay our attention. He Himself testified on another occasion, "The disciple is not above his Master: but every one that is perfect shall be as his Master." We may judge, therefore, the character of the disciples and their actions from the master, of whom they learned.

The Pharisees are well known to every reader of Scripture. By them the flesh was religiously cultivated to its highest perfection. Hence we may easily judge the reason for their fastings and prayers. They thought to gain the favour of God by their religious activity and self-denial. A true idea may be formed of them by the prayer of the Pharisee, of which our Lord speaks in Luke xviii. 10-12. His prayer was not an expression of "man's weakness waiting upon God," but rather a statement of his own religious goodness, and in this his fasting twice in the week occupied a prominent place. No more then need be said. It is clear that the Pharisees fasted and made prayers in their religious self-occupation, desiring in this way to win the favour of God.

Now the goodness and religiousness of the flesh had no place in the ministry of John the Baptist, by which his disciples were formed. The Pharisees, along with the Sadducees, he denounced as a "generation of vipers." He insisted that there should be fruits brought forth meet for repentance. He said, "Begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham." Along with this he announced imminent and unsparing judgment. Those whom he baptized owned the claims of God, and how utterly they had failed as a nation to comply with

them. In repentance they confessed their ruin, and stood in self-judgment before God.

Doubtless then all this gave the reason for the frequent fastings and prayers of John's disciples. Unlike the Pharisees, who engaged themselves with the supposed goodness of the flesh and sought to bring it to perfection, these had constantly before their minds its badness, and their utter failure. In the sense of this they withdrew themselves from the pleasures and resources of the flesh, and mourned, and waited upon God.

But the disciples of the Lord ate and drank, and this perplexed the wise scribes and religious Pharisees. "Thine eat and drink." Was it then, as they in their reasonings might suppose, that His teaching, which formed His disciples, lowered the claims of God's holiness, or made light of the people's failure? Surely not. All that John brought from God was true, and all that his ministry produced in his disciples was right and becoming. But the disciples of the Lord had advanced one step further. Instead of being engaged with the badness of the flesh (much less its supposed goodness) their hearts were gained by Him who was all the delight of the heart of God. So answered the Lord, "Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them?" It was He Himself who filled their hearts with joy; there was no fasting in His presence.

It is a blessed theme for meditation. Man had entirely failed and broken down beyond remedy. Then came the blessed Son of man, who was openly declared to be God's beloved Son, in whom was all His pleasure. From that moment everything depended on

Him, and not upon the broken-down creature. He would fulfil all God's will, and secure His perfect delight. But He would not do this by patching up the old character of things, or by infusing new joy into the old system. He who came to do God's will could only fulfil His pleasure, and secure everything unfailingly and eternally, by taking away the first order of things connected with man's responsibility and failure, and establishing a second order, in which all things are new and according to God. This He would accomplish in His holy sacrifice, by which He glorified God in respect to sin.

It was not all accomplished at the time the scribes questioned and the Lord answered, but HE was there, the Accomplisher, Himself the delight of God's heart, and the One upon whom all now depended. The joy of that new order of things was felt by those whom He brought to share in His company (although they could in no way have explained it), and they delighted in Him who was God's delight. All was before His own eye, and He knew how to impress the hearts of His poor disciples with the unfading joy of the sphere to which He belonged, and into which He would bring them, in fulfilment of the gracious purpose of God concerning them.

Then why did not these very scribes feel the blissfulness of His presence, and also rejoice in Him? Alas! they were so thoroughly imbued with the "old wine" that they had no taste for the new. Their minds were so completely filled with thoughts of the flesh—its capabilities, its improvement, its hoped-for ultimate perfection—that they could not appreciate His presence who morally superseded it all, that every-

thing might centre in His own Person, and all joy be found in His own sphere.

These three companies of disciples have their representatives in our own day. Many, alas! are devoted disciples of the Pharisees, and accordingly fast and make prayers, hoping by these means to win the favour of God and secure His pleasure. How vain is this!

Others there are who seem to be diligent disciples of John, for they are ever mourning over man's badness (it may be, their own in particular) and the breakdown of everything which has been entrusted to him. Shall we make light of man's incorrigible wickedness and weakness? Or shall we endeavour to overlook the failure as of small consequence? God forbid. Such mourning we must all pass through to reach, in truth and reality, the peace and blissfulness of the presence of Jesus. But it is a blessed thing to advance beyond it.

Now in the glory of God sits the blessed Son of man. Through His holy sacrifice He is the Accomplisher of God's will. He gives effect to it by placing us as His companions before God in the place and relationship which God had purposed for us, and He leads us by the Spirit into all the exquisite joy of it. If His disciples could not fast in His company here on earth, as they were made to taste the joy which belonged to His presence, how much more may we feast as brought into all the reality of the boundless bliss which finds its centre in Him. Blessed, deeply blessed it is, having confessed the entire failure of man, to find rest and joy in His company, brought by Him to His Father and God, and knowing that all that God has purposed is fully secured by Him.



“The days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.” The more fully we enter into the joy of His company the more shall we feel His absence. In the sense of this our abstinence from the joys and resources of the earth will be far more complete than that of those who are engaged either with the goodness, or with the badness of man.

May it be granted to us to know more fully the joy of His own company, and the new character of all that into which He brings us in association with Himself.

J. R.

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## CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE.

1 PETER i. 2.

*(Continued from page 50.)*

WE have seen then, in the doctrine of the Old Testament and of the New, what gives its character to the obedience to which we are sanctified. That it was that of the Son of God become man, to render it in a perfection beyond all that could have been otherwise conceived, so contrary in its nature to all that man is naturally. But we must turn to the gospels to seek in the power of the Spirit to trace a little the detail of that perfection in His walk: no more wonderful study could be presented to our poor hearts, so slow to enter into it. The test came early. For when, in fulfilling righteousness (Matt. iii. 15), that is, carrying out God's will, His first public act was to identify Himself in John's baptism with those who, in submitting to it, took their true place before God, confessing their sins, and were thereby proved to be the saints, the excellent of

the earth in whom was all His delight—the opened heavens, and the Father's voice, and the descent upon Him of the Holy Spirit, declaring Him to be, *in the humble place He had thus taken*, the object of the Father's delight—the very next thing is that He is led of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. But what circumstances for the Son of God to be found in in this world! “Having fasted forty days and forty nights, afterwards He hungered. And the tempter coming up to Him said, If thou art Son of God, speak, that these stones may become loaves of bread.” But simple as it would have been for Him, with all divine resources ever at command, to help Himself to bread, He would not put forth power to take Himself out of any consequence of the place He had come into as man. He had not become man to command; *man's* place was to obey, and the enemy is foiled by His keeping that place perfectly. “It is written, *Man* shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” He waits therefore, will only act, if it be but in the matter of necessary food, when there is a word from God for it. But more than that, He *lived* by it, for this was God's will for man according to the passage that He quotes, if now for the first time it was realized in man—not merely a *path* outwardly directed by the word, but a *life* formed by it, of every movement of which the word was the motive and source.

Well may we pause at the outset of such a study, and put it to ourselves honestly before God, Do we know indeed that this is the obedience to which we have been sanctified? I am not speaking of failure in walking according to it, but have we bowed without

reserve to the principle of it as thus brought to the test by Satan, and proved in its absolute perfection in the blessed Lord. Then we shall know how to judge in the secret of our hearts any spring of thought or action that has not its source in God's known will. I say known, because there is no more subtle form of temptation than when it is pressed upon us that circumstances call for action, when there is no word from God, no intimation of His will. Yet if we act without knowing God's will, nothing can be more certain than that we are doing our own; and this is the essence of sin. "Behold, obedience is better than sacrifice, attention than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of divination, and self-will is as iniquity and idolatry." (1 Sam. xv. 22, 23. New Trans.) Nothing in man is right except obedience. Confidence in God will be surely needed for waiting, as with the Lord, left for forty days without food; and this was the principle brought out in the next temptation: but is it a strange thing to those who know His heart as perfectly revealed in the Son that we should trust Him?

This testing took place then alone with Satan, but under the eye of One who appraises it as none else could, and reveals it in grace to us, that delighting in it with Him we may learn man's true place of obedience, and be formed by it.

A very different form of testing arose with the *circumstances of His rejection*, as it began to come out more and more plainly. We see the effect of it on His spirit in Matt. xi. His testimony, as that of His forerunner, was rejected by that generation; He felt it. "Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented

not," more hard of heart than Tyre or Sodom. But (v. 25) He bows in the deep trial to His Father, answering the rejection of the cities by, "I thank Thee . . . even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight." What rest in the known wisdom and love of the Father, and what perfect submission also, as He traces all that pressed upon Him to its source there! Then if He exercises divine will, it is not for Himself, but only, as always (chap. viii. 3; John v. 21), to meet need in man, in carrying out the testimony of grace committed to Him. Here it is to reveal the Father, so as to *give* us into the same resource and resting-place He had in the knowledge of the Father, and then to call us to take His yoke upon us, learning from Him (meek and lowly in heart) that submission in which rest is practically *found* for the soul, whatever the circumstances. Testing then, in whatever form—whether from Satan or from men—only drew out before God and the Father the sweet savour of a divinely perfect obedience now found for the first time in man upon earth.

But for the full positive development of it we must go to the Gospel of John, where, above all, the divine glory of His person shines forth; than which nothing can be more remarkable in the connection of the truth. Here He is the Word that was with God, and was God—for none other could express God—the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, come to make Him known according to that relationship, even as One in *it* only could. He can say, "Before Abraham was, I am"; "I and my Father are one": yet it is ever the Son become flesh, whom we see, and who, true to the place of man, never assumes anything to Himself, but delights to receive all—even

when it belongs to the rights of His person—from the Father. He may speak and act as none but a divine person could; yet He never leaves the place of a servant, subject to the Father, carrying out that for which He was sent. Surely the mystery of His person meets us everywhere; nowhere else is there such an unfolding of obedience as in this Gospel.

His ministry opens in chapter iv. He had found a poor sinner to whom He could reveal Himself in an activity of grace that formed, as to His life in connection with men, His only joy here. There was manifest refreshment for His spirit in it. He sees the fields already white for harvest in the light of that one soul brought to know herself and Him. But the sources of it lay deeper than the disciples could enter into: "I have meat [or "food"] to eat that ye know not." Wherein did it consist? Not merely in outward acts of service. "My food is that I should *do the will of Him* that has sent me, and that I *should finish His work.*" What a character this gives His whole path! His food, the sustenance of His life, was in carrying out the Father's will.

Chapter v. becomes a complete revelation of the place He has taken. Divine grace, active in power to bless even on the Sabbath day, had clashed with Jewish stickling for forms. How little they knew the heart of God, who thought that He could *rest* in a world where there was the cry of human misery on every hand. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," revealed that heart, but in terms that they knew well involved the perfect community of nature between the Son who spoke and the Father; and they charge Him with *making Himself* equal with God. Nothing could be

further from the truth, as to One who never sought His own glory, but only the glory of Him that sent Him (chap. vii. 18; viii. 50); yet to be on such an equality was no usurping of what did not belong to Him, as we have seen. But He had emptied Himself, becoming in the likeness of man; and so He answered them, "The Son can do nothing from (*ἀπο*) Himself, but whatever He sees the Father do." He had not come down to act as an independent divine person on earth in the exercise of His own will and power; but in perfect dependence, and in the communion in which He ever walked with His Father, we learn further that "whatever things *He* doeth, these also doeth the Son in like manner. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that He Himself doeth;" and this carried out even in quickening whom He will (v. 21); while verses 27-30 shew that not otherwise will it be in the exercise of the *judgment* committed to Him. "I cannot do anything from myself: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is righteous; because I do not *seek* my will, but the will of Him that sent me." Oh, how it searches and humbles us to hear Him speak of not even *seeking* will of His, but only that the Father's might be accomplished!

In chapter vi. 38 *et seq* it is the same thing that characterizes Him as the bread of God; He came down from heaven to do the will of Him that sent Him. For if He found the food of His life here in doing that will, God found His bread,\* the food of His

\* Compare for the force of the expression Leviticus iii. 11, 16; xxi. 6, &c.; Numbers xxviii. 2, 24; Ezekiel xvi. 19; xlv. 7, where "food," "bread," and "meat" are the same in Hebrew (the point being missed by the LXX., save in the last two quotations). Nor can I doubt that the "bread of God" here gets its character from this

own joy as it were, in Him as come down to do it. In wonderful grace—when we have reached Him through His death, “have eaten the flesh and drank the blood of the Son of man” (v. 53), identifying ourselves thus by faith with His death, without which “there is no life to taste and to enjoy the bread,” as another has said—verse 57 brings us into participation in what He was to God: “He that eateth *me*, shall live by [or ‘on account of’] *me*.”

We have seen this principle of dependent obedience as to the *works* of the blessed Lord; but nothing gives a greater idea of its absoluteness than to find it also true of His *words*, “I speak to the world those things which I have heard from [ $\pi\acute{\alpha}\rho\alpha$  “from with”] Him,” though men would only recognise, when they had lifted up the Son of man, who He was, and how as to the place He had taken He neither acted from Himself, or spoke save “as my Father hath taught me.” (John viii. 28.) How wonderfully the opened ear of Isaiah l., as of one that is instructed, has been verified in His path. For, as He says again (chap. xii. 49), “I have not *spoken* of ( $\epsilon\kappa$ ) myself, but the Father which sent me He gave me a commandment what I should *say* and what I should *speak*. . . . Whatsoever I speak therefore even as the Father said unto me so I speak”—in words and works thus alike, the revealer of the Father; and so, as the verse tells us, “His commandment is life eternal”: for it is eternal life to know the Father as thus revealed.

use; namely, that it is not merely the bread which He gives, but upon which He feeds first of all, as the infinite excellency and perfection of Christ, proved under all testing, in the lowly stoop and place He had taken to carry out the Father’s will, yielding Him divine satisfaction and joy.

But we are nearing the end, for the enmity of man's heart was surging round that only path of perfect light ever seen in this world, where, in the Son of man keeping man's place, in the simple perfection of dependent and delighting obedience, God found His delight and was glorified. The state of all men being thus revealed, it was necessary, because of that state as well as for the glory of God, that such a path should close here; but only in taking up that state in grace to identify Himself with it, and endure the judgment of God in which it is ended for ever. Precious it is to know that meeting the judgment due to sin became only the occasion for manifesting the depth of the perfection of His obedience, laying therein a fresh ground for the Father's delight in Him: "Therefore doth my Father love me because I lay down my life that I might take it again." Divine power was needed, for "No one taketh it from me, but I lay it down from myself; I have power to lay it down and power to take it again." But He will only exercise that power as ever in obedience—"This commandment have I received from my Father." (Chap. x. 17, 18.)

One more passage connects obedience with the spring of it, that whether in Him or in us, gives it all its blessed character and acceptance—LOVE. I refer to chapter xiv. 30, 31: "Henceforth I will not talk much with you; for the prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I *love the Father*, and as the *Father gave me commandment* so I do." What foothold could the enemy find in a life made up of nothing but love and obedience? Luke brings us to this final assault of Satan; he, who notes that after the temptation in the



wilderness the devil departed from Christ for a *season*, and at the close that, if it was "man's hour," the power of darkness was awfully associated with it. (Chap. iv. 13; xxii. 53.) In that gospel too, in Gethsemane, the full force of the temptation comes before us, as that of Satan who, having by man's sin and the judgment of God, the power of death over man, sought to press it in that character upon Him, to deter Him from going the whole way in obedience. We are permitted to draw near and know what very real conflict it was to the blessed Lord, though none can fathom His sorrow, in anticipating having to pass out of the consciousness of the Father's presence which had been all the light and joy of His path, into that of being wholly forsaken of God. Presenting it before the Father in the unclouded communion in which He yet was did but add poignancy to the sorrow. In His very perfection He shrank from such a cup. "Nevertheless not my will, but Thine be done" records His giving Himself up to it, in the perfection of obedience here brought to its absolute and final test. And the fiery trial over, in peace we hear Him say in John, "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?" as He went to the cross to exhaust it, as He alone could, and finish the work given Him to do. Thus in infinite depths of suffering He endured the judgment of the will of the flesh that once characterized us; but that even now we may be so easily betrayed into if not abiding in Him. Oh, that in true dependence and nearness of heart to the Lord we may know how to be "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus," that nothing but His will-less life may be manifested in our body. J. A. T.

(To be concluded, D. V., in the next number.)

## TWO ASPECTS.

## PART II.

JOHN xv. 26-xvi. 15.

WE come now to the second aspect of the sending of the Comforter; that is, the one of which our Lord Himself speaks in the first of these scriptures. Here He says that *He*\* would send the Holy Spirit from the Father, and we shall find that this gives the character to the whole passage.

The Lord Jesus, as the ascended and glorified Man in the Father's presence, should send the Spirit who should bear witness concerning Him; the apostles too, who had been with Him from the beginning, should bear witness. The opposition of the world would be aroused, and as we noticed before the Sadducean or materialistic character of its infidelity, so now we shall see its antagonism to Him who is in the Father's presence, whence He has sent the Holy Ghost. The persecuting character of the world thus comes out in the first verses of the sixteenth chapter; and when the Lord speaks of its being profitable for the apostles that He should go away, He begins by shewing what the Spirit's testimony towards the world would be.

Let us remember that the subject before us is the glory of the risen and ascended Jesus in the Father's presence, and the character of the Spirit's testimony.

1st, in face of the world:

2ndly, in believers.

Keeping this in view, we may look a little more

\* Notice the emphasis on the pronouns in this passage, especially upon the one referring to the Holy Spirit.

closely into these two testimonies; and, first of all, let us notice that in speaking of the world it is not meant here that it should be convinced and converted by the presence of the Spirit, but that the fact of His being here should demonstrate its true state.

The state of sin is announced by the fact of the Holy Ghost's having taken the place of the Christ, whom the world rejected. It is not here a question of sins in the plural (acts of sin), but of the state of sin in which the world chose to remain in rejecting Jesus: there was now no excuse to be found (compare xv. 22-24), and the Spirit's presence demonstrated it.

Again, righteousness towards the world is proved by the Lord's presence with the Father in heaven. This shews that whilst Jesus' work and testimony have been rightly appreciated in the very highest place, the world, too, has been justly punished so far, by His going up to the Father.

And thirdly, morally speaking, the prince of this world is judged. It does not mean that the enemy is yet cast into the abyss, but that his sentence is pronounced, and that no further trial is necessary. Thus, to use an illustration (I trust not too familiar for the subject), I recollect hearing of a brigand who got loose from confinement in Italy, and who then committed various depredations. When he was ultimately caught, it was not necessary to have a second trial, for he was already condemned. The illustration fails of course; for God may, in His infinite wisdom, and for His own purposes, allow the enemy to be at large for the time being, and to occupy that bad eminence of "ruler of this world," but he is not the less morally judged.

So far, then, for the world ; and now we may look a little upon what the Comforter can announce to believers.

The Lord had many things to say which the apostles could not then bear, but the infallible Spirit should come, the Spirit of truth, putting everything into its right place in their souls, and guiding them into all the truth. He should not speak from Himself, that is, independently of Jesus, who should send Him from the Father, but He would speak what He should hear, and announce what is coming.

Let us ask first of all, "What *is* coming? What is there in the future?" The answer is at once grand and simple. The future belongs to our glorified Lord, and everything must give place to the introduction of the Firstborn into the habitable world. Many people will talk to you of prophecy, of the Roman earth, of Gog and Magog, and of the confederation of Latin nations against Russia, and yet fall short of an adequate idea of the future. I quite admit that the feeblest Christian has a far clearer insight into political questions than the most practised statesman, for the Christian has the true key to all that shall happen on the earth ; but we have a far wider subject here; that is, the full glory of Christ when He shall reign over the universe.

We all recollect, as an illustration, Pharaoh's dream when the famine was predicted, and the subsequent exaltation of Joseph ; so we foresee the day when all things shall be put under the feet of Joseph's glorious Antitype, when the splendour of His reign shall fill the universe. The future is a very glorious prospect, and what constitutes its beauty for us is the certainty that He, who was dishonoured and crucified here, shall be universally exalted and worshipped.

But then there is an actual knowledge of the Lord in glory in the Father's presence. We know now already, by the Holy Spirit, the things that belong to Jesus where He is. "*He* shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you." We do not wait to be glorified to know the present position of Christ, the things that are His, and our part in them. May we know more and more of the resources of Him who is the Antitype of Joseph, for, by the Spirit, all the riches of God's glory are available *to faith!* The Father's name is then brought in, and adds, in the most blessed way, to the preceding truths. "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that He (the Comforter) shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you." This gives a peculiar charm to the whole passage.

It is not merely the grandeur of the official glory of the Son of man, but the full and blessed acceptance of Christ risen and gone up to the Father. The intimate character of this part of John's gospel has often been before us, and here the Holy Spirit, sent from the glory, where all the Father's heart is known, receives of Christ's and announces it to us. Thrice happy shall we be if we allow nothing to hinder the Spirit's action, for His very mission to us is to announce what belongs to our blessed Lord in the Father's presence.

Thus we can understand what Jesus says, "Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father," and find in these words, as unfolded by the Comforter, the very highest blessing and encouragement. May we know more and more of it!

E. L. B.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

## I.

JAMES iii. 18.

It would seem that there are three possible translations of this scripture; viz., "The fruit of righteousness in peace is sown for them that make peace," or, "The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by them that make peace," and the rendering of the *Authorised Version*. But there is no great difference in the meaning; indeed the second given is practically the same as that in our Bibles. Before seeking to explain it a passage in Isaiah may be cited, which may throw light upon its significance. It is, "The work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever." (Chap. xxxii. 17.) That this refers to Messiah's reign is clear; but the statement contains a similar principle to that in the scripture in James, as may be seen from the context. James contrasts man's wisdom with that which is from above. The characteristics of the latter are, first of all, it is pure; then it is peaceable, gentle, and yielding; next, combined with mercy, it is full of activity in good; and, finally, it is unbiassed and sincere. But this "is the reproduction, in the walk of a man, of the peace and love of God as it was manifested in Christ down here." He was the great Peacemaker, and it was He who pronounced the blessing upon all who should tread in the same path, that they should be called the children of God, inasmuch as they would thereby present moral likeness to Himself, and thus exhibit the divine nature. All such, those

who make peace, sow in peace (for peaceableness is a mark of the divine wisdom of their conduct in opposition to the envying and strife of the earthly wisdom of the natural man—*vv.* 14, 15) the fruit of righteousness. Or if we take the other rendering, "The fruit of righteousness in peace is sown for them that make peace," it will mean that in the path of peacemaking the fruit of righteousness will be produced and enjoyed in peace. The term, "The fruit of righteousness," may be understood from *Phil.* i. 11 and *Rev.* xix. 8, in both of which scriptures holy activity is seen as flowing from righteousness. Indeed, if believers are the righteousness of God in Christ, their lives are to be in moral agreement with this character; and hence every good deed or holy action, of which the Holy Spirit is the source and power, is a fruit of righteousness. *Psalm* xcvi. 11 may be compared with these scriptures where we read, "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." That is, those who are practically righteous and upright in heart before God will find a crop, as it were, of light and gladness, so that every activity of the new nature is like a seed sown to produce further blessing. (*See* 2 *Cor.* ix. 10.)

### III.

#### 2 *TIMOTHY* ii. 12.

It is scarcely a question here of suffering with, or for, Christ. In fact, it is not the usual word for suffering, as, for example, in *Romans* viii. 17. It means rather to endure, or, as it has been well put, "to go through suffering patiently." Consequently it *must* include suffering with Christ, as every Christian does this,

although the measure of it will depend upon his fidelity to Christ, upon his walking in the Spirit, and it *may* also include suffering for Christ. Still the meaning of the word is that which has been given. To deny Christ, we understand to mean, not a sudden fall into temptation, like Peter, but a total and absolute denial, evincing, whatever the profession previously made, that there had never been any reality in the soul. The use of the word "we" will be understood when it is remembered that the Spirit of God always takes us up on the ground of our profession. The question therefore is not raised whether a believer can finally deny Christ, but the teaching is rather that an absolute denial of Him is the unmistakable evidence that the soul had never been converted. It is as the Lord Himself said, "Whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven." So here those who deny Christ will also be denied; that is, they will be finally and entirely rejected. Then it is solemnly added, "If we believe not" (that is, not, as some have contended, if we are unfaithful as Christians, but if we are positively without faith; for we see no reason for departing from the usual significance of the word), "He abideth faithful (not *to us*, but to Himself and to His word): He cannot deny Himself." Whatever our vacillation and changeableness He must ever act in accordance with His own nature, His holiness, and His truth. Therein indeed—in His immutability—lies the eternal security for all who, through grace, have been led to put their trust in Him. That He cannot deny Himself is therefore a precious word of consolation for His feeble, tried, and afflicted people.



"THY NAME IS AS OINTMENT POURED  
FORTH."

IN this language is portrayed the preciousness of Christ (as the Bridegroom) to the bride. This will be at once perceived if the context is examined. "Let Him kiss me," cries the bride, "with the kisses of His mouth: for [now addressing Him directly] Thy love is better than wine." It is not so much the love itself, as the enjoyment of the love, of which she speaks; this it is which is "better than wine." Every renewed heart will respond to this statement, for while the love of Christ is ever beyond all our thoughts, infinite and unspeakable, it is only as we enjoy it that we in any measure enter into or appreciate it. But when the heart expands in the power of the Spirit to its blessed influences and constraint, when it opens, without let or hindrance, to the inflowing of its mighty tides, then the soul learns experimentally the marvellous character of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. Another thing is equally true. The more we taste of the love of Christ, the more we desire it. Every experience of it begets an ardent longing for a larger measure of it. Thus, if the bride had not previously known something of the Bridegroom's affection, she would never have uttered this passionate desire.

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It is, moreover, through the heart that all divine knowledge is received; and hence, as here, the bride passes from the expression of her estimate of the enjoyment of the Bridegroom's love, to a declaration of

the effect of His excellencies and perfections. Her heart apprehends, through the enjoyment of His love, the savour of His "good ointments." Still, it should be remarked, in the language of another, that "however strong" the bride's "affections may be, they are not developed according to the position in which Christian affections, properly so-called, are formed. They differ in this respect. They do not possess the profound repose and sweetness of an affection that flows from a relationship already formed, known, and fully appreciated, the bonds of which are formed and recognized, that counts upon the full and constant acknowledgment of the relationship, and that each party enjoys, as a certain thing, in the heart of the other. The desire of one who loves, and is seeking the affections of the beloved object, is not the sweet, entire, and established affection of the wife, with whom marriage has formed an indissoluble union. To the former, the relationship is only in desire, the consequence of the state of heart; to the latter the state of heart is the consequence of the relationship."

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This distinction should be well weighed and apprehended, for it contains the key to the interpretation of the "Song of songs." But it is still true, whether in the heart of the bride or in that of the Christian, that love is the means, the capacity, of divine knowledge; that, in a word, he that loves most knows most (see 1 Cor. viii. 1-3, Ephes. i. 18—reading "heart," instead of "understanding"). Mary Magdalene is a striking illustration of this point. Peter and John had more light than she, for they (or certainly John) had seen that the sepulchre was empty and believed,

while she was in utter darkness as to the resurrection. And yet it was to Mary that the Lord revealed Himself. The two disciples, having satisfied themselves that the sepulchre was bereft of its prey (and John, at least, believing that the Lord had risen Victor over death), "went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping." Engrossed, in the intensity of her affection, with her object, she was rooted to the spot; having lost Christ she had lost everything, and all the world was but a sepulchre to her if Christ were not living. The state of her heart was right, although her spiritual understanding was not enlightened; and hence it was that the Lord could come and disclose Himself to her, and make her the glad messenger of the blessed tidings that henceforward He associated His brethren with Himself in heaven, before His Father and God, in His own place and relationship.

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If the reader have understood the divine principles which have been enunciated he will easily comprehend the language of the bride, which must now be considered. "Because of the savour of Thy good ointments," she says, "Thy name is as ointment poured forth." The "good ointments" will represent for us the blessed fragrance of His excellent perfections, as seen in His life, in His acts of tenderness and grace, as well as in His words and in His walk of entire dependence and obedience before God in His pathway through this world. They will, doubtless, be apprehended and enjoyed in the intimacies of His own presence, in His manifested relationships with the soul, in His ways and personal dealings. The bride, indeed, could not

have known the savour of His good ointments in any other way. And it is ever true that the nearer we are to Christ the more fully we enter upon the experience of the beloved disciple, who was admitted to the intimacy of reposing upon the Lord's breast, and the clearer will be our perception of His beauty and grace. We may be much impressed by report and testimony, even when at a distance like the Queen of Sheba, but it is only when, like her, we hear and see for ourselves, that we are lost in adoration in the presence of the fragrance of the good ointments. If, therefore, we would be absorbed with the sense of His graces and beauties we must press on with the two disciples, drawn onward by His attractions, to the place where He dwells. Having part with Him there, the savour of His excellencies will constitute the perpetual joy and rejoicing of the soul.

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Before proceeding further it should be noticed that the sweet savour of the life of Christ, as may be gathered from Leviticus ii., was first and foremost for God. The priests might eat of the fine flour, mingled with oil, of which the meat-offering was composed, but all the frankincense thereof was to be burnt with a part of the offering upon the altar, to be an offering made by fire, of a sweet savour unto the Lord. How blessed to know this! If there had not been a single soul upon the face of the earth to delight in the savour of the good ointments of Christ, His life would not have been in vain, inasmuch as it brought glory to God and filled His heart with infinite joy. No! our blessed Lord could not have wasted His sweetness "upon the desert air," because there was

One whose eyes ever rested upon Him with unspeakable complacency, noting with joy the perfection of His every thought, and act, and word, and step. It was this which drew forth from the overflowing heart of God the words, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And the more Christ was tested—and He was tested in every variety of way, even by the holy fire of the altar itself—the more abundantly did His sweet savour flow forth to gratify the heart of His God. We call attention to it, because if the bride is, if we ourselves are, permitted to participate in the enjoyment of the sweet savour of His life, to feed upon the perfections of His entire devotedness to the glory of His God, it is only because God has first had His portion, and because He, in His ineffable grace, has called us to share in His own delight in the pathway and Person of His beloved Son.

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Remark also that it is through the savour of the good ointments that His name, the revelation of all that He is, is spread abroad, as the fragrance of ointment poured forth. In this way, as expressed in the hymn—

"Like fragrance on the breezes  
His name is spread abroad."

Illustrations of this abound in the gospels. "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. And His fame went throughout all Syria." As we read in another place, "And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but He could not be

hid." No! blessed Lord, the savour of Thy good ointments had gone abroad on every hand, making Thee everywhere known, so that Thy name had become as the sweet fragrance of ointment poured forth to all who were burdened with distress and sorrow, to the weary and needy souls amongst Thy people.

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This is doubtless only one side of this precious truth; for what our scripture brings before us is rather the soul's entrancement with the preciousness of Christ through the apprehension of His various excellencies as displayed in Himself and His ways. Still it is always through our needs that we first get to Christ and learn what He is in His love and grace. Then, when our needs have been met and satisfied, we are at leisure, set at liberty from ourselves, and at liberty in His presence, to contemplate Himself. The savour of His good ointments, indeed, scarcely steals into the soul with its gladdening refreshment until every question affecting ourselves and our relationship with God has been settled. In rare cases Christ Himself may be known at the commencement of the spiritual life; but generally speaking, it is a troubled conscience which has to be appeased through the efficacy of the blood of Christ before we are free to survey His glorious perfections. Then, as these surprise and awaken the soul's delight, His name, even the very mention of it, will fill our hearts with the sense of its sweetness and fragrance, and produce such emotions as can only be expressed in adoring worship at His feet.

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Another thing should be mentioned. The savour of the good ointments of Christ may flow out through the

holy lives of His people. Every trait, every perfection exhibited by Himself in His walk through this world may be reproduced in those that are His. Look, for example, at the precepts and exhortations of the epistles. Every one of them has been perfectly exemplified in Christ; and unless this is remembered, so that they may be associated with Himself as the living Word, they will become hard and legal obligations. Christ in us, Christ our life, as set forth in Colossians, is to be followed by the display of Christ through us, in the power of the Holy Ghost. For this we need to be much in His company; for the more we are with Him and occupied with Him, the more we shall be transformed into His likeness, and the more certainly will the savour of His good ointments be spread abroad. And this will be a mighty testimony to what He is; for in this case His name will, through us, be as ointment poured forth; the sweet savour of the name of Christ will flow forth from our walk as well as from our words. The apostle Paul uses the very words in speaking of his preaching, when he says, "We are unto God a sweet savour of Christ"; and in a subsequent chapter (2 Cor. iv.) he points out that testimony is connected with the life as well as with the lip. As we meditate upon it, may we not say, "What a privilege! What a mission, to be sent out into the world to make known the savour of the good ointments of Christ, that His name may, through us, be as ointment poured forth!"

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The effect of this has yet to be noticed: "therefore do the virgins love Thee." The fragrance of the name of Jesus attracts the hearts of the virgins—not of all

God's people, be it observed, but only of the virgins. A very distinct thought is connected in Scripture with the virgin. It is character, moral character, speaking as it does of the absence of defilement, of uncontamination with the polluting influences of the world (see Rev. xiv. 4.) Virgins, therefore, stand in this scripture for those who have been enabled, through grace, to maintain a holy separation from the defilements of the scene through which they are passing, those whose hearts have been kept true to Christ, and guarded in loyalty to Him through the sense of His claims, and of His love. A heart possessed of Christ is fortified against the most seductive allurements of the world. It is absorbing affection which always distinguishes the virgin; and this affection is ever intensified and deepened by every new discovery of the perfectness of Christ. In other words, those who partake of the virgin character always respond to the display of the preciousness of Christ. He being the sole object of their hearts, they are in the condition of soul to enter into and enjoy His beauties. They will detect His presence, the blessed fragrance of His words and His acts, where others will observe nothing. They live in His presence; they are wholly for Him; and hence it is the delight of Christ to disclose Himself to them in such attractive ways as to increase and elicit their affections towards Himself.

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It follows from what has been said that the state of our souls may be discerned by the effect produced upon us by the name of Jesus. If our hearts are careless and irresponsive when He is the subject of conversation or presentation, we cannot be in communion with the



heart of God. Why even the name of a beloved object on earth will produce pleasurable emotions. How much more should the name of Christ, the object of God's heart—and also of ours if we know Him—awaken within us holy feelings of delight, which can only be expressed in praise and adoration!

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## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN,

### CHAPTERS i., ii. 2.

THIS part of the first Epistle of John forms a preface to the rest of the book, and we may notice at once three grand subjects in verses 1-4, 5-7, 8-ii. 2.

These are:

1. Full communion with the Father and Son—perfect love.
2. God is light, and our walk in the light.
3. The question of sin, and the position of Jesus Christ as Advocate.

These three well-known subjects have, no doubt, often occupied our attention; but it may be well to go over them again, looking to the Lord to bless them to us.

Nothing is lost as to the eternal deity of our Lord in observing the *characteristic* force of the first verses. The character of that eternal life, which was such as was with the Father, is brought into prominence; and so far from our losing sight of the divine glory of the Person in whom this life was manifested, that very glory is enhanced by this special and blessed teaching as to the true nature of eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to the apostles.

But the apostles declare it to us, that our joy may be full. They had themselves the deep and blessed knowledge of that which they announced. I suppose the case of a father writing to his son in military service in a foreign land. The letter will contain many expressions of affection, and the young man who receives the letter will alone be able to understand its meaning. The messenger, or postman, who brings the letter might be glad to witness the joy of the receiver's heart, but he would not enter into this peculiar joy himself. In the case of the apostles announcing *their* message, however, it is very different, for they entered into the deep blessedness of what they communicated. Their own joy was full, and they announced full joy to their hearers.

Indeed no higher joy could be known than that which flows from communion with divine Persons. No doubt we are still here in an evil world, but our communion has nothing at all to do with the world and its principles, but belongs to the Father's house, where the Son of the Father is known. Our communion is with divine Persons, and truly outside the world, which might be well represented by a huge city having over its principal gate this inscription, "*No admittance to God, or to Christ.*" The city is grand enough, and full of the arts, sciences, religion, steeples, domes, minarets, the crescent and the cross, but the Father is excluded. Now our communion *is* with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

But now we have another thing to observe, that is the message of verse 5: "God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all." The light manifests everything, and God has come out, revealed as light, in His own

blessed nature, and we are in the light, as He is in the light. Let us not confound this with the unapproachable light of 1 Timothy vi. 16. In this latter passage we have the essential Deity which no man can see, whereas in John's epistle it is the *revelation* of the divine nature, and our being brought into the light, according to God's thoughts.

It is not said here, "If we sin, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us," but, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

True fellowship is in the light, and I will give a very simple illustration to shew the effect of the light. Supposing that several persons come into a dark room, and that a book is taken off the table; each one might give his opinion, and surmise that the book was "a Testament," "a French grammar," "a dictionary," &c. Lights being brought, the book is found to be a Testament, and all divergence of opinion is at an end. This is a poor illustration, but it is very clear that we need to be in the light to have communion one with another; and at the same time it is there, in the light, that we know the full and permanent value of the blood of Jesus Christ, which has answered to all our need. We are in the light on the ground of its value, and it is there (in the light) that its inestimable value is known.

Now we cannot say that we have no sin; nor can we say that we have not sinned. How shall this full and blessed communion be maintained with a God who is Light as well as Love? How shall we, who cannot say that we have no sin, be maintained in communion with

the Father, in whose presence we are, in full light? Nothing of the character of pure light has been lost by the relationship of Father being established with us; and how are we, who still have sin in us, to be kept in the joy of such a place?

It is here that the advocacy of Christ is introduced; and let us notice that "Advocate" does not fully give the meaning of the word Paraclete in ii. 1. When we talk of advocates we are usually given to limit the force of the word to those who plead in a law court, and this would be quite an inadequate thought in the passage before us. We have One who represents us, who has all our affairs (our highest, most blessed interests) in His hands, and who never fails in His interest in us. As an old Roman patrician represented his plebeian clients, having all that concerned them in his hands, so does the Lord Jesus Christ hold all that concerns us in His own power.

The illustration of a Roman patron is, after all, a feeble one, for we have in *our* heavenly Representative one who constantly leads us to judge and confess our sins—to judge *ourselves* in the case of any levity or allowed evil—and who, by a deep work in our souls, brings us back to communion if this has been interrupted.

The ninth verse of the first chapter is very general and abstract, and applies to the full and whole confession of sins at the beginning of, and during, our course. But the apostle writes that we should not sin; there is a full and perfect provision for our walk though sin be in us, and He who is the propitiation for our sins, and for the whole world, is Jesus Christ the righteous. He is seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high,

according to the righteousness of God, and upon the ground of that very righteousness He represents us before the Father.

Confession is a very serious thing, for one is made to feel that the very sin that interrupted the communion cost untold agony to Him who bore it upon the cross; so God is faithful and just to forgive it, in virtue of the deep, atoning work of our Lord.

May we be more earnest, more truly serious, in walking, so that full communion may be maintained between our souls and the Father! E. L. B.

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## CHRISTIAN OBEDIENCE.

(Concluded from page 77.)

LASTLY, I would look at what the Word connects with obedience, as the abounding portion of our hearts to be enjoyed in the path of it, and not to be known out of it. We have seen it as the principle, simple but of such far-reaching effect in the soul's history, of rest practically realized, as shewn us *first in the experience of the blessed Lord Himself*. (Matt. xi.) And this is true in every part of the blessing. For all flows out of the fact, so immense in itself, that it is of His own life and nature we live, of which His path here was the perfect expression and revelation.

Thus if in Phil. ii. 12, "as ye have always obeyed" was the condition, whether under apostolic care, as when Paul was with them, or now much more in its absence, of their deliverance from all the present allowed power of the enemy, the *mind* of obedience (as well as of self-emptiness) was expressed in Him,

who, being found in fashion as a man, humbled Himself, becoming *obedient* unto death, even the death of the cross (verses 5-8). Here was the wonderful pattern for the saints. In the path of obedience the apostle had helped them to work out their salvation; they had only to go on in it now, that he was gone, and work out their own salvation \* "with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both the willing and the working according to His good pleasure." The Lord's path had been the complete illustration of the principle; and the verses following (14-16) are just the reproduction in the saints of the blessed traits of His own life. His name and testimony involve us in a conflict which is *His* with Satan: the issue is not uncertain; we are on the winning side; He will bruise him under our feet shortly. But the enemy works by wiles; it is well not to be ignorant of his devices; fear and trembling have their wholesome place if we have learned to distrust ourselves; but we have only to be occupied with carrying out God's will in obedience, and are carried through all safely to the heavenly glory of Christ, which is the salvation of the Epistle.

Still it is in the Gospel of John, where the obedience of Christ has been brought out to the full, that we find the full consequences in blessing of its being wrought in us; and first, in chap. xiv. This precious instruction of the Lord opens out to us the Father's house, as connected first with the full revelation there *had been* of the Father in the Son come down here—"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father"; then with the place He was *about to take* as going to the Father on

\* In contrast to Paul's, not to God's.

the ground of accomplished redemption, "I go to prepare a place for you"; and lastly, with His *coming again* to receive us to Himself there. But meanwhile, between His going away and coming again, the Holy Spirit is promised as the power of our enjoyment of the new place, that it may become the present home of hearts that miss the Lord out of *this* place. All that follows from v. 16 is the effect of the Holy Spirit having been given us; we should not be left orphans, for the Lord Himself would come *to us*, to be known in a way He could not have been to the disciples. When the world saw Him no more we should see Him, and this intimately connected with living of His life—"Ye see me; because I live, ye shall live also." And further, "At that day ye shall know that I am in the Father, and ye in me and I in you." If the Son has His place in the Father by the glory of His person, we have ours in Him, not only in divine righteousness before God, but—inseparably connected with such a position—He in us, as participating in His life and nature, now to be expressed in this world.

Now from verse 20 we have the path, the only possible one, in which the Spirit dwelling in us, and ungrieved, can be the power of the enjoyment of all this wonderful blessing. Flowing from a dependent life in Him it is but the path of that life, the reproduction in us of what constituted the life in Him, as verse 31 shows it—love to the Father and obedience. And so verse 21, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." Thus the obedience of love in us, being of His own life, brings with it the manifestation of the Lord Himself. Then when the thought of such a private manifestation to

one, and not to another, clashed with Jewish thoughts of an appearing in glory that would be public and before all, the Lord in reply to Jude only deepens the character of the obedience, "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." The word differs from the commandments of Christ only in that it is the full revelation of His mind, whereas these have to do with details; as, for instance, the oft-repeated one, that we love one another. There is not a *commandment* for everything, but His *word* covers the whole range of the life, leaving no room for the subtle plea of *self-will*, that His will is not revealed. Love keeping His word then brings with it not only the manifestation of the Son, but the coming of the Father and the Son to make their abode with the obedient one. So that the two characteristic joys of what is *before* us, the Father's "abodes" (for it is the same word in verses 2 and 23) and the Son's presence, are brought down to our hearts, and made the present portion, in the power of the Spirit, of the obedience of love—this obedience being but the true expression of the life we now possess in the Son.

Chapter xv. confirms the wonderful character of the path set before us. There (*v.* 9) we learn the only measure of His love—it is the Father's love to Him. But His desire is that we should *abide* in it—be in the enjoyment of it continually; for though the love does not depend upon our walk, the whole realization of it does: "If ye *keep my commandments*, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might be in



you, and your joy full." It is but the same path of the same life, now true in Him and in us, leading into the same joy—the joy He had in the Father's love.

One thing more is connected with it in verse 14, "Ye are my friends, *if ye do whatsoever I command you.*" Oh, how unspeakable the privilege! to be treated not as servants who receive their orders, and that is all, but as the trusted friends of Christ to whom He communicates His mind—all things that He has heard of the Father—so as to be the depositaries of it in a world that has seen and hated both Him and the Father, and be formed by it as witnesses for Him.

The Epistle adds its testimony to the full blessedness found in walking according to our wholly new order of being as of a new creation in Christ.

In chap. ii. we have already seen this to be the principle upon which the walk of Christ is the pattern of the Christian's. I look at it again as to the wonderful consequences flowing out of it. "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." This is not given us as a test by which we may know *whether* we know Him—as often falsely used to lead souls not in the liberty of grace into doubt and perplexity; for the fact that we are addressed as to the characteristics of the divine nature assumes that we are partakers of it; it is impossible to conceive anything of a nature we do not possess, as that of angels. But it enables us to judge (as do all the tests of the Epistle) the pretensions of human wisdom and the like to have part in Christian privilege when Christ is unknown. For how can we know Him save as having

His life and living of it? Certain it is that man in the flesh does not know Him—"the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God"; but as we have seen everywhere that life consisted of obedience. Hence "he that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him"; while, on the other hand, every footstep in the path of obedience confirms and deepens in the soul the knowledge that we have of Him.

The next verse shews the character of the knowledge contemplated; it is not that of ordinary acquaintance, but of communion with the One we know in partaking of His nature: "Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected; hereby know we that we are in Him." Keeping His word is not different from keeping His commandments—"The old commandment is the word which ye have heard"—but only carries the obedience further, as in John xiv. His word is that in which all that He is in His own nature of love was perfectly expressed. That love is now shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit given to us—God, who is love, thus dwelling in us. In keeping the word then, which is the revelation of the *love*, there is nothing to hinder the full realization of it; it is perfected in us, and we know that we are in Him. Again, it is but His own path, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked." Oh for hearts in the power of the Spirit to enter into the character of that walk a little more! So walking—the normal life of the Christian—our heart condemns us not; we have confidence toward God; we are formed by His mind in the intimacy of

the confidence in which we walk, and "whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we *keep His commandments*, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight." (Chap. iii. 16-22, compare John viii. 29.) And this leads into the last blessed consequence of such a life and path, as brought out in the last verse—there is nothing beyond it forever—"He that keepeth His commandments *dwelleth* in Him." The heart first drawn to Him by all the infinite grace revealed in Him, as its refuge from itself, and its hiding-place, now in the path of obedience—that is, of the divine nature—knows Him as its dwelling-place and home; the richest fruit individually of all the ways of that grace with us. It is surely an inestimable joy that may thus be our portion now. But as essential to it, in the possession of the divine nature, "He dwells in us," and we know it "by the Spirit which He hath given us"—the power of the manifestation of all that is true of that nature, and that nothing else may be tolerated as the life of the Christian.

And now, in closing, I would put it to myself as to my beloved brethren: How are our hearts affected by such a calling that, setting us *in* Christ by place, and *as* Christ by life, nature, and relationship before God and the Father, can give us no other path here than that in which He walked, doing always those things that pleased Him? It is profitable for our souls to pass and repass our life in review before God in the light of such an obedience, and consider how much of it would have been left out, how many things in word, action, or thought would never have occurred if Christ had been filling our hearts. Deeply humbling as such a review of the past must be to each of us,

it is well if it only shuts us up the more absolutely to the grace that is in Him, for the present and for what may lie before us; that, if sanctified to the obedience of Jesus Christ, and seeing it flows from and is alone true of the life we have in Him, we may seek to realize it, not by effort but by abiding in Him. But this abiding in Him must be *where* He is; and dwelling there in heart and spirit with Him, we shall be formed by the things that are there—the natural home and sphere of the life we possess—so as to live out nothing but that life in a sphere where everything is contrary to it. “I am crucified with Christ: but I live; yet no more I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. ii. 20.) May we each one know more of such a life—Christ become everything to us as object, in whom He is our life. (Col. iii. 11.)

J. A. T.

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## THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF CHRIST.

CHRIST alone could pass through death, and exhaust its strength, when in it, as shedding the blood of the everlasting covenant; and He alone could rise again from death, in the reality of the power of the life that was in Him, “for in Him was life.” But it was proper divine power by which this was done. God raised Christ from the dead, testimony of His full acceptance of His work. Christ, being God, could say: “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up”; nor was it possible that He could

be holden of death. But it is not by any force of spiritual life, as man, that He raised Himself; though we know, as He laid it down of Himself, so He took it again, and this by commandment received of the Father—so that in this we cannot separate the deity and humanity—I speak of the act, not of His Person. He had power to take it again, but it was still obedience; we feel at every step no one knows the Son but the Father. He has opened this way; He has converted death into a power that destroys the flesh which shackles us, and a deliverance from that in us which gives advantage to the enemy with whom we are to fight, being thenceforward brought into Canaan. Therefore the apostle says, “All things are yours, whether life or death.” Now, every true Christian is dead and risen in Christ; the knowing and realising it is another thing. But the Word of God sets Christian privilege before us according to its real power in Christ.

J. N. D.

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## RESPONSIBILITY IN TESTIMONY.

IF those to whom God in His grace has committed a testimony do not employ this testimony in behalf of others according to the grace that bestowed it, they will soon become unfaithful in their own walk before God. If they duly acknowledged God they would feel bound to make known His name, to impart this blessing to others. If they do not own His glory and His grace they will assuredly be unable to maintain their own walk before Him. God, who is full of grace, being our only Strength, it cannot be otherwise.

J. N. D.

## "NOW"—"THEN."

ROM. viii. 18 ; 2 COR. iv. 17.

*Now* the bitter partings, eyes bedimmed with tears,  
 Hearts o'erwhelmed with sorrow, filled with doubts and fears ;  
*Now* the barren desert, scene of strife and sin,  
*Now* the noise of battle, conflict's weary din.

*Then* the blessed meetings, tears all wiped away,  
 Hearts with joy o'erflowing ; bright, unclouded day ;  
*Then* to drink the fountain, river of God's grace,  
 No more toil and sorrow, we "shall see His face."

*Now* the pain and suffering, day of shame and loss,  
*Now* the rugged valley, shadowed by the cross ;  
 Still we tread the desert where God's Son has been,  
 But our joys and treasures are outside this scene.

*Then* all suffering vanished, loss turned into gain,  
*Then* the songs of triumph, death no more shall reign ;  
*Then* the weary pilgrim shall find perfect rest  
 In God's wondrous favour—how supremely blest !

*Now* sore disappointments, all is changing here,  
 Nought the world can offer gives us lasting cheer ;  
 All is void and empty, nought can satisfy,  
 And earth's fairest flow'rets only droop and die.

*Then* no disappointments to that scene can come,  
 Heavenly pleasures fade not in yon blessed home ;  
 Crowns and palms of victory all the ransomed bear,  
 Peace and joy eternal speak of Jesus there.

Let us still press onward to the rest above,  
 Cheered *now* in the desert by God's ceaseless love ;  
*Then* with joy before Him all the path to trace,  
 How He led and kept us in His matchless grace.

How our lips shall praise Him when the race is run,  
 When we hear Him utter those sweet words, "Well done,"  
 All the pain and suffering of this "little while"  
 Blessedly rewarded by His radiant smile. F. E. L. B.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

## I.

## PSALM lxxxv. 10.

IT is very evident from the first three verses that this Psalm is prophetic of the restoration of Israel. The exercises of the remnant, preceding God's intervention on their behalf, are given in the next four verses, and then we have a statement of the divine principles on which God has acted in bringing back the captivity of Jacob, and in forgiving the iniquity of His people. They are contained in v. 10: "Mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." A few words will explain their nature. God had made certain absolute and unconditional promises to Israel. (See Genesis xv. 18-21; xvii. 1-8.) But after Sinai, the possession of their inheritance, and their blessing in the land were dependent upon their obedience to the law. Everything therefore was now connected with the fulfilment of the responsibility which they had voluntarily undertaken. (Exodus xix. 3-8.) How grievously they failed, even before the terms of the law had reached the camp, as well as after they had been put into the possession of their inheritance, is fully recorded in their history in the Scriptures. They had thus forfeited everything on the ground of their responsibility, and they were entitled to nothing but judgment. And when Christ came, "a Minister of the circumcision *for the truth of God*, to confirm the promises made unto the fathers," they incurred the

crowning guilt of all by His rejection and crucifixion. The consequence was, as the apostle shows in Rom. xi., that, having lost all claim upon the truth of God, they were as much the objects of mercy as the poor Gentiles. And God could exercise, and righteously exercise, mercy towards them, inasmuch as Christ died for "that nation." When therefore God takes up Israel again in a future day, He will, on the foundation of the death and resurrection of Christ, accomplish in His faithfulness, all His promises made to the fathers, and at the same time display His mercy in forgiving His guilty, yet beloved, people. Mercy and truth will then meet together. It is then Israel will cry, "Thy mercy is great above the heavens: and Thy truth reacheth unto the clouds." (Psalm cviii. 4.) Righteousness and peace, moreover, will at the same time be exhibited in happy union. (Compare Isaiah xxxii. 17.) For God has been so abundantly glorified in the death of Christ, that He can become the righteousness of those who will have none of their own: "This is His name whereby He shall be called, the Lord our righteousness." Peace will thus be secured to Israel, as indeed it is now to the believer, through the righteousness of God as revealed in the resurrection and exaltation of our blessed Lord. (Compare Rom. iv. 23-25; v. 1.) It may be added that Peter expressly speaks of God's righteousness in the blessing of Jewish believers: "To them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"—words which, we apprehend, could not have been used in the same way to Gentile Christians. This righteousness will be manifested before the whole world when He that scattered Israel shall gather them



out of all lands and establish them in blessing, according to the thoughts of His own heart, under the sway of their glorious Messiah, when there will be "abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth."

## II.

## 2 CORINTHIANS v. 21.

Two or three preliminary remarks will help to the understanding of this scripture. First, it is essential to notice that the apostle is speaking of man's state, not of his guilt. This is seen from verse 14, "If one died for all, *then were all dead.*" Secondly, the verse refers to a direct action of God in relation to Christ: "He hath made Him to be sin for us"; and the word "made" in this clause is entirely different from that so rendered in the next clause. "Made" must be retained in its full and proper force in the first instance; in the second, it is more properly rendered "become" — "become the righteousness of God in Him." It is therefore beyond a doubt that the apostle is setting forth that solemn transaction on the cross when God caused the judgment due to man's sinful estate and condition to fall upon Christ. That He also bore the sins of His people at the same time is blessedly true, but it is not the aspect of His death here presented. All were "dead," as the consequence and fruit of sin (Rom. v. 12); and Christ came and "died for all," offering Himself as a voluntary victim to bear all that the glory of God required in judgment. He was thus "made sin," fully identified by God with the state of those for whom He suffered. None but One, let it be reverently said, who was intrinsically holy, and none

but He, who was more than man, could either have so offered Himself, or have borne such unsparing judgment. And never, let it be added, did His perfections, His devotedness to the glory of God at all costs, His whole-hearted obedience, His grace, and His unquenchable love shine forth so resplendently. Up till this moment He had always been in entire communion with His Father, and in the unbounded sense of His delight; now He endured the hiding of God's face, and yet unfalteringly and perfectly, yea, divinely, He accomplished the whole of God's will in this new place, and under these new circumstances. It was indeed the climax of the perfection of His ever-perfect obedience; and hence in His death He furnished the Father, as is often said, with a new motive for the expression of His love. "Made sin" then is to be confined to what Christ endured on the cross from God, to whom He had presented Himself for this purpose, on account of our state and condition. And it is this truth which formed the essential foundation of the glorious ministry of reconciliation. There had been a preparation for this: "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation." (v. 19.) Since, moreover, Christ was no longer here, and had charged him with the mission, the apostle could proclaim himself an ambassador for Christ, "as though God did beseech by us"; and consequently he went forth everywhere beseeching men to be reconciled to God. In this blessed mission he could tell them of the immutable basis which God Himself had laid in the cross of Christ for their reconciliation; and on which all who bowed to

the message might become the righteousness of God in Christ. Such would be the response of God to the One who had been made sin for His glory. His first answer to it (for therein is His righteousness displayed) is seen in the place Christ now occupies at His right hand. "If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him." But He was made sin for us, and on this account all believers will be the eternal expression of God's righteousness in Christ. Nothing short of this would satisfy the heart of God in response to the work of His beloved Son, or fully declare His righteousness. It is the moral state of the new creation, where old things have passed away, and where all things have become new—the unhindered display of the glory of God.

## III.

2 Cor. v. 3.

No greater mistake can be made than to suppose that the same word in different Scriptures has always the same significance. The context in each case, and the character of the truth unfolded, have always to be considered. Hence the term "naked" in Gen. iii. and in our passage must be interpreted on this principle, and it will be found in both instances that it is a contrast with a clothed condition. In Genesis, as was recently explained, it is moral nakedness in contrast with the state of Adam and Eve after they were clothed with skins by God Himself. In 2 Cor., as may be plainly seen, the contrast is between being clothed with the resurrection body and being without it. "We know," says the apostle, "that if our earthly house

of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this (the earthly house of this tabernacle) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that *being clothed* we shall not be found naked." Here the Spirit of God leads Paul to speak of the blessedness of being "clothed upon" (v. 4) at the Lord's coming, when, without passing through death, mortality would be swallowed up of life, and he would not be found naked as a disembodied spirit. Elsewhere (Phil. i.), when the possibility of death was staring him in the face, he could say that he desired to depart and be with Christ, which would be "far better." Great, however, as his gain would be, if he thus departed, it was not to be compared (for it is not a perfect state nor the full fruition of redemption) with being "clothed upon with our house which is from heaven." It will be thus seen that in this scripture to be "naked" refers to the state of saints who have departed to be with Christ, and are waiting for the fuller blessedness connected with the possession of the house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens—their resurrection bodies.

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"SELF-EXALTATION is neither possible nor desired in the presence and enjoyment of God." Hence the nearer we are to Christ the more the humility displayed. It is indeed the language of a hymn:

"The more Thy glories strike mine eye,  
The humbler I shall lie."

## THE \* NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME.

SOMETIMES the question is raised as to what this name is; but whether it be the name of JESUS—as seems probable, if the amended reading be adopted—or not, its significance is very apparent. A passage from the epistle to the Ephesians will explain this. In connection with the display of the exceeding greatness of God's power "to us-ward who believe, according to . . . His mighty power, which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead," the apostle proceeds, "and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, *and every name that is named*, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." (Chap. i. 19-21.) Here the meaning evidently is that, whatever the exaltation or dignity of any of the heavenly hierarchies or intelligences, Christ as the glorified Man has been set above them all. Among the vast number of celestial beings He is absolutely supreme. The rendering "*far above*" may not be exactly justified by the word used; but we cannot doubt that our translators seized its spirit in seeking to express that there was no second to the glorified Christ, that His exaltation is so unspeakable that all the highest gradations of angelic existences are far beneath His feet. Similarly in Philippians "the name which is above every name" will betoken the absolute

\* Some MSS. read "the" instead of "a" name; and the *Revised Version* has adopted it.

supremacy in the whole universe of the glorified Christ as Lord. Nothing short of this will satisfy the terms of this scripture.

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This will be more readily understood if we consider the place and connection in which these words are found. In a sense the passage from *v. 5* to *v. 11* is complete in itself. It grows out from previous exhortations; and herein is the marvel that all this blessed unfolding of the Person, of the character of the incarnation of Christ, His humiliation and consequent exaltation, should be given to enforce the apostle's exhortation that the mind "which was also in Christ Jesus," seen in His coming "from Godhead's fullest glory, down to Calvary's depth of woe," should be before believers as their example! Let us then ponder upon it, for the more it is considered the more deeply will it impress itself upon our souls. In a past eternity He, who has been down here as the humbled One, was—subsisted—in the form of God. Such a statement, however far beyond the utmost range of all our thoughts, cannot signify less than His absolute and essential Deity. It speaks of His eternal existence as God, even as John says of the Word, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." On this blessed truth hangs the whole truth of revelation and redemption. To surrender it would be to lose the sun from the solar system, and thus to bring in darkness, chaos, and destruction. On this very account controversy has raged in all ages around the Person of Christ. Now His humanity, and now His Deity has been obscured if not denied. Faith meets

all the arguments of man by the simple statements of the Word of God.

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If, however, the Deity of our blessed Lord is here introduced, it is but to magnify His grace and self-humiliation; for the assertion of it is followed immediately by words of transcendent importance. First, He "thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but," secondly, "made Himself of no reputation," or, more literally and exactly, "emptied Himself." The first clause will mean that although He subsisted in the form of God, He did not use it for self-exaltation, "did not," as one has translated it, "esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God." It is, doubtless, a contrast to Adam, who fell into Satan's snare of seeking to exalt himself, to be "as gods, knowing good and evil." Adam being a man sought to exalt himself; Christ being God humbled Himself. How blessed the contrast! This was the mind which was in Christ Jesus; and the next clause—"but emptied Himself"—contains the first expression of that mind. It must be with unshodden feet (for the place is holy) that such a statement must be approached. Of what, then, did He who subsisted in the form of God empty Himself? It has been lately written that He emptied Himself of "divine prerogatives"; others have taught that the "emptying" included His divine attributes. Far be the thought! To admit it is certainly to becloud the essential truth of His deity, and to open the door to rationalism in its worst forms. For what are attributes? They are the characteristics of Deity, so that to empty Himself of the former is to lay aside the latter. No! a thousand

times, no! As another has said, "The essential being of Godhead cannot change. His emptying Himself applied to the form."

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The next sentences will make this plain, describing, as they do the process and the effect of the emptying: He "took upon Him the form of a servant and was made (rather, 'became'—it was His own voluntary, and, indeed, divine act) in the likeness of men." It was as God He emptied Himself, and now these words present Him to us after He had done so; for we see Him in the likeness of men, and in form as a "bondsmen." This includes the whole truth of the incarnation, and through it we are enabled to form some estimate, however inadequate, of the immensity of the descent from "the form of God" to the "form of a servant." None but God was equal to such condescension and grace, for it was really the exhibition of divine love in the midst of sinners, and none but God could have made such a stoop, for man is limited to his own form and mode of existence. In the fact of the incarnation, therefore, we behold one of the glorious mysteries of redemption. And while unable to grasp its full and far-reaching significance, we yet learn that the lower Christ went down, the more brightly the effulgence of His divine glory shone forth! For God is light and God is love; and where do we behold this? Surely in Him who took upon Him the bondsman's form. In every step of His pathway, in His words of grace and truth, in His works of power and mercy, light and love in all their perfection may be perceived by the opened eye; and the divinely-instructed heart is constrained to exclaim, Lo! God is there.



As God, it has already been said, He emptied Himself, and now we learn that as man He humbled Himself. Indeed, the whole life of our blessed Lord as man is compressed into the words, "He humbled Himself"; for it is not, as in our translation, *and* became obedient unto death, but *becoming* so, that is in humbling Himself: and then, to bring out the full character of the humiliation, it is added, "even the death of the cross." It was a low place indeed He took when He assumed a bondsman's form; but how much lower when, "being found in fashion as a man," He went down to the shameful death of the cross! And let us again remind ourselves in our meditations, while we wonder and adore in the presence of such infinite condescension, that Christ is here presented as our example. The question may well be asked, in the beautiful language of another, "Are not our affections occupied and assimilated in dwelling with delight on what Jesus was here below? We admire, are humbled, and become conformed to Him through grace. Head and source of this life in us, the display of its perfection in Him draws forth and develops its energies and lowliness in us. For who could be proud in fellowship with the humble Jesus? Humble, He would teach us to take the lowest place, but that He has taken it Himself, the privilege of His perfect grace. Blessed Master, may we at least be near to and hidden in Thee."

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Such is the wondrous foundation on which the present exaltation of Christ is based. That there is a direct connection between the two is seen from the word "wherefore," which also expresses to us the

estimate of God's heart of the self-humbling of Christ. Many grounds of the glory of Christ are given in Scripture. His worthiness, for example, is celebrated in Revelation v., in virtue of the redemption which He had secured through His death, and through the efficacy of His blood. He Himself claims to be glorified in John xvii. because He had glorified the Father on the earth, and had finished the work which had been given Him to do. Here it is quite another aspect. It is God Himself stepping in, in the joy of His heart, in His delight in the One who had so humbled Himself, and raising Him to those heights of glory which He now occupies; and the act proclaims aloud throughout the whole universe that no other position would have been commensurate with His deserts, that He who went down the lowest of all must have the highest place. Morally it is the exemplification of the principle, in all its perfection, which the Lord Himself enunciated—"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." It may then be said that His being highly exalted was but His meed and crown. The apostle in his epistle to the Ephesians touches upon another side of this great subject. There he tells us that He who descended into the lower parts of the earth is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. (Chap. iv. 9, 10.) While we may not be able to fathom this profound language, it cannot mean less than that, in virtue of the humiliation of Christ, and of the work He thereby effected for the accomplishment of the counsels of God, He will eventually flood the whole universe with His own redemption-glory. And this, and nothing short of this, will be God's answer to the humiliation of His beloved Son.

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Returning to our Scripture, we learn that "the name which is above every name" is given Him as a part of His exaltation; nay, that it is God's own estimate of what was due to the One who had humbled Himself and become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. It is thus the worthiness of Christ shown out by the place which God has given Him to occupy. We say, "given Him to occupy," because the presentation here is that of His exaltation as Man, as the consequence of His perfect obedience and entire devotedness to the glory of God through the whole of His pathway on earth up to, and including, death. What "the name" is, or whether it is the name of Jesus, it has already been remarked, cannot be decided; and, indeed, it is the thing signified to which the Spirit of God would direct our attention. The significance, let it be repeated, is that, whatever exalted beings may surround the heavenly throne, the glorified Jesus is above and beyond them all. The name accorded to Him, in virtue of His humiliation, bespeaks a dignity which far transcends the most exalted ranks of the celestial host, and tells, moreover, that He is supreme in all the worlds which constitute the universe of God. If then this position which He now fills is expressive of God's delight in the once humbled Christ, will it not also awaken the delight of God's people, as they contemplate Him in that state and glory? It is in the grace of our God we are called to share in His own delight in His beloved Son; and the enjoyment of this, however feeble its measure, is really the foretaste—the commencement—of heavenly joys, which, filling the heart, even while treading the sands of the wilderness, can only find an outlet through the channel of worship and song.

## THE COMING OF THE LORD.

## A READING.

REVELATION xxii. 16, 17.

IN the closing testimony the Church, as in the remnant character, is characterized by the brightest trait of the original. Do you understand that? A remnant now is characterized by fidelity to Christ, the brightest trait at the beginning. Many think that a remnant is only the fag end, but it is not so in Scripture. The scripture I give you is Isaiah vi. 13: "In it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them."

Would Simeon and Anna be the remnant?

Yes.

What did you say the tenth was?

The tenth is God's right. He has a right to the tenth. The tenth was called the best of the spoil. That which Abraham gave to Melchisedek he was entitled to as conqueror. Thus tithes came in. The royal priest received the tithes.

Is the Lord's coming the hope of the Church?

Yes. "This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." The Thessalonians were waiting for God's Son from heaven. The Lord said of John that he was to tarry until He came, and as soon as the book of Revelation was given this was fulfilled, because everything was in its place preparatory to His coming. Things may have developed since, but there is nothing new.

Then you overleap the rapture?

Oh, no, I do not! The rapture is before the dawn of the day; it is not the day. The rapture occupies some too exclusively. They are thinking only of being taken out of everything here.

Many hold that everything has been fulfilled, and that we are on the eve of the appearing, and that it may take place at any moment. What is the effect of that? That the Church has passed through the tribulation already.

Of course that is not true! The Church could not be in the tribulation. Many cannot see that the Church and Christ are one. Some speak of the coming of the Lord as if it were only to take them out of their present trouble. That is not the idea here. As far as I understand, John revives the truth entrusted to Paul. He begins with the Church at Ephesus. The whole book is written to the seven churches, and he begins at the chief one. It had lost its first love; Christ was no longer the absorbing object. The one attractive object to the heart of the bride is Christ. The candlestick has been taken away. If you look around you see many trying to recover the candlestick, to be acknowledged by the world.

What would you say when we speak of being a testimony?

To be acknowledged by the world is at the bottom of that saying.

Do you take the morning star to be a substitution for the candlestick?

Yes. To Thyatira was given the morning star. From Thyatira down to Laodicea the rewards, for the most part, are connected with the kingdom. The great

thing is to have the Lord as the object of your heart. That is the point here. You must take in the whole passage—"I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

What do you understand by "the root and the offspring of David"?

He is the rightful King. In Philadelphia you find He has the key of David. What does that mean? He, though the rejected King, has opened the way through everything, notwithstanding all the opposition. He is coming to reign. The last type of the Church in the Old Testament is Abigail, and she ministers of the substance of Nabal to the rejected king. That is what you and I ought to do.

Would you mind telling us what that means—the substance of Nabal ministered to David?

Whatever would meet his necessity. She was thinking of the rejected king. The application to-day is, that instead of spending your time and means for your own benefit, you are engrossed with Christ and His saints. A type is but a shadow.

Would you explain the two things—the "root" and the "star"?

He (Christ) is the King, but besides being the King you get concurrently that He is coming. This the morning star indicates. If in natural life you were to hear, "There's the morning star," you would know that the day was at hand. If you were weary with a long night of travel, you would be glad to see the morning star. It is the harbinger of the coming day. I was glad to see a remark of Mr. Darby's the other day, that the rapture was only spoken of in Thessalonians, and possibly referred to in John xiv. 3. No one can

deny that if you have the coming you must have the rapture.

But might we not, with regard to the rapture, have communion with the joy of Christ in receiving His people?

I have no doubt it is lovely in its order. The Thessalonians were in trouble because they thought their Christian friends would not be in the kingdom because they had died. They were waiting for God's Son from heaven, but they knew nothing of the rapture. They thought that those who died would not be in the kingdom. The rapture shows the Lord's tender love. "The dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds." We shall all go up together. The beginning of His power—the first demonstration of it—is for us. There is no allusion to the Lord's coming in Ephesians. Philippians is the experience of a heavenly man. We are united to Christ in the brightest spot, but down here in the wilderness we have a body of humiliation. If the Lord should come we should have a glorious body. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." He has taken to Himself His great power. The rapture is the first wave of His power. Do you see? We cannot limit the power to that event. It is a most touching mark of His love, and He will have us to share with Him at once.

That is, it is the application to our bodies, of the same power that He will use afterwards to subdue all things unto Himself?

Exactly. But one has very little heart for Christ if he does not look beyond the rapture. That is mainly our own part. The great fact of the Lord's coming is lost sight of, if it is only to take us out of trouble. The Bride has "made herself ready." No one is ready to say "come," but the Bride. No one else is ready for the Lord.

There is no responsibility in the rapture?

Exactly. Now you use the right word; the Lord's coming is to reign. He is the King. We are looking for Christ to reign. Hence the prayer, "The very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."\* I do not think I can explain it, but the way you are found when the Lord comes affects your position with the Lord when He reigns.

That is, during the kingdom only?

Your place never alters in the new Jerusalem. Your place in the kingdom is distinct from your place in heaven. The youngest babe is as well off in heaven as Paul. Suppose a man could say "I have been living for the Lord for forty years—all except these last six months." Well, I am afraid the last six months will tell against him. I do not say he will lose the forty years, but we read, "That . . . we may . . . not be ashamed before Him at His coming." The coming there is the Lord's appearing.

Do I understand you that the great point is, how the Lord finds you when He comes?

Yes, that you are expecting Him. "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord. . . .



Blessed are those servants, whom the Lord when He cometh shall find watching." Who is the good servant? The one who is watching and giving his fellows "their portion of meat in due season." He is expecting the Lord, and paying every attention to His own.

So that (that we may all follow and understand) in this verse in Revelation xxii., there is a reference to the King?

Yes.

Can we say then that we delight in the thought of the coming of the King, being absorbed in His interests?

Quite so; and therefore no one can say, "Come," but the Spirit and the Bride. As I said before, it is not merely the rapture when you will be taken out of the trouble here—but you are to be full of Christ's interests, because He is coming. What brought about the state of Christendom? They began to say, "My lord delayeth his coming."

Of course there is a danger of losing sight of the rapture. The whole boast of the natural man is, as you say, to teach that there is no rapture at all?

That is a grievous error. You might as well say there is no morning star before the morning. I believe the very first flash of the morning star is the rapture.

Is that when I get it in my soul?

Yes.

Besides, is it not responsibility that comes in in this verse?

Yes, certainly. You never find responsibility connected with the rapture. "I charge thee therefore

before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, and by His appearing and His kingdom." That is responsibility.

But if the Church is not known, can the rapture be known?

I think the rapture might be looked for, but not the appearing. The Bride only could enter into Christ's interest.

Then does the morning star speak of the heavenly beauty of Christ?

It is the harbinger of day: "Until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts." The day star comes before the day dawns.

Then only the watchers will see it?

The watchers are not only looking out for it, but they are diligent in caring for Christ's things; hence the Spirit and the Bride say, "Come," and the effect of this said truly is that the hearers say, "Come." You say, "I heard brother So-and-so saying 'Come,' and it had a great effect upon me. I say, 'Come,' too." When this truth was revived it had a great effect upon souls.

What produced the effect, the lives of those that held it?

The reality of their desire for it. I knew a young man, (he was younger than I was—then '17 or 18), and the verse he gave me for the Lord's coming was, "The meek shall inherit the earth." Do they? No. "Then," he said, "there is something coming."

Is not the appearing of the Lord very much lost sight of?

Yes, very much. I hope we shall improve.

Is it right to speak of the Lord as our King?

No, it is not. Some imagine that He is King now. It is not true.

I suppose when we speak of the Lord as King it is always in connection with the earth ?

Yes. The moment He takes to Himself His great power and reigns, there is joy in heaven. The moment the rapture takes place His power has begun. Nothing can exceed it. I could dwell on the rapture, but I am afraid of saints dwelling too exclusively on it. It is very touching to our hearts that the first use of His power will be with regard to His own.

Still, we hear very little of the appearing of the Lord and of the wonderful reality of what it will be to reign with Him.

If the Lord were to walk, this minute, into this room, no one would take any position for Him greater than he has now. I mean as to reigning with Him. Whatever interest you take in the Lord's affairs now, that is the interest which qualifies you for a place in the kingdom. The overcomer in Laodicea only sits on the throne, he does not get any power. In Thyatira he rules. In Philadelphia he is a pillar.

If the rapture were to take place this moment, we should all be equally glorified.

Yes, certainly. We should all go up together to the Father's house, and all know unclouded happiness there. As I have sometimes said, the holidays will have come and we shall have gone home, but the examination follows. At school, the examination comes before the holidays ; in God's grace, we go home first, before the judgment seat. (2 Cor. v. 10.) Everything will come out there from our infancy onward—as it were in two columns : one as to what you have been, and the other,

God's grace to you all the way. Grace has abounded, and you get the good of it.

We shall all be glorified together at the rapture and all in heaven.

Yes, truly, but consequent on that "His wife hath made herself ready," she has passed the judgment seat. White linen is the righteousnesses of the saints.

All responsibility is connected with the appearing?

Yes. It is connected with your righteousness here. A Wesleyan will tell you that you cannot get to heaven without good works; he will quote, "that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God." But, I say, the kingdom of God there does not mean heaven. You get a place in the kingdom on the earth according to your works. The kingdom is founded on righteousness.

Then it will be a result of the judgment seat, at the appearing?

Yes. You come out in righteousness then.

The Father's house comes after the rapture, and then the judgment seat?

Precisely. When Babylon has been destroyed there is the greatest joy in heaven. Then the Bride passes in review before the Lord, and each one gets his own place in the kingdom.

Does the marriage supper take place after that?

Yes; it is then celebrated. All the Old Testament saints are guests.

Before we appear with Him in glory?

Yes; we should be looking for this, to "appear with Him in glory." It is important to bear in mind that you could not be in the mind of the Bride if you did not know union with Christ.

It is not individual then ?

No ; the Bride is the remnant seeking for the others.

“ Let him that heareth say, Come.”

Who is that, a Christian ?

Yes ; to be sure. The remnant is true. Anna, the prophetess, was a remnant at the time. She “ departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.” You cannot look for the Lord according to His mind, unless you are identified with His interests. The Spirit and the Bride look for Him to come. You must know 2 Timothy iii. in order to be a man of God for this day. There are two things in that chapter. The one is, you know the state of things in Christendom. It is different from 2 Timothy ii. There they “ erred ” from the truth. Now they “ resist the truth ” ; they have the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof. You have the same sins as in Romans i., only here there is a cloak. Now comes the most important point. No one is alive to the difficulty of this day who does not see that the truth is resisted by an imitation of it. The most effectual opposition to a reality is to imitate it. The more precious it is, the more the deceiver gains by imitating it. Many imitate gold, few imitate copper. Diamonds are imitated because of their value. Thus Jannes and Jambres neutralized the power of God by imitation. How were they checked ? The dust was turned into living creatures, and they could not imitate that. Life marks the power of God. You confound imitation by life. Here the ministry of John comes in. If a diamond and a glass imitation were in this room together, you would not discern the difference. But take them both into the dark, and you would soon see the difference.

In the dark there is no light in the glass, but there is in the diamond. It is a great moment for you when you see that imitation is the greatest hindrance to the truth. Suppose a Christian leaves system, and says, "I am looking for the true way of gathering," and he goes on with you for a while and then breaks away and sets up an imitation. He is a greater hindrance to the truth than if he had remained in system.

How are we to take their rods becoming serpents? Was there life in them?

No; I should say they became devils. Life was not brought in. The water turned into blood was the same, significant of judgment.

So what we have in Christendom is a multitude of counterfeits?

Yes; show me anything that is not a counterfeit. One minister reads aloud a written sermon; another speaks extempore—the latter is more talented than the other. Natural ability is not spiritual gift.

The better the counterfeits the more dangerous?

Yes. There are two qualities in a good physician. One is, he knows what is the matter with you; the other is, he knows the remedy to cure you. You have both in this chapter. First, the state of Christendom; a perfect diagnosis. Next the remedy; "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, &c." First, Paul's teaching must be thoroughly known, not only as to the Church, but also as to the Gospel. You will never understand the Church until you understand Paul's Gospel.

What do you mean by Paul's Gospel?

A Gospel which connects the believer with a Saviour in glory. Paul calls it his Gospel—the Gospel of God.

(See Acts viii.) The eunuch was reading Isaiah liii.: "His life is taken from the earth." Now, in chap. ix. we read of a "light out of heaven." That is Paul's Gospel.

We sometimes hear people say, "So-and-so preaches nothing but Jesus Christ crucified."

They must go another step. Paul writes, "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, AND Him crucified." In Christendom they often leave out the "and." There are two distinct points in that passage—one, "Jesus Christ," and the other, "Him crucified." It is generally quoted "Jesus Christ crucified." The force of "and" in Scripture is a disjunctive one. It separates two ideas; "and" leads to a new idea.

But to resume. The man of God must not only be a proficient in Paul's teaching, but he must know the Old Testament, because there God's ways with man are fully brought out. You will never know what man is in relation to God till you are master of the Old Testament; yet a man who confines himself to the Old Testament is legal.

From Abraham down to the present day the man whom God supports is the man who is set for God's object at the time. When Daniel knew that he was sentenced to the lions' den he prayed in his house three times a day, his window being open towards Jerusalem. Jerusalem was then a heap of ruins, but he was set for God's object. I have illustrated this by the trade winds. The trade winds blow always the same way, and every ship is thus wafted along by them; and thus it is with every one who is in the line of God's present object.

Is that what you meant by a man for the day?

Yes, a man who is fully acquainted with Paul's Gospel and the mystery, and also with the Old Testament. He is a man of God. A man of God means really, A man for the crisis.

And the effect will be that he comes out as of the remnant, and will answer to the faithful servant, giving the household "their portion of meat in due season." Every one can help. Each one may be in heart so set for Christ that His interests are ever paramount—not only looking for Him to come, but as you do so, being more and more devoted to His treasure here. Amen.

J. B. S.

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## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

### CHAPTER ii. 3-11.

WE find three times in this passage the words, "He that saith." In verse 4, "He that saith, I know Him"; in verse 6, "He that saith he abideth in Him"; and in verse 9, "He that saith he is in the light." In each case a proof is given as to the real nature of Christianity.

Obedience is the first thing that is noted here, and it is obvious that if anyone pretend to know Him without keeping His commandments, he is a liar. For suppose the case of one who should pretend to be in the service of some earthly monarch, and yet never go to his court, nor know anything about the rules of it, the fact would be manifest enough that he was not telling the truth.

But in contrast with this there is something far more intimate—"But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected." The distinction between



the *commandments* and the *word* has often been made, and we here again find the two expressions, as in John xiv. 21, 23. The word no doubt implies far more than the commandments; for keeping the word is not merely obeying in detail, keeping the commandments that direct the children of God upon earth, but means a full entering into His thoughts, and the full expression of a dependent nature. An illustration, though not adequate, might be taken from a servant who is obedient, but who needs to have all the detail of his duties repeated to him. I now suppose another servant, attached to his master and to his master's household, who carries out his daily duty, and more beside, through intelligent attachment to his master's interests, without there being any necessity to repeat it to him. In this latter case there is true devotedness to his master's welfare, and this, I think, though the figure be imperfect, would correspond with keeping the word.

Then he that saith he abideth in Him ought to walk as He walked. The fruit of true communion with Him in another place, which is entirely outside this world, will be seen in the walk here, which will be separate from all that is not according to the Father. What a measure is this for the Christian's walk!

Now come two very important verses. First of all, it is not a new commandment the apostle wrote, but an old one, the word which they had heard from the beginning. There would be no innovation, or addition to that which had been fully expressed in the Son of God Himself when He was upon earth; *there* had been seen perfect obedience to the Father's will and perfect dependence. But in the eighth verse there is a new commandment, that which is true in Him and in us;

this could only be after the death, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord, for before this the corn of wheat abode alone, and it could not be said "true in Him and in you."

This new aspect of Christ and Christians gives a peculiar character to the whole epistle. The Lord is no longer on earth, but glorified; and we have been brought into this new and happy position through His death and resurrection, and we live because He lives. It is true in Him and in us; and notice that the darkness is not yet passed away, but *is passing away*. The true light now shines, and the time is not far distant when all darkness shall be past, and when Christ shall be displayed in all His glory. Darkness shall completely vanish before Him; but what a wonderful place is this which we occupy, in being here, in the midst of the darkness, in order to shine (morally) in contrast to it! May we feel more and more what this means, and what the shining of the true light implies. The natural mind of man which the Scripture calls darkness, is really devoid of all that is according to God's thoughts.

Now comes a test, for anyone can say that he is in the light. He that saith he is in the light and hateth his brother is in the darkness even until now. Light and love are inseparable, and the nature that we have is composed of them. Darkness and hatred go together, and it is no use saying that one is in the light if there be hatred to one's brother. A true Christian loves his brother and dwells in the light, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him.

Hatred is the very opposite of the divine nature, and he that hates his brother is in the darkness; but there

is more than this—he walks in the darkness because the darkness hath blinded his eyes; it is a terrible state.

To sum up—the child of God is characterized by obedience, by walking as Christ walked, and by loving his brother; and all this in the midst of a world where there is neither godliness, light, nor love. E. L. B.

### THE GOLDEN SCEPTRE.

HADASSA\* trembled . . . and drew near  
 Within the fatal ring;  
 O who would look, and never fear  
 At the great Eastern king?

But straight the monarch pity shewed,  
 And spared the doubting child;  
 The sceptre's point with favour glowed,  
 And spoke of mercy mild.

O Lord! we thank Thee for Thy grace  
 As in Thy courts we bow;  
 Mercy stands written in Thy face,  
 No Persian tyrant Thou!

And should our heart condemn us, Lord,  
 We still can venture near;  
 For "light and joy" Thy words afford,  
 Whose love casts out all fear.

Thy presence-chamber open stands,  
 Thou call'st us to be bold;  
 And glory lights those gracious hands  
 That wield the Rod of Gold. E. K. B.

\* Esther.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

## I.

1 COR. x. 6 ; HEBREWS ix. 24.

THE word rendered "examples" in the first of these scriptures is really "types," and that given in the second as "figures" is more exactly "antitypes." Attention to the teaching of each will readily enable us to understand the difference. The journey of the children of Israel through the wilderness, divinely sustained as they were by the manna from heaven and by the water which flowed out of the smitten rock, was typical of, and shadowed out, the Christian's passage through this world, which has become morally a wilderness to him, because his home is in the Father's house, where Christ has gone to prepare a place for him. A type therefore is a thing, an event, which is taken up by the Spirit of God to adumbrate something in the future. And there are typical personages, such as Isaac, Joseph, Benjamin, Moses, Aaron, David, and Solomon, who are selected to pre-figure Christ in some special character or office. An "antitype," as in the second scripture, is a correspondence with something already existing. Thus the tabernacle, a figure (image) for the time then present, made after the pattern shown to Moses in the mount, was a revelation of heavenly things. It was not intended so much to point to the future, although it be true that it is only in Christianity that the things revealed by the tabernacle can be understood and inherited, as to display what belonged to

heaven. Hence the apostle says: "Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands" (that is, into the holy places of the tabernacle, where only the priests could enter), which are the figures (the antitypes) of the true, "but into heaven itself," etc.; for indeed it was "heaven itself," of which the "holy places" were the antitypes. A *symbol* again is different. For example, the sun, moon and stars, in Matt. xxiv., as also in Revelation, are used in a symbolic sense, as symbolizing governing authorities—the sun as supreme, the moon as derived (she receives her light from the sun), and the stars as subordinate, authority. So the new moon was, to borrow language, "the symbol of the reappearance of Israel in the sun's light, hailed with joy by the people, and connected with redemption in the thought of faith." Then also there are figures and illustrations. When, for instance, our blessed Lord says, "I am the door," He uses a figure to teach that it is through Him we enter into the possession and enjoyment of heavenly things. The spiritual mind, guided by the Holy Spirit, will have but little difficulty in comprehending these distinctions, and in seizing their significance, when studying the Scriptures.

## II.

## 2 CORINTHIANS i. 21, 22.

If it be remembered that it is the same Holy Spirit who is the anointing, the seal, and the earnest, it will be seen that all three operations are simultaneous; that, in other words, when the believer is sealed with the Holy Ghost he is also anointed, and receives the earnest of the Spirit in his heart. It is God's work in

giving the indwelling Spirit; and the condition of bestowing it, as may be readily discovered from the Scriptures, is the knowledge and possession of the forgiveness of sins. (See Acts ii. 38; x. 43, 44, etc.) The three terms used in the above scripture do but express various aspects of the Spirit as received by the believer. As the *seal* two things are mainly signified—ownership and security. The Christian is thus marked out as belonging to Christ (Romans viii. 9), and is eternally secured until the day of redemption. (Ephes. iv. 30.) As the *anointing* the Spirit is the source of knowledge (1 John ii. 20, 27) and of power (see Acts x. 38); and as the *earnest*, He is the guarantee, or the assurance, of our being brought into the enjoyment of all that has been secured for us in Christ. Thus in 2 Cor. v. 5 He is the earnest of our resurrection and glorified bodies; while in Ephesians i. 14 He is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession. The same Spirit, moreover, is the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father; and it is also by Him that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts. The possession therefore of the Holy Ghost is, in God's infinite grace as revealed in Christ, and in the redemption which He has wrought out through His death and resurrection, the distinguishing characteristic of Christianity, and that which marks off the believer of this period from the saints of all other dispensations.

### III.

TITUS ii. 11-15.

This passage really contains a summary of Christianity, and, as may be readily seen, it is introduced

here to enforce the previous exhortations—"the things which become sound doctrine." These concern the conduct of the aged men, the aged women, the young women, the young men, and the servants, the object being, though only given in connection with the last class, "that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." This forms the transition to our scripture, as shown by the language used: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation for all men" (we give the more approved rendering) "hath appeared," etc. In verse 13 a change in the translation is also necessary; it should read, "Looking for the blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." There are then two appearings: grace has appeared, and the glory of our blessed Lord will appear, and it is between these two appearings that the exhibition of true and practical Christianity is to be made by those who have been brought into the possession of grace. No doubt the appearing of grace began with the incarnation of our Lord; it was seen in the whole of His life, for God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; it was declared in the cross, for God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son; and it has been continued ever since in the publication of the glad tidings of the gospel. It brings salvation for those whose hearts are open to receive it, and then it begins to teach them (*v.* 12). It should be said that the word "teach" here is not the same as "doctrine" (teaching) in verses 1-10. The word in verse 12 is often rendered "disciplining," and the reason for the change is that the character of the life enjoined is seldom displayed, excepting through discipline. Those

then who are the subjects of grace are taught to deny ungodliness or impiety, everything that savours of indifference or opposition to God, and also worldly lusts, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. (1 John ii.) They should, moreover, live "soberly," with self-restraint and chastened, subdued spirits; "righteously," having regard to what is due to one's neighbour, indeed to all men; and "godly," walking before God in humble dependence, confidence, and subjection to His will. Then, while so living, the attitude to be maintained is that of constantly looking for the blessed hope, and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. Believers are caught up to meet Christ before the appearing; only, when in responsibility, the appearing of Christ is always the goal, because that is the time of the vindication of His own rights and claims, and of the displayed recompense of His people. (See 1 Thess. iv. and 2 Thess. i.) Next, the apostle leads us back to the death of Christ, and to His object in His death as furnishing an all-powerful motive to a holy life. The One who will soon appear in glory is the One who gave Himself for us, thus claiming our devotedness by the revelation in His death on our behalf of all His love, and in that death His object was to redeem us from all iniquity, and to purify unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. What an appeal to our hearts! May we all have the opened ear to hear it, that, constrained by His mighty love, we may seek grace to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

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## “AT THE NAME OF JESUS.”

IF God gives Christ the place of universal and absolute supremacy, He will have it owned, and in every circle of His dominions. Hence it says, after stating the fact that He has given Him the name which is above every name, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” The language here employed must be carefully considered if its precise significance is to be apprehended. And, first of all, the force of the words “at the name of Jesus” must be explained, inasmuch as much discussion has been raised upon this point. The phrase in the original is ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ; and this, it is freely conceded, might be accurately rendered, “in the name of Jesus” instead of “at His name,” as in our translation. The question then is, Can this rendering be accepted? If “at the name of Jesus” were an incorrect presentation of the original words, the other, whatever its attendant difficulties, would have to be adopted; but it is as exact as “in the name of Jesus”; and on this account we must be governed by other considerations. It is then submitted, that to bow before God *in* the name of Jesus, and to confess Him as Lord, is to appear there in virtue of what He is, in all the value of what He is through His death and resurrection (see, for example, John xiv. 13, 14), and consequently it would imply salvation for all the classes named. In other words, if

"*in the name of Jesus*" were insisted upon, it would make this scripture teach universalism, and a universalism, as will be seen later on, which would include demons as well as men and angels. Such a meaning would thus land us in direct contradiction to many other scriptures; and hence we are compelled to adopt the alternative rendering, "at the name of Jesus."

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By this is meant, that it is God's will that every creature in the universe shall sooner or later acknowledge the supremacy and lordship of the exalted and glorified Jesus. If the heart go with the acknowledgment, and the confession of the mouth proceed from a real and living faith in Christ, it will be salvation for all who make it. (See Romans x. 8-13.) All therefore who, in this day of grace, receive the gospel, God's testimony to the death and resurrection of Christ, and confess Christ as their Lord as well as Saviour, will be everlastingly saved. But the point of the scripture is, that all outside of this blessed class, all unrepentant and unregenerate men, all the angels who have ever stood, or rather, who have been preserved, in their created perfection, all the angels who have fallen and have been "cast down to hell, and delivered into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment," and all demons and infernal beings, will be compelled by power to own the authority and lordship of the glorified Jesus. God will not suffer, according to the teaching of this scripture, a single sentient creature to be contumacious or outwardly rebellious towards His beloved Son. They may hate Him in their hearts, as many of them will; but, whether they do or not, they will be made to bow the knee to the

once humbled, and now glorified, Jesus, and their lips will have to confess that He, Jesus Christ, is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. And this is His due, as it is well expressed in the familiar lines—

"Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou  
That every knee to Thee should bow."

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It may be necessary, however, to explain this with a little more detail, as some may not have hitherto entered into the subject. Let us then examine the actual words of this scripture. It says then, "that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, *of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth.*" Things in heaven, as before said, will include all celestial existences, all the heavenly hosts, and things on earth will, as plainly, indicate men; so that the only difficulty lies in the phrase "under the earth." The word itself (for it is actually but one word) points admittedly to that which is subterranean. Conceding this, it is yet contended by some that only the dead are intended. But even in classical usage, it went further and comprised evil spirits, and when it is recalled that, during the sojourn of our blessed Lord in this world, demons were compelled to own His authority and even to confess His name, and that, as James teaches, they "believe, and tremble," there is a strong assurance that they are in view in this scripture. There is another scripture which, though apparently of the same significance, is yet quite different. In Revelation v. we read, "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power,

be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever." The term "under the earth" here is not the same as in Philippians; and it means, as the addition of the words, "and such as are in the sea," etc., shows, every animate thing under the surface of the earth, and it thus looks onward to the fulfilment of the last verse of Psalm cl., "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord." It anticipates the praise of the whole of creation.

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Assuming then the correctness of our interpretation, it may now be asked, When will this universal acknowledgment of the authority of Christ, together with the confession of His lordship, take place? It is God acting from His own heart, let it be remembered, and also in righteousness, who has given to Christ this exalted place as Man. It is not a question here of His deity, although this is never to be forgotten, but rather of the place which God has accorded to Him as the Man who once humbled Himself here, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. And together with His exaltation in this character the decree has been issued that all created intelligences must bow to, and own, His sovereignty. Where, then, the question returns, will obedience to this decree be exhibited? In seeking to answer it, we may take the three circles of beings in their order; and, first, therefore, that of things in heaven. There are two scriptures especially touching this subject to which reference may be made. In Hebrews i., in a citation from the Psalms, we read, "And let all the angels of God worship Him"; and this is in connection with the introduction of the First-begotten into the world. In Rev. v. we are

permitted to hear ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands of angels, when the Lamb takes the book out of the right hand of Him that sat upon the throne, "saying with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." When, moreover, the Son of Man comes in His glory, all the holy angels are with Him, as the executors of His throne; and we thus learn that their acknowledgment of His supremacy will be constant and perpetual—that, commencing with the moment of His exaltation, it will go on for ever.

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The submission of the second circle, that of things on earth, will in one sense be more gradual and extended. It began on the day of Pentecost; for Peter's testimony on that day was, that God had made that same Jesus, whom the Jews had crucified, both Lord and Christ; and every one who through grace received this testimony did in effect bow the knee to Christ, and confess His authority, as declared by the apostles. So with every one converted since that day, and so will it be with all who are brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light, or until the close of the day of grace. After the church has been removed, there will be still proceeding a mighty work of grace, as may be gathered from Rev. vii.; and during the thousand years will be fulfilled the glorious prediction of the Psalm, "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. They that dwell in the wilderness shall bow before Him; and His enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and of the isles shall bring

presents: the kings of Sheba and Seba shall offer gifts. Yea, all kings shall fall down before Him: all nations shall serve Him." There will therefore be, during His glorious Kingdom on earth, universal subjection to His rightful claims as Supreme; so that, as we read in another Psalm, "Through the greatness of Thy power"—power displayed before the eyes of men—"shall Thine enemies submit themselves unto Thee," or, as it is in the margin, "yield feigned obedience." During this reign of righteousness man will not dare, whatever the thoughts of his heart, to rebel against the sovereign rule of Christ, except at the cost of instant destruction. Outwardly, therefore, all will be in professed submission to His government. And is it not a delight to contemplate this prospect, when the once humbled and rejected Christ will be universally exalted even upon this earth? The scene that once witnessed His shame and ignominy, will then behold His exaltation and glory; and from millions of hearts will go up the glad confession that it is His rightful due, as they sing: Blessed be His glorious Name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory; Amen, and Amen.

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In regard to the last circle we have fewer positive scriptures to guide us, although the fact is stated over and over again that nothing, no being in the universe, will be excepted from subjugation to His authority.\* The time when "the angels which kept not their first estate," will be dealt with is distinctly stated to be at "the judgment of the great day" (Jude 6); and we learn from Rev. xx. that the devil

\* See, for example, Ephesians i. 20-22; 1 Cor. xv. 24-28, etc.

himself will be cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, immediately before the session of Christ, to whom all judgment has been committed, upon the great white throne, where all the dead, small and great, will receive their everlasting award. Demons are not here mentioned; but there can be no doubt that they are included in the judgment of their leader and chief. The final judgment, therefore, whether of the fallen angels, of Satan himself, or of the multitudes of unconverted dead (for only such appear before the great white throne) will take place at the close of all God's dealings with this world. The earth and the heaven will indeed have fled away from the face of Him who will sit upon the great white throne, before this last session of judgment commences; for this final scene of the establishment of God's holy claims and righteous authority, is preparatory to the introduction of the new heaven and the new earth, wherein righteousness will dwell. God's purposes concerning the glory of His beloved Son, His will that every knee should bow to Him, and that every tongue should confess that He is Lord, will then have been accomplished. All evil will then have been done away; for God will then have wiped away all tears from the eyes of all His redeemed, "and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

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Even the exaltation and glory of Christ has, if we may venture so to speak, an object. It is, as we read, "to the glory of God the Father." If His eternal counsels concerning Christ and His redeemed have

flowed forth from His own heart, they will in their accomplishment and issue redound to His own displayed glory before the eyes of the whole universe. It is for the believer to anticipate this ; and, indeed, the contemplation of this glorious end of all God's ways will so fill his heart with admiration and adoration that he will be constrained to exclaim, in the inspired words of the Apostle, " For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen." And yet again, " Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

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## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

### Chapter ii. 12, 13.

THE whole family is comprised in the 12th verse, where the apostle writes to the " children " ; that is, to all the children of God. It might be well to notice the expression, " His name's sake " ; for we have in it all the value of the name. It is not merely that we are forgiven, but in such a way that the glory of the Person, by whom forgiveness came to us, is enhanced.

We might make a simple illustration, and suppose the case of a man who comes into some financial establishment, where he owes a considerable debt. He presents a bond, I suppose, signed by some one whose name is everything in the banking world—such as the name of " Rothschild." Whatever the man's looks may be, and however little the banker might be inclined to trust him from his threadbare appearance, the moment he sees the signature and the name of Rothschild, he is more than satisfied.



In making this feeble illustration, let us think of the priceless value of the *name* of Him through whom our sins have been forgiven! This blessed privilege applies to all believers.

But now comes the threefold division of God's family upon earth, and it is well to notice the preliminary verse (the thirteenth) before the apostle commences to develop the special features of each class.

The grand features are found in the thirteenth verse.

The fathers are mature; they have learned what the world is worth, and they have known Him that is from the beginning the whole of their way. I recollect, some years ago, showing to an aged servant of Christ one of the planets through a telescope, and after expressing his wonder and admiration at the huge moving globe, he said that the day would come, he hoped, when I should find Christ enough. If Christ be enough, one does not need playthings in this world. The heart is calm and satisfied; the blessed grace of Him who is from the beginning fills it, and not even the riches of Solomon, nor his philosophy (for, surely, his was of a better kind than the nonsense which goes by that name now) would ever be desired to fill any empty space. The fathers are mature, and will tell you that they have known (and still know) the blessed Lord as Him that is from the beginning. It will be said that this class is rare, and that one may travel far without meeting a father. This is true, but God would have His children matured here, and growing really in the knowledge of the Lord in such a way that He becomes everything to them, and that all the rest is felt to be worth nothing.

The young men have overcome the wicked one. It is well to know that the enemy is less strong than the men of the family of God. It is never a wise thing to underrate the power of the enemy, and I recollect its being said that the secret of Napoleon's success consisted in his estimating aright the force opposed to him. The wicked one is strong, no doubt, and there is no force that is stronger, save that of the "mightier armed man" who despoiled him in the very first encounter. The devil could not stand against Christ, nor can he stand against those in whom Christ has been formed by the Holy Ghost. There is a certain development in the young men, who have the consciousness of having overcome (and of still overcoming) the wicked one. The enemy cannot stand before them.

We shall say no more of them until we consider the detail of their character in what follows.

The little children (or babes) have known the Father. It is very important to see that the very first thing that characterises a babe is that he knows the Father. In 1 Thessalonians i. 1, the first thing realised by these simple and bright Christians was the knowledge of the Father. It is the Christian revelation, and these young believers (newly converted) had much to learn, no doubt; but they were "in God the Father," in the sense of being surrounded by His care on all sides. A young child begins to distinguish his father from other men (probably the first great abstraction that he makes), and to call him by a name implying paternity, and it is so in the case of the babes—they know the Father, and this is the true beginning of the Christian position upon earth.

They have much to learn ; they are not yet mature, they are just beginning, but the knowledge of the Father characterises the very beginning of their course, and our Lord's blessed words to His own, before He ascended unto His Father and their Father, apply as much to the babes as to the rest of the family of God.

Having briefly noticed these three grand divisions, we may leave the further explanation of the apostle till another time.

E. L. B.

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## THE APOSTLE PAUL'S MINISTRY :

ITS MANNER, METHOD, AND MATTER.

ACTS xx.

IN these words addressed to the Ephesian elders, we have an epitome of Paul's life, labours, and doctrine. As far as recorded in the Acts, the scene presented in this chapter closes the apostle's active service. From this point it only relates how he fell into the hands of the Jews, that he was detained a prisoner for two years in Cæsarea, and finally, how after an eventful voyage, he reached Rome. This lends a significance to the occasion, which it would not otherwise possess, and makes us feel what a deeply important moment it was when, through the Ephesian elders, the great apostle was addressing the Church for all time. And never was there greater need to keep in memory these last injunctions than at the present moment. Many of the professed exponents of Christianity to-day are not to be trusted, but here we can listen to the words of God's own chosen and inspired vessel. What it needed to transmit undimmed the revelation given to him, no one can conceive. Well might he exclaim, "Who is

sufficient for these things?" But the apostle was a steward, and it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful. It was not merely what he taught, but, in his life and in his labours, he was at once the embodiment and the exponent of the truths of Christianity.

The elders of Ephesus were selected to hear the parting admonition of the great apostle of the Gentiles. Ephesus seems to hold a special place. It was here that a great work had been wrought by the Spirit of God. (See chap. xix. 1-20.) All that dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus. Ephesus is the first Church addressed in the Revelation; and finally, to the Ephesians was addressed that wonderful epistle, which unfolds the counsels and purposes of God, and wherein the truth as to the Church is the special subject. It may be added that it was at Ephesus Timothy was left to take the oversight. And now it is to the elders of this same church the apostle speaks of his own ministry, and also of what would happen after his departure. To us, who are witnesses that all he foretold has really come to pass, his words possess a special and peculiar interest.

It is the manner, method, and matter of Paul's ministry we have brought before us in this chapter, and which we desire to dwell upon. All these features deserve our careful consideration. It is not only necessary for us to preach, but *what* we preach, and the *way* we preach are quite as essential, if we are to commend ourselves to the Lord.

First, then, as to the *manner*. The apostle says, "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations which befell me by

the lying in wait of the Jews." (v. 19.) How much there is underlying these words, "serving the Lord." The Lord was his object in service. True, he would endure all things for the elect's sake, he would become all things to all men if by any means he might save some; he was content to be made as the filth of the world and as the offscouring of all things, but, it was as the *Lord's servant*. Writing to the Galatians, he says, "Paul an apostle, not of men, neither by man," and again, "for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ." He was the Lord's servant, and owed no allegiance to man but to serve. He was free from all, and therefore he could, and did, become servant of all. It is only as any of us are thus, that we can truly serve. But not only was he the servant of the Lord, he also had the Lord before him in all his service. If the first gave him liberty, the last gave him joy. If men received his word he could rejoice, and if they refused his message he could still rejoice, for he had served the Lord. (See 2 Cor. ii. 14-16.) As servants, do we not need to remember these two things? What boldness it would give us, if we always had this for our motto, "Serving the Lord." There is immense encouragement too in it, for it means we are accountable only to Him. As the apostle could write to the Corinthians (1 Cor. iv. 3-5), "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment . . . but He that judgeth me is the Lord." And as we are accountable only to the Lord, so it is only to Him we are to look for reward. Is it not enough to think of His "well done"? What greater stimulus do we require? If we can honestly say we are "serving the Lord," then every other question may

be left. Do not let us covet man's approbation. If it is the Lord we serve, it is the Lord who will recompense. Sometimes we may be flattered, at other times frowned upon, at times elated and at times depressed, success now crowning our efforts, and then seasons of barrenness, but through it all be it ours to serve the *Lord*. If through all his arduous labours, this sustained the apostle, it will be quite sufficient for us.

But we must not omit to notice the features of his service. First of all it was characterized by "humility of mind." Such strangely perverse creatures are we, that unless the flesh is kept under, service, instead of making us humble, is apt to puff us up. The publicity, which to a great extent is inseparable from service, the position it gives the servant, and the many inducements to make the servant think something of himself, arising from the very nature of the work—all these may tend to self-exaltation. If we have this example of the apostle continually before us, we shall be saved from many a pitfall. Humility in the apostle did not mean feebleness—when occasion called for it, he knew how to magnify his office, and he could write to another and say, "Let no man despise thy youth"; but of himself as a worker he could say, "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given"; and on another occasion, "I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle . . . but by the grace of God I am what I am." Humility has generally marked all the servants of Christ who have been especially owned of God. And in this quality they have resembled the Master Himself. Who so humble as He? He washed His disciples' feet, and said to them, "Know

ye what I have done to you? . . . I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you?" He told them, "I am among you as He that serveth." The apostle followed his Master in this, though of course at a distance. In the passage we are considering he puts humility above everything. Ah! do we? He does not speak of his success, he does not mention the number of souls that were converted under his ministry, but he speaks of *humility*. And others too, though of lower rank than the apostle, have been distinguished for the same grace. Whitefield was as conspicuous for humility as for his marvellous gift. Notwithstanding all that God wrought by him, besides his unequalled popularity with men, he ever remained a truly humble servant. An unfailing proof of his humility was, he always valued other servants of Christ, while he put himself low down.

There are several reasons why humility should characterize the servant of the Lord. One is given us in 1 Cor. iv. 7, "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? now, if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?" And, again, in the previous chapter, verse 7, "So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase." And 2 Cor. iv. 5 affords an additional reason, "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." Here, then, we have three solid reasons why humility should characterize the servants of Christ. First, as to what they *are*, the Lord makes His servants to differ as to their qualifications, and all that they have, they received; secondly, as to what

they *do*, it would come to nought unless God gave the increase; and, thirdly, as to what they *preach*, they exalt Christ, and Christ *only*.

But there was another thing that marked the apostle's service. He served the Lord "with many tears." Now, why does the apostle mention this fact? It is hardly too much to say that in a large measure it reveals the secret of his power. A man who weeps is alive to the importance of his mission, and is downright in earnest about it. If we are not moved ourselves, how can we expect to move others? The blessed Master is a pattern in this as in everything else. He wept over Jerusalem; He wept at the grave of Lazarus; He wept in the hour of His agony, when, with strong crying and tears, He offered up prayers and supplications unto Him that was able to save Him from death. Depend upon it, if there were more tears, there would be more conversions. Hearts would be touched. "How is it that your seed comes up so soon?" said one gardener to another. "Because I steep it," was the reply. Here is the reason why our preaching is often without effect—we have forgotten to steep it in tears. "He that goeth forth and *weepeth*, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." These are the conditions. Weeping in secret, when no eye sees us but God's, is, after all, the great thing.

The last thing we notice, and that briefly, in connection with the manner of the apostle's ministry, is "temptations." No doubt this word would also include all that is ranged under the head of trials. It has been well said, "Prayer and temptation, the



Bible and meditation, make a good minister of Jesus Christ." Trial and temptation are the badges of service. They are incidental to the work. The servant is seeking to pull down the kingdom of Satan and establish the kingdom of God, and no wonder that the great adversary will not let him alone. He is in the forefront of the fight and must expect blows. An unusually large share fell to the apostle's lot. (Read 2 Cor. xi. 23-28.) Moreover trials have a purifying effect. "When He hath tried me, I shall come forth as gold." They also have a mellowing effect. What a lack is discernable where there has been freedom from trial! Such a servant may have much gift, but hardly be as distinguished for grace. "If I am in sorrow," said one, "commend me to a bruised brother." Who is it has been made perfect through sufferings? Is it not the Lord Jesus? And is there any other road for His servant? In trial and temptation, the servant learns too the deceitfulness of his own heart, discovers his weakness and imperfections, and experiences his own emptiness. But, on the other hand, he grows in deeper acquaintance with Christ, tests the boundless resources of his Master, and learns experimentally that His "strength is made perfect in weakness." As a consequence he becomes better able to help others. Often when some message from one of the Lord's servants has been used to us, we have little thought of the suffering he has had to pass through to fit him to be such a channel of blessing. If it is true of believers generally, it is even more true of servants: "I have chosen thee in the furnace of affliction." No servant will ever distinguish himself who has not passed through the

school of suffering. We might mention many of God's servants, whose history illustrates what has been said. Look at Joseph! Think of his pathway! From his father's house to the pit, from the pit to the prison, and thence to the palace. Moses had to keep sheep at the backside of the desert, before he led forth the people of God; and David wandered as a fugitive, ere he was established on the throne of Israel. If any who read these lines are passing through special trial and temptation, let them remember it may be the needed preparation for future service.

It will be seen how much the servants of the Lord need the prayers of God's people. Weak in themselves, they need power from on high, and this is given only in answer to prayer.

R. E.

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## TWO CITIES AND TWO FEASTS.

I THINK it may be profitable to call the attention of the saints of God to two feasts, both kept with joy, but from widely different reasons; and to the cities, far apart from each other, in which they were kept. These histories are among the things that were written aforetime for our learning, that we, through patience and comfort of the scriptures, might have hope; and may the Spirit of God guide our thoughts, and bless our meditations on them.

The two cities are Jerusalem and Shushan, and by turning to Ezra vi. 15-22 and to Esther viii. 15-17, we shall get an account of these two feasts held almost at the same time.

Let us turn first to the book of Ezra. Chap. ix. 8, 9 describes the situation: God's people for their iniqui-

ties are bondmen to the king of Persia, but grace is shewed from the Lord their God to leave a remnant to escape; and, through mercy, a reviving is given in the bondage *to set up the house of God*. In chapter i., Cyrus, the king of Persia, makes a proclamation throughout his kingdom, declaring that God had charged him to build Him a house at Jerusalem, and calling upon His people to go up to Jerusalem and do it. The chief of the fathers, with priests and Levites, respond to the call and go up to build the house of the Lord, and Cyrus commits to them the vessels of the house of God taken captive by Nebuchadnezzar. Chapter ii. gives us the number and the names of the company that went up, and such importance does the Spirit of God attach to this company that their names are recorded a second time in the book of Nehemiah. Chapter iii. records their first act—they build the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses, and they keep all the set feasts of the Lord even before the foundation of the Temple was laid. Later on with praises and shouting the foundation is laid. Some regarding rather the present mercy, the reviving in the bondage, and hoping that brighter days have dawned, shout aloud for joy; while many, the ancient men, who had seen the first house, weep with a loud voice; they think of the ruin, the shame, the sin, and the present is in their eyes as nothing in comparison with the past (Haggai ii. 3).

In chapter iv. the work is stopped, but resumed in chapter v. through the stirring words of Haggai, the prophet; he rebukes them for attending to their own houses while *God's house* lies waste, and calls on them

again to build it, with the Lord's promise that He will take pleasure in it, that He will be glorified. The feeble remnant, no longer afraid of their enemies, obey the voice of the Lord, fear Him, and come and work in the house of the Lord of hosts, their God. A fresh message cheers them—"I am with you"; and again, in Haggai ii. what gracious words of encouragement we have—"Be strong . . . and work," "I am with you," "Fear ye not." What an assurance, that feeble as the work appeared, the glory of the latter house should be greater than that of the former; and what a promise of their own blessing—"From this day will I bless you." How God delights to bless! but obedience must precede this blessing.

Now to turn back to the account in Ezra. In chapter vi. 15 the house is finished. The eye of God had been on them frustrating the purposes of their enemies, and the word of God had sustained them; they prospered through the prophesying of Haggai, the prophet; thus they builded, and finished. Then comes the dedication—an hundred bullocks, two hundred rams, four hundred lambs as the burnt offering, and for a sin-offering for all Israel twelve he-goats. The priests and the Levites are there in their courses, as it is written in the book of Moses, and purified together, they kill the passover for all the children of the captivity, and for themselves. And here notice how this remnant cleaves to the *written word*: the city is in ruins, the wall unbuilt, enemies all around, and the bulk of the people of Israel *not* with them, but still scattered through the vast dominions of the king of Persia. (Esther iii. 8.) Yet they offer the sin-offering for *all* Israel, and kill the passover

for *all the children of the captivity*, who are absent—not with them, but still remembered and interceded for.

Now comes the feast, kept by two classes: 1st, the children of Israel, who were come again out of captivity; 2nd, all such as had separated themselves *unto them* from the filthiness of the land. Notice, these returned ones, the first class, have been a blessing to the second class, and together they eat, and keep, the feast of unleavened bread with joy, for the Lord *had made them joyful*. It is divine joy—they are back at the divine centre, Jerusalem, where God had put His Name; and they are keeping God's Feast, as in days of old.

Now let us consider the other city and the other feast.

1st, The city, Shushan, the city of *a* great king truly, but a heathen king; can it be compared with Jerusalem, the city of *the* Great King?

2nd, The feast; who keep it; and what are the circumstances?

Those who keep it are of the same race and people as those who built the Lord's house; yea, they are those for whom the sin-offering was offered, and the passover was killed. Why had they not returned to God's land, and city, and centre, as their brethren had done? We can hardly answer this question: but remark this, they do not cease to be the people of God through lack of faith, or energy, to go back to their true place; but what losers they are! Read the book of Esther; it is a book in which, while the providence and care of God for His people are in exercise, the name of God is not mentioned—God is hidden: and His people have lost their right name

all through and are called Jews; no fresh word in season—no “Fear not” or “I am with you”—is spoken to them. They are scattered and dispersed (chapter iii. 8) through all the provinces of the king’s dominions, and are all doomed to death (chapter iii. 13); could they have been worse off if they had returned to their own land? I gladly notice that this doom comes on them through the faithfulness of Mordecai, and that they themselves are spoken of as having laws diverse from all people (God’s laws), and thus, obnoxious to the people around them, answering to the position of the saints now (John xv. 19); but the fact remains, they are not in their true place, they have come short of their calling.

In Esther iv. 3 there is great mourning, fasting, weeping, and wailing; but how different to the weeping of the ancient men in Ezra iii. Ezra gives us a proclamation from the king to go up and build God’s house at Jerusalem, and those who neglect it and remain where they are, are found under another proclamation dooming them to death. The ancient men weep at the dishonour done to God, at the ruin of His house; the others weep at their own condition and danger. I would notice again they are truly the people of God, and in their deep trouble turn to Him, they fast before Him, and Mordecai, who had dared to disobey the king’s command about Haman, now speaks bold words of faith and confidence (chap. iv. 14): “Then *shall* there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place.” It must be so, or God’s word would be broken; he counts on God, trusts Him, and urges the queen to go in to the king, and request the lives of her people. She does so after prayer and

fasting, and she finds favour, for "the king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, as the rivers of water; He turneth it whithersoever He will." (Proverbs xxi. 1.) The king makes a new decree, not revoking the other—that could not be—but granting the Jews life out of death, and making known his special favour towards them. The posts that carry the letters bearing the king's commandment are hastened and pressed on, and Mordecai himself is taken into the king's favour, receives the king's ring, and is clad in royal apparel. Then the Jews had light and gladness, and joy and honour—a *feast* and a *good day*. This was because of the king's second decree, and later on, when the deliverance was fully accomplished, they have another time of feasting and gladness. But I ask, Can this feast compare with the one at Jerusalem?

But now to apply all this to our own circumstances. Surely the Church of God has failed, even as Israel of old; the fine gold has become dim! the glory has departed! "the stones of the sanctuary are poured out in the top of every street." (Lam. iv. 1.) Almost every blessed truth of God's word was obscured, if not entirely lost, in the darkness of the middle ages. But has there not been a reviving? Has not a remnant been led back to the divine centre, to gather, not now to any spot on earth where God records His name, but to Christ Himself, in the midst of the two or three gathered to His name? And are not multitudes of the dear children of God still in captivity, scattered, divided, and occupied with their experiences, needs, dangers, and deliverances? Through grace and mercy they do sometimes have a feast and a good day; they do have answers to their prayers, special marks of

God's favour, and striking interpositions on their behalf; they may also be much used in leading others to turn to God, as we read, "Many of the people of the land became Jews"; but I press it, they are still short of their true, full blessing; they cannot worship aright if away from the place where God has put His name; they cannot keep a "*feast of the Lord*," save in the appointed place. (See Deut. xii. 11-14.) They cannot have the peculiar "I am with you" of Haggai i. 13, or of Matthew xviii. 20, till they are in the position of the remnant, who are stirred up to attend to the claims and interests of the Lord's house.

Beloved saint of God, where are you? What feast are you keeping? Are the Lord's interests, or your own, paramount? Your name may be in the Lamb's Book of Life, every redeemed sinner's name is there, all grace and mercy for Christ's sake alone, but has your name also a place in what answers to Ezra ii.?

J. E. D.

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## THE COMING ONE.

"Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

SON of the living God, Thou Rock secure,  
Whereon Thy church is built, and standeth sure;  
Thou Jesus, "He that liveth, and was dead,"  
Whom God anointed over all things Head;  
Most blessèd One, the Lord of glory Thou,  
We see Thee crowned, enthroned, o'er all exalted now.

Lord Jesus Christ, to dwell with Thee above,  
(Son of the Father, Son of God's own love,)  
To see Thee in those heavens whence Thine eyes  
First sought afar Thy pearl, Thy love's great prize,  
To know the Father loveth Thee, the Son,  
What bliss! What rest and joy! By Thee God's will is done.



And Thou art coming, Lord : Thou wilt descend  
 From heaven with a great commanding cry !  
 Thy voice in triumph did to God ascend,  
 E'en when 'Thou stoopedst on Thy cross to die ;  
 No voice but Thine, O Saviour, can declare  
 That moment when, caught up, we meet Thee in the air.

Thine is the greatness ; Thine, O Lord, the power,  
 The glory and the victory are Thine ;  
 The majesty that in Thy sorrow's hour  
 Did through the thickest darkness break and shine.  
 Thou, Conqueror over Satan, sin, and death,  
 Did'st there alone fulfil whate'er the Scripture saith.

Oh, to see Thee—who could'st, forsaken, bear  
 God's curse, His wrath—Thy weight of glory wear !  
 The many diadems around Thy brow,  
 The written name none knoweth, only Thou.  
 To follow Thee, until Thy warfare o'er,  
 God dwells with men, and is their God for evermore.

Oh, to adore Thee as we shall at last !  
 Tears, death, and sorrow, pain, and crying past ;  
 At home with Thee, restraint and conflict o'er,  
 To feast as Thou wilt feast us evermore.  
 To hear Thy voice there celebrate the ways,  
 The counsels, flowing deep, that issue wide in praise.

Oh, to be like Thee ! First-born One, who art  
 The perfect answer to Thy Father's heart ;  
 Who hast, obedient, put to endless shame  
 Man's long rebellion : " Wonderful " Thy name,  
 The faithful Witness, able to fulfil  
 Alike on earth, in heaven, Thy God and Father's will.

Oh, to be with Thee, dwelling where Thou art,  
 From all that is not after Thee apart,  
 Beyond the stain, the sight, the sound of sin !  
 The gates of pearl, the city, entered in ;  
 Within her jasper blaze of living light,  
 Her gold, as crystal clear, to walk with Thee in white.

Trained by Thy Father for Thy love's employ,  
 Thy path our dowry, clue to all Thy joy ;  
 Built out of Thee, owned, in eternal life,  
 Thy body, and Thy cherished bride, Thy wife.  
 Called with Thyself to have eternal part,  
 Lord Jesus! Come! We wait to see Thee as Thou art.  
 H. K. B. E.

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## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

### I.

JOB xxxiii. 23.

CONSIDERABLE discussion has been raised upon the last clause of this verse, owing to the difficulty of the connection in which the word "uprightness" is found. The *Revised Version* renders it, "To show unto man what is right for him," and gives in the margin, as an alternative, the translation of the *Authorised Version*. A well-known French version has, "Pour montrer à l'homme ce qui, pour lui, est la droiture"; that is, "to show unto man that which, for him, is uprightness"; and it adds in a note "that is to say, uprightness in judging himself," this being, in the opinion of the translator, the sense of the passage. Another version, often bound up with the *New Translation*, puts "duty" for uprightness, and adopts the note we have cited from the French version. It is quite conceded that the Hebrew word may in some circumstances be rendered "duty," but it is scarcely admissible in connection with man's sinful state and condition before God. No doubt his state calls for self-judgment; but this could not be pressed as a duty. Nor is the sense of the scripture preserved, in our judgment, by any word which expresses an obligation. The French version conveys unquestionably the

mind of the Spirit in setting forth that what the sinner needs to be shown is what *for him* is uprightness; viz., bowing before God, and owning without reserve or concealment his true state. This would be genuine uprightness, and it would immediately draw forth the response from the heart of God, "Deliver him from going down to the pit: I have found a ransom." (v. 24.) The substitution therefore of the words "for him" in the place of "his" changes the whole complexion of the scripture, and brings it into entire harmony with the teachings of the Word on this subject in other places.

## II.

REVELATION ii. 17, iii. 12.

THE "new name" in these scriptures is, in our judgment, entirely different. In the first case it is a new name for the overcomer in Pergamos; in the second it is "*My* new name"—the new name of our blessed Lord and Saviour. As to the meaning of the term in its respective applications, we can only call attention to the indications afforded by the context, bearing in mind, as we do so, that "name" in Scripture is often the expression of what a person is, either absolutely or in any special relationships as presented. Taking then, first, the promise to the overcomer in Pergamos, it will be seen that the new name there is used to set forth a special link with Christ. The overcomer should feed upon the hidden manna, a reference to the manna which was laid up, and thus concealed, in the ark, concerning which no better exposition could be offered than the well-known lines—

"There on the hidden bread  
Of Christ—once humbled here—  
God's treasured store—for ever fed,  
His love my soul shall cheer."

Moreover, the Lord would give him "a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth it." The white stone is a special mark of the Lord's approbation, and the new name is a secret between Him and the receiver. It refers therefore, we conclude, to some distinct intimacy, delight, and communion, acquired perhaps through the conflict in overcoming, which the Lord will for ever signalise by this new name, thus forging, if one may so speak, an indestructible link of delight between the overcomer and the Lord—a perennial joy with which none else will ever intermeddle (Jacob and Peter may help in the further consideration of the subject). The Lord's new name written upon the overcomer in Philadelphia, who, in feebleness here, will be transformed into a pillar in the temple of God, is rather the revelation of what Christ is in His new and glorified condition. This will be more readily apprehended if it is perceived that the main characteristic of the promise to this overcomer is association with Christ in many aspects of heavenly blessedness. The repetition of the word "my" shows this—the temple of *my* God, the name of *my* God, and the name of the city of *my* God, and *my* new name. Confining ourselves now to what is immediately before us, to have the Lord's new name written upon the overcomer cannot mean less than that he will receive the impress of, and be brought into conformity with, his glorified Lord. And this ineffable blessedness, as in prospect, is held out to cheer and encourage those in Philadelphia to hold fast that which they had, that no man might take their crown, and that they thus might be constituted overcomers.

## “IN HIS NAME.”

ON examination, it will be found, speaking generally, that there is a two-fold significance connected with this expression—one God-ward, and one man-ward. To this may be added the expression, which, while slightly different, may be fitly included under this head; viz., believing “in His name.” (John i. 12, ii. 23.) The word “in” in this case is not the one usually so translated, but rather “into” or “unto,” and conjoined here with believing, it indicates the object to which faith has been drawn. This will be more easily understood if it is explained that there are three main ways of setting forth faith in the Scripture. For example, it is said that Abraham believed God; we also read constantly, especially in John’s Gospel (though not always so rendered) of believing *in* Christ; and, in addition, we meet with believing on or upon Him, as in Acts xvi. 31, etc. There is a very distinct difference in these various modes of expression. To believe a person is to receive his word or testimony; to believe in him is to believe that he is trustworthy; and to believe on is really to rest upon, or to trust in, the object of faith which has been presented to the soul. We may see therefore that to believe in the name of Christ is the assent of the soul to His trustworthiness, and that the name of Christ, the expression of all that He is, is that which is proclaimed in the gospel as the object for faith. And the reception of

this testimony, testimony to what Christ is, as the Lord Jesus Christ, is the commencement of all blessing. The title to take the place of children is connected with it (John i. 12); as also to the possession of eternal life. (John iii. 15, 16.) Attention is called to this, and earnestly pressed upon the reader, because without the knowledge of this doorway into all blessedness, it is impossible to enter upon the consideration of the virtue of the name of Christ. The value of His name must be known for salvation before it can be enjoyed in the presence of God, or before it can be used in the world.

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In John xiv. we read, "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." As the last words of verse 13 show, it is here, in accordance with the characteristic truth of this gospel, the name of the Son rather than that of Christ; but this will all the more strikingly illustrate our point. What then is brought before us is, that believers are divinely warranted to appear before the Father in the name of the Son; that they themselves in relationship through having been born again, and having received the Spirit of adoption, and having been set, through the death and resurrection of Christ, in association with Himself in His own relationship (chap. xx. 17), they are now free to enter into the presence of His Father and their Father in His blessed name. That these words look on to the period after His death, resurrection, and ascension is evident from the fact that the presence of the Holy Ghost is contemplated. (Chap. xiv. 16, 17, etc.) When that time

should have come, not before, they might ask the Father in His name. This will explain the Lord's language in chapter xvi.: "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, He will give it you. Hitherto" (during the time of His sojourn with them on earth) "have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full." (vv. 23, 24.) Who of us has entered into the vast significance of this scripture? Or who has availed himself of the unspeakable grace, in all its length, breadth, height, and depth, herein expressed?

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Let us then examine these wondrous intimations, and to aid us we may enquire, first of all, what is meant by asking in the Son's name. To be before the Father thus, is to be there in all the value of that name, according to the Father's own estimate of it, with all the claim of the Son upon the Father's heart, and with the Son's authority for the presentation of our petitions. When He Himself, the Incarnate Son, stood by the grave of Lazarus, He said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me. *And I knew that thou hearest me always.*" If therefore we ask anything in His name, we shall also be always heard; and this is precisely what the blessed Lord here promises. Understanding then that He has given us this liberty and privilege, when we are in the enjoyment of the relationship which He has secured for us with the Father, two things have yet to be ascertained; first, as to His requisite authority for the petitions here referred to; and secondly, as to their subject. The

authority of the Son for the utterance of any special desires begotten in our hearts can only be obtained in communion with His own mind, from the Scriptures as taught by the Holy Spirit. And hence their subject can only concern the Son's own things. That is, in other words, the assurance given that whatsoever we ask in His name shall be done, cannot allude to our own personal needs and desires; but it supposes His people to be in fellowship with His own desires, objects, and interests, so that they can pray for these both in His own name and authority. For when we have learned, in any feeble measure, what the Father's counsels are for the glory of His beloved Son, we are free, if we have ceased from self-occupation, to be led out into the vast circle of the Son's things and the Father's things (John xvi. 14, 15), and to pray for the accomplishment of all these wondrous purposes of His love. What a place it is into which we are introduced! And what grace to invest us with all His own preciousness before the Father!

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If on this side we may appear before God in the name of Christ, on the other, it is enjoined upon us to do everything, whether amongst our fellow-believers or in the world, in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him. (Col. iii. 17.) These two aspects are constantly, and in every variety of manner, presented in the Scriptures. In John xvii., for example, after the Lord has put the disciples in His own place before the Father, He gives them His own place before the world. Peter, in like manner, teaches that, if believers are a holy priesthood, to offer



up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, they are also a royal priesthood to show out, in the world, the praises (excellencies) of Him who has called them out of darkness into His marvellous light. This is only to state the blessed truth that the believer is inseparable from Christ, whether before God or before men, that through grace he is so bound up with all that He is, and has accomplished, that he enters the holiest in all the value of His person and His work, and passes through the world as His representative. Indeed, this last word most nearly expresses what it is to act in the name of Christ, or, as in this scripture, in the name of the Lord Jesus. It is to act on His behalf, and under His authority. What an ambassador, or a plenipotentiary is in relation to his sovereign, the Christian is in relation to Christ. He is to be governed entirely by the will of His Lord, he must, with all fidelity, express His mind, study His instructions, and seek in every way to advance His interests. Self and selfish objects can have no place in such a mission: his motto must be that of the apostle Paul, "To me to live is Christ"; Christ alone the motive and object of all his activities.

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We may well pause in the presence of such a statement, and exclaim, Who is sufficient for such a mission? Lest any, therefore, should be overwhelmed at the thought of what they might deem to be a tremendous responsibility, let it be remembered that He who sends us out to act in His name, sustains us in the mission with all His power. No one goes to warfare at his own charges at any time. His name, indeed,

when rightly borne and used, carries omnipotence with it. Thus when the seventy returned to the Lord, they said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us" (not "through," as rendered, but) "*in Thy name.*" "Yea," replied the Lord, "behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy." The mission and the power for its accomplishment are thus intimately connected; only faith, faith in activity, is the essential condition for the use of the power. This truth needs to be earnestly insisted upon at the present time, if there is to be a revival, or recovery, before the Lord's return. It is written, "all things are possible to him that believeth"; we read the words, do not doubt them, and yet we seldom think of the possibility of their being verified in our own experience. A saint of olden time knew the secret when he wrote, "Lord, give what Thou commandest, and then command what Thou wilt." Even so, for it is only by the Lord's own power that the smallest of His precepts can be translated into practice; while it is equally true that His largest behests are as easy of performance as the smallest, inasmuch as adequate power is ever at the service of faith. This is seen in the case of the man with the withered hand. How stretch forth an arm that was dry and dead? He believed, and divine power flowed into his dead arm, and he stretched it forth; and lo! it "was restored whole as the other."

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A few illustrations of acting in the name of Christ will help to the understanding of the whole subject. Take first an instance of apostolical activity in Pente-

costal days. When Peter and John encountered the lame man at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, Peter expressly disclaimed acting in his own authority or power, saying, "In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk." (Acts iii. 6.) In like manner Paul, "in the name of Jesus Christ," commanded the evil spirit, which possessed the damsel who followed him day by day, to come out of her. In both cases they acted, therefore, as His servants, and used, in the exercise of faith, His power in the miracles wrought. So likewise, when correcting disorders among the saints at Corinth and at Thessalonica, the apostle acted in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. v. 4; 2 Thess. iii. 6.) These instances will suffice to show that in all service, as well as in all the duties and responsibilities of daily life, it is the privilege of the believer to act in the name of his Lord. It is, indeed, his true calling to stand before men as the representative of Christ. This may be seen in another aspect from a scripture in Peter. "If ye be reproached," he says, "for" (literally *in*) "the name of Christ, happy are ye." (1 Peter iv. 14.) Here it is evident that the enemies of Christ look upon His people as bearing His name, and as thus standing forth in the world as representing Him. Hence their enmity to Christ is manifested in the persecution of His followers. And the Christian can never divest himself of this relationship to his absent Lord. Whether in the assembly, in his home, or moving amongst his fellow-men, everywhere and at all times, he must remember that he bears the name of Christ, to act in His interests, under His authority, and on His behalf.

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It may be again repeated, What an unutterable privilege to be endowed with the liberty of appearing before God and men in the name of Christ! It is, on the other hand, the very greatness of the privilege which indicates the vastness of the responsibility. For if we are entrusted with the name of Christ, as with a holy standard, what incessant vigilance, and what realization of our dependence, are required to maintain it in all its purity, and to guard it from all dishonour! To encourage ourselves to be diligent in this object, we may remind ourselves how precious it is to the heart of Christ to behold His people zealously and jealously caring for the honour of His name. As we read in the prophet Malachi, "They that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, *and that thought upon His name.*" (chap. iii. 16.) It was a day of abounding iniquity and corruption amongst God's people; but this pious remnant were drawn apart from the evil into the bonds of holy fellowship by their godly fear, and their love of Jehovah's name. The eyes of the Lord were upon them; and in the joy of His heart He proclaimed, "And they shall be mine . . . in that day when I make up my jewels"; that is, in the day of coming judgment He would put them into His treasury-house amongst His most precious things. May we all covet the Lord's approbation for caring for the honour of His most precious and peerless Name.

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## THE ATONEMENT: ITS VALUE BEFORE GOD.

EXODUS xxx. 11-16.

“WHO maketh thee to differ from another?” And surely the answer is that believers, and believers only, have a permanent standing before God. This they have on the ground of the atonement. When we consider ourselves as saints, it must be either as the apostles Paul and John said; that is, with Paul, “I know nothing against myself,” or with John, “If our heart condemn us not then have we confidence toward God.” In both cases the heart is free and happy before Him; or we must, like Isaiah and Job, consider ourselves as conscious of our failure and of the defect that there is in us, as His saints. (Isaiah vi. 5; Job xlii. 6.) We must look upon ourselves either as in the one condition or in the other of these two.

The value of the atonement, to the one who stands before God on the ground of it, is seen both in the “burnt-offering” (Leviticus i. 4) and also in the “sin-offering.” (Leviticus iv. 31.) The offerer is before God *in all the value of it*, as known to Him, who alone *could* estimate its value. God is now revealed, and Christ is both the true burnt-offering and the sin-offering, there is no other given, but this is.

Now whether we can regard ourselves through grace as on the one ground of Paul and John, to which I have referred, or must rather regard ourselves as poor failing saints, feeble as to the full and right under-

standing or manner of life based upon our immense privileges and blessings, God never considers us as either the one or the other *apart from the atonement*. Then the only right way in which we should regard ourselves, is surely the way in which God regards us! Are we failing? To remember this will cheer and correct us. Are we, through grace, going on with hearts that do not condemn us? It will humble us yet the more to see nothing in us to glory in. If God regards us in all the value of the atonement, and in all the value of Him who accomplished it—and God estimates—and He only *could* estimate the perfection of it—it is in this that we stand. What a relief for us ever so to regard ourselves.

In the matter of taking the sum, or of “making a survey” of God’s people, this comes clearly out (now that Christ is come) in Exodus xxx. in the following instruction given to Moses. Each individual comes up alone, but each is on the same ground, whether rich or poor.

“When thou takest the sum of the children of Israel” (the Septuagint reads, “When thou takest an account in the surveying of the children of Israel”) “after their number, then they shall give every man a ransom for his soul unto the Lord, when thou numberest them; that there be no plague among them, when thou numberest them. This they shall give, every one that passeth among them that are numbered, half a shekel after the shekel of the sanctuary:” (a shekel is twenty gerahs:) “an half shekel shall be the offering of the Lord. Every one that passeth among them that are numbered, from twenty years old and above, shall give an offering unto the Lord. The rich shall not give more,

and the poor shall not give less, than half a shekel, when they give an offering unto the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls. And thou shalt take the atonement money of the children of Israel, and shalt appoint it for the service of the tabernacle of the congregation; that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord, to make an atonement for your souls."

When we consider ourselves, and how we stand individually before God, it is well to be reminded that we are (as also were God's people Israel) already, and for a long time, in all the value of the blood of the Lamb and of the redemption out of Egypt. The Red Sea was the close of their history there—from it they were brought to God, as Exodus xv. says, and the wilderness journey commenced. This offering of atonement money was only a memorial of the great fact, the ground on which they each one stood with God—"that it may be a memorial unto the children of Israel before the Lord." This chapter does not give us the *reason* for the age of those who were numbered being fixed at "twenty years old and above," but Numbers i. does. It adds, "All that are able to go forth to war in Israel." These, therefore, were the only ones to be thus numbered or taken account of. If a man is not able to stand before the *enemy*, he is at present of no account. He is not yet on the ground of God's full age, in the experience of his soul, and is therefore not one of the "perfect" named in 1 Cor. ii. The Corinthians had fallen under the power of the enemy—the seductions of the world—and the apostle could not address them as "perfect," or full grown. Some of the saints of that day *were* of full age. Hence he

says, "Howbeit we speak wisdom among them that are perfect."

To be of full age, I must be in my own soul in the *conscious* value of the atonement before God. Blessed position, known in this world! Such a man lifts up his head boldly, strong (though not in natural strength) to meet both the *open* opposition, as well as all the *wily* seductions of the foe, for these are the two forms in which he approaches us now. The enemy in the wilderness is either "Amalek" open opposition (as brought out in Exodus xvii.), or he is before us as "Moab" (the fraternizing, seductions of Numbers xxv.). His object in both cases is the same—to hinder us from *going on*, and from manifesting to all that we are pilgrims and strangers here.

Now of what account is a Christian who is *not going on*, and so showing this out? Clearly in the type, an Israelite who could not stand before the enemy, because he was not of full age, was not counted. If we regard ourselves apart from the atonement, it only ministers to fleshly pride, we STOP, and fall into the hands of the enemy, and then the "plague," from which the memorial atonement money would have shielded us, has already begun. God cannot own anything of man, or of this "present evil age," and at Corinth, because they *did* own it, Paul says, "Many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." They were saints, but they did not overcome the world and its prince. "Ye have reigned as kings without us." They were plagued that they might not settle down here, and might not be condemned with the world.

The atonement makes *everything* of God and *nothing* of us. This surely, every believer will admit, is as



it should be. Apart from Christ and His work on my behalf, *I am nothing*, but regarded on the ground of it my blessing is illimitable. Why should I ever regard myself then in any other connection? My privilege is to think of myself as God thinks of me; to this, in my life, the Spirit seeks to *transform* me, and every other way of looking at myself savours of the "plague," which God must mete out, sooner or later, to all that is not of Christ.

In 1 Chron. xxi., we read a sad story of the numbering of God's people, and of the plague that fell upon them on account of it. As far as we know, the suggestion of the numbering of the people, apart from the atonement offering, was (and always is) the work of Satan. We have seen that they *may* be numbered, or taken account of, as on the ground of the atonement (and it is only thus that Balaam is made to take account of them, in the beautiful passage, Numbers xxiii., xxiv., the burnt offering being before him). But so far as we know, this was forgotten by David. And what is the tendency, then, of taking the names? Pride, and nothing else. To be similarly enrolled on the earth now—to get a *name*, either as an individual, or as a company, where Christ got only *reproach*—is a sad comment on what man is, after all the teaching that we, as CHRISTIANS, have received—viz., as unfolded in one word: "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." But observe, what was it that stopped the plague? It was placing Israel before God on the ground of "atonement." The angel of judgment, with his sword yet drawn, stood by the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite. Then the king lifted up his eyes (condemned himself), and received a

message from God to set up an altar unto the Lord in the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite, and there he offered burnt offerings and peace offerings, and then, "The Lord commanded the angel, and he put up his sword again into the sheath."

It is the same lesson. The sacrifice that went up from that spot stayed the sword of judgment. But it also declared afresh that the *only* ground, and through grace we may say *the all-sufficient ground*, on which, as saints, we can estimate ourselves, is this, what God has made us, through the work of our Lord Jesus Christ. We must maintain it, or we shall never walk accordingly.

May the Lord grant that we may never look upon, or consider, ourselves *apart from the atonement*, for it is only as thus consciously "full grown" that we are able to meet the enemy. It is then true of such that "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier." As soldiers we shall have to meet open *opposition*, and if not that, *seduction*; but it remains true (be it which it may) that our privilege is to "be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might," and this, apart from the knowledge of the one perfect atonement, we could not be. As acting in the value of the atonement I am in the panoply, and in antagonism to the enemy, who is seeking to make me settle down here. I make no truce with him, but am manifestly going on, running with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of faith (Heb. xii.), Himself being the *only perfect* model, set before me day by day.

H. C. A.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

1 JOHN ii. 14-17.

NOTHING further is said of the fathers but that they have known\* Him that is from the beginning. Christ is all for them, and they have arrived at that state of maturity where the world's true worth is known, that is, as being equal to zero, and their hearts have known, and still know, the all-sufficiency of Christ.

The young men are strong, and the word of God abides in them, and they have overcome\* the wicked one. The world is still the same as when Cain built his city without God, and the danger in this case is being seduced by it; for though the evil one has been overcome, and the power of God's word has thus made itself felt, yet the attractions of the great system remain, and may turn aside the heart from the Lord.

The world is not unlike some huge co-operative store, where you may buy anything you please; the "Vanity Fair" of John Bunyan, a kind of standing fair, where the prince of this world displays his wares, taking care to make the whole thing as pleasing as possible to the senses. (I have heard that in the great gambling centres, such as Monte Carlo, music is provided gratis.) The danger would be for the young men to be led astray by the beauties of this "cosmos,"

\* It has often been explained that the state produced continues: the fathers have known, and they know still. They do not cease to know Him who is from the beginning. It is so with the young men; they have overcome, and still are overcoming, the wicked one.

or ornate system. The Holy Ghost, however, shows here its true moral character, hidden under its blaze of glittering products—"the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." There are snakes hidden beneath the grass; and where all appears to be so bright and flourishing, the lust and pride of man's heart are developed and encouraged by the Tempter. What could there be in common with the Father in all this? Nay, there is nothing but antagonism to His will. His love is known to His children; and notice, again, that obedience goes with it. The world and its lust pass away, but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

What a contrast between the whole history of this world, which passes away like the colours in a dissolving view, as deep eternal realities take their place, and the abiding portion of God's obedient children becomes more defined. In that which is transitory, let us learn the value of that which is eternal!

The little children, or babes, have a much longer portion of the letter addressed to them than the fathers and the young men. It is well to notice that they have all that which properly characterizes a Christian, that is the knowledge of the Father, and the unction (the Holy Ghost) from the Holy One, and thus they have no need to go to any worldly sources of knowledge. It does not mean, when it is said that they know all things, that they have no progress to make, but that God has given them His Spirit, who shall certainly lead them into all the truth.

The "last hour," of verse 18, has very often been explained, and it is a great mercy for us that the Apostle John was allowed to remain upon earth until

all the characteristics of the last apostacy (to be matured in time) had begun to show themselves. No doubt the Antichrist will be revealed in his time, but there are already many antichrists, that is to say, many who are imbued with the spirit of exalting man (the first man), and deifying him. I have seen such sentiments as the following by those who are supposed to be the "leaders of thought" in this enlightened century, that is, that man's great object should be to get all he can out of this planet where he is living (without God, of course): and further still, that the God so long sought for, is man himself!

This will all end with the pretentious man of sin who will exalt himself against all that is called God, or is an object of veneration; but in the meantime the spirit of Antichrist is here, and is really the spirit of the age. The babes, however, have nothing to fear; no multiplicity of antichrists need astonish them, and the safeguard given to them is that no lie is of the truth.

The Antichrist will deny the Father and the Son, and that Jesus is the Christ. Now these are atrocious falsehoods, and the faithful in the last days will be kept from believing them. In the meantime, as evil ripens and the spirit of falsehood becomes more general, the sure refuge of the babes is that what they had heard from the beginning should abide in them; so should they abide, in the true communion, in the Son and in the Father. They will not be deceived by any one speaking of the "universal fatherhood" of God, or anything of the kind; for they will not be satisfied at anything short of the true confession of the Son: "who-soever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father."

The path of the babes is simple, for God has given them an unction by which their spiritual sense has been quickened, so as to discern the truth as to the person of the Son, and in Him to know the Father. The three persons of the blessed Trinity are thus known, even to the babes; and as they thus know the one true God fully revealed, they are taught by the unction abiding in them to distinguish between truth and all the wicked assertions of the father of lies. They are taught, too, to abide in the Son and in the Father in bright and happy communion.

With this they need not go to the Antichrist's school to learn any new theology; they are happy and quiet in the truth.

E. L. B.

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WE are in Christ, and in Him we are perfectly accepted. He is our righteousness—a righteousness which is fit for the glory; for He is in the glory according to this righteousness. But He is also *in us* as our life, and according to the power of the Spirit. This life in itself is perfect, and cannot sin; but we must also have a sanctifying object before us. Therefore the Holy Spirit takes what is in Christ, and reveals it to us; yea, He reveals to us all that is up there where Christ is, and where the Father is also. By this we grow objectively in that which is heavenly; we are weaned from the world, live in spirit in the heavenly places, enjoy the Father's love, and become thus holy in practical ways.

J. N. D.

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IT is the knowledge of a glorified Christ by the Holy Ghost which is the formative power of holiness.

## NADAB AND ABIHU.

THE record of the impious failure of Nadab and Abihu, and of the swift judgment that fell upon them, as recorded in Leviticus x., has been written for our admonition, and, indeed, the lessons taught us in it are as plain as they are solemn and important. Moses at once seeks to impress upon Aaron, what was so distinctly expressed thereby—Jehovah will be sanctified in those that draw nigh to Him, and will be glorified before all the people. His holiness and His glory must be maintained before all.

The near and privileged place had just been granted to Aaron and his sons. The privilege and honour of the priesthood had just been conferred upon them, and it was the day of their inauguration into that new and holy position, by virtue of which they might draw near to God, and present offerings and sacrifices to Him, and burn sweet incense before Him. All had been of divine appointment, and that which alone could be suitable to Him by those who drew nigh to Him had also been plainly declared. No place had been left for man's thoughts, ideas, or judgments. All things (according to the character and order of that dispensation) were of God.

God was thereby setting forth (in type) the great and marvellous truth that His purpose was to have man near and acceptable to Him. But He was also plainly declaring that there was only one divinely provided, and divinely ordered, way whereby this

could be realized. As to their persons, they must first have been the subjects (figuratively) of the renewing and cleansing action of the word and Spirit of God; and as to their standing and place, it must be on the ground of blood-shedding, and of all the value and sweet savour of the offerings. Thus, nothing of themselves—of what was characteristic of them in a natural way—was owned or allowed in the least; for God has always maintained this important truth, that man in the flesh could never have any place or footing before Him. Nor, moreover (and this is where failure so often comes in, as indeed it was in the case we are considering), can anything of man—that is man in nature, or according to nature and the flesh—be accepted or owned if presented to Him, or introduced into His presence *by those whom He has privileged and fitted personally to draw nigh to Him.*

Nadab and Abihu were indifferent as to this,—they presumed to come into His presence and to burn incense before Him (that which typified the fragrance of Christ before God), with “strange fire” (not taken from off the altar, see Isaiah vi. 6.) which He commanded them not. If we are to be before God in the acceptance and preciousness of Jesus, it is because He has suffered the judgment of God on the cross, of which the altar was a type, and all true communion with God, and enjoyment of, and worship in, His presence, can only be on this basis, and *as our souls are in the true and real sense of this.*

The fire had just descended from heaven and fed (so to speak) upon the sacrifice laid upon the altar, thus expressing, typically, God’s full acceptance of the work of Christ, as perfectly meeting His holy



judgment against sin, and glorifying Him about it. All approach to God and worship before Him, must be in the recognition of the truth and reality of this. The application of this truth to us is expressed in Phil. iii., "We are the circumcision, who worship in (or "by") the Spirit of God, and rejoice in Christ Jesus and have *no confidence* in the flesh." Our praise and worship must not be the fruit of natural excitement, nor religious sentimentality, nor yet in virtue of any service in which we may be engaged, but as "the circumcision" —as those who have learned the unfitness for God of all that we were in ourselves, and the judgment and setting aside of it all in the death of Christ, but who are now "complete in Him." (See Colossians ii. 10.)

All this we have set forth in type in the case of Aaron's sons, as we have already briefly noticed. But, alas! that bright day in Israel's history was soon clouded over through the rashness and folly of Nadab and Abihu, who failed to order their approach to Him according to the holiness and sanctity due to His presence, and ignored the altar, which was the basis of all their blessing and fitness for His presence. It might seem a little thing in human judgment, but Jehovah marked it as a most serious and solemn neglect of what was due and suitable to Him.

In its application to us it is a warning against forgetting, or ignoring, that judgment of all that we are naturally, as expressed by the sufferings and death of Jesus on the cross. It is true we have boldness to enter into the holiest, but it is "by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, *that is to say, His flesh,*" and it is "by Him," that we are exhorted to

"offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually," and again it is in "Christ Jesus" that we, who were sometime afar off, are "made nigh *by the blood of Christ.*"

It is well that we should know and appreciate our privileges, and the place of nearness into which we have been brought, but it is also of the utmost importance that we should ever bear in mind the way all this has been secured for us, and what is due to Him who has "reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ," through making Him who knew no sin to be sin for us. Therefore, in drawing nigh to Him, nothing of nature or of the flesh, religious or otherwise, can be allowed.

Nadab and Abihu paid dearly for their rashness, and though we are living in a day of grace, yet it is not that God is any less jealous of His glory, or more tolerant of what is unsuitable to Himself. Far from it. What enters the Holiest must be suitable for the Holiest. We may fail to discern what is suitable, if under the influence of nature or the flesh, and as a result, instead of presenting a sweet savour of Christ to God, there is that which practically puts us at a moral distance from Him, as savouring of that to which Christ died.

Indeed, we do well to bear in mind that what Christ died *to*, as well as what He died *for*, can never be allowed in the presence of God. We are considering now the position of believers as *priests*—as a *holy* priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. We have to do with natural things and relationships in our life here, but in our capacity as priests and worshippers we must not

introduce what savours of man, nor the fruit that grows in nature's garden, so to speak. The fire used by Aaron's sons would be all right outside the tabernacle, but it must not be applied to the sweet incense in the presence of God. In His presence there must only be what suits Him, and that is what is of Christ—not of ourselves.

Aaron and his two remaining sons are admonished, subsequent to the death of Nadab and Abihu, to be careful to avoid all that would hinder their proper discernment of what suited God. They too, indeed, had failed, but it was more through human weakness—they plead incompetency as to their not having eaten the sin offering. They were not practically up to their new and honoured position, and they own it. But their case was different from that of Nadab and Abihu. These had no excuse—the forwardness of the flesh was sadly manifest with them, and met its deserts—"they died before the Lord." He distinguishes between their case and that of Aaron and the others. He bears with the latter, though He seeks their profit by what had happened, instructing and admonishing them, that they may be exercised as to what was due and suitable to Himself. He has, moreover, written these things for *our* profit. He would have us exercised as to what suits and glorifies Him. He has called us with a holy calling, and given us a wondrous place of nearness and privilege to Himself, and He would have us enjoying it, but this can only truly be in the practical refusal of all that to which Christ died, and in the appreciation by our souls of all that Christ is, and has done for God's glory. The Spirit of God has been given to us as the power for

this. Our worship is to be "by the Spirit of God." (Phil. iii. 3.) Our sacrifices are to be "spiritual sacrifices." (1 Pet. ii. 5.) Our prayers are to be "in the Holy Ghost." (Jude 20.) This allows no place for natural excitement, or human wisdom, or fleshly piety, in our approach to God, whether in the assembly or privately.

We are before God only in virtue of the death of Christ, and in His acceptance, and it is as our souls are in the sense of this by the Spirit of God that we eschew what is of self in our approach to Him, conscious that we are complete in Christ, accepted in Him; in short, that we are on new creation ground, where "all things are of God," and where "Christ is everything and in all."

S. M. A.

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#### A NOTE.

SOME objection has been taken to our explanation of the term "naked" in 2 Cor. v. 3, in the April number. It was taken as a contrast between the disembodied state and being clothed with the resurrection body—"our house which is from heaven." The ground of this interpretation was in the word "we": "if so be that being clothed *we* shall not be found naked." Great difference of judgment has ever prevailed on the subject; and it is quite possible that "naked" may refer to those who will be left behind at the Lord's coming; that is, to the unconverted. In this case, it will be equivalent to being without Christ.

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## GOOD TIDINGS.

“The Gospel of God, concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord.”

THE Gospel is of God,  
 It tells us of “His Son,”  
 He, Jesus Christ our Lord,  
 By power God’s will hath done.  
 By power He bruised the serpent’s head,  
 By power God raised Him from the dead.

The Holy Spirit came  
 On Jesus from above,  
 Not “whirlwind” nor as “flame,”  
 But lighting “as a dove.”  
 And lo, from Heaven, the Father’s voice  
 Owned Him in whom He doth rejoice.

This Saviour, Christ the Lord,  
 ’Mid guilty sinners came,  
 Maintained the truth of God,  
 Bore grief, reproach, and shame.  
 Unwearied in His love, His grace,  
 He took the guilty sinner’s place.

Alone, upon the cross,  
 God’s judgment Jesus bore.  
 He paid in full the cost  
 Of glory evermore.  
 His precious blood was freely shed,  
 This “Jesus” liveth, and was dead.

By resurrection now  
 God doth His rights declare,  
 Let men and angels bow  
 To JESUS everywhere.  
 For to this Man, God’s Son, is given  
 All power on earth, all power in Heaven.

## A SERIES OF SCRIPTURE QUESTIONS.

(1) WHAT is the meaning of "the true tabernacle," in Hebrews viii. 2?

*Answer.* If it be remembered that the tabernacle in the wilderness was a revelation of heavenly things, that it was made after the pattern showed to Moses on the mount, it will be at once apprehended that the "true tabernacle" signifies the place and scene of the exercise of the Lord's heavenly priesthood. Thus everywhere in this epistle the earthly tabernacle is regarded as the antitype of the heavenly, as, for example, where we read, "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures (antitypes) of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." (Chap. ix. 24.)

(2) Does "heaven itself" and the "presence of God" refer to the same thing?

*Answer.* "Heaven itself" is the place into which Christ has entered, whereas the presence (literally, the "face") of God teaches us that it is before God in that place that He appears as the great High Priest, as the representative of His people. This is clear from the words "for us," or "on our behalf," at the end of the verse. (ix. 24.) As Aaron was to bear the names of the twelve tribes on his shoulders and on his heart before Jehovah, so Christ, in a more excellent way, presents and represents all His people, in the exercise of His priesthood, before God, and, it may

be added, in all the acceptance of His own person, and in the perfect efficacy of His work.

(3) Is the "holiest," in chap. x. 19, the same as "holy place," in chap. ix. 12?

*Answer.* The words in the original are the same in both scriptures; and no doubt the same place is indicated. But it may be noted that the words here used are general, and might be rendered "holy things," or "holy places," and would thus cover the whole of the heavenly sanctuary, that is, if we apply them, for the moment, to the earthly tabernacle, the holy place as well as the holy of holies. There is another expression in chap. ix. 3 which could only be translated "holy of holies," or "holiest"; but as already said, the more general terms in ix. 12 and x. 19 cannot but refer to this, because they refer to the place into which Christ has gone as the great high Priest.

(4) Does not "boldness to enter" show that a believer has now access to God by the blood of Jesus?

*Answer.* It is not exactly "by" the blood that we have access; the meaning of the expression is "in virtue of," or "in the power of," and it teaches that it is in the efficacy of the blood of Jesus that we find our absolute and indefeasible title of entrance. But it must be noted that it is by a new and living way, which Christ has initiated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, that we can alone enter. In other words, Christ entered through death and resurrection, and it was thus He opened up the new and living way. To enter, therefore, into the holiest, we must travel by the same path—through death and resurrection—only in our case morally; for the

holiest is outside of this scene, and only to be approached through the pathway of death and resurrection. To understand this is of all importance.

(5) If the way is thus opened, what is it that hinders our enjoyment of access?

*Answer.* The answer to this question is found in v. 22, where we have the exhortation to "draw near." Two things are in this scripture—the title to draw near, and the practical condition of soul, without which the title cannot be used. The title lies in the words, "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water"; the condition of soul necessary for the enjoyment of the title is expressed in the words, "a true heart in full assurance of faith." A true heart is one that has no reserves from God, nothing unconfessed or unjudged (compare 1 John iii. 19–22); and full assurance of faith is entire confidence in the perfect and abiding efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ, combined with unshaken trust in God and His grace, as displayed in Him who by His one offering hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified. (v. 14.) Indeed, it is only when we are in the knowledge of God's grace in redemption that we can welcome the action of the light which exposes our hearts before God, and desire that everything which is unsuited to His presence should be removed. To sum up, then, the only thing to hinder our access, when we possess the title, is the neglect of self-judgment and confession, the absence of a true heart.

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“FOR HIS NAME’S SAKE.”

THERE are two or three expressions which may be considered under this head. A shade of difference may be discerned in their meaning; but, in their practical application, they have, to all intents and purposes, the same force. One might be rendered, “on account,” or “by reason, of His name”; another as the title of this paper; and yet another, “on behalf of His name.” In all three alike the fundamental idea is the value of the name to the one acting, enduring, or suffering; and this will also find, as we hope to see, an exemplification in God’s actings of grace towards His people. The words, “Thy name is as ointment poured forth,” have already been before us, and the expressions now to be adduced will furnish another illustration of the fact that it is the fragrance of the name of Christ which delights both the heart of God, and the hearts of His people. Hence it is, as we read in connection with the blessings of His righteous sway during the thousand years, that “His name shall endure for ever: His name shall be continued as long as the sun: and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed.” Yea, throughout eternity we shall continue the song we have learned on earth:

“Thy name we love, Lord Jesus,  
 And lowly bow before Thee;  
 And while we live, to Thee we give  
 All blessing, worship, glory.”

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In the first case which will come before us, it is the value of the name to God as affording the basis of the exercise of His forgiving love. The apostle John thus says, "I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for His name's sake." (1 John ii. 12.) The whole truth of grace is contained in this short statement; for the term "little children" in this scripture comprises the whole family of God. We learn then from it, that in the forgiveness of sins God acts solely on the ground of the value of the name of His beloved Son, but in virtue of His name as the One who glorified Him on the earth, and finished the work which He gave Him to do. What misconceptions would be cleared away from the minds of anxious souls, if this simple truth were but apprehended! For then, instead of spending weary days in searching for some good thing or merit in themselves, on which to rest for acceptance before God, or as an undoubted evidence of their conversion, they would perceive that if they are to be saved, it must be wholly through what Christ is to God. Let all such, therefore, prayerfully ponder upon the words "for His name's sake," inasmuch as they show, beyond the possibility of doubt or mistake, that God's attitude towards all who come to Him, confessing their sins, depends entirely upon His estimate of the value of the name of that Blessed One who now sits at His right hand. What an unchanging and immovable rock is thus provided for our souls—that Rock of Ages, indeed, on which we may rest for ever in perfect peace, a peace which no change of feeling, or experience, need ever affect. Let us, then, never cease to proclaim this blessed truth to sin-stricken and weary souls, for it is the very kernel of God's glad tidings to men in this day of grace.

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And, not only have we thus received the forgiveness of our sins, but our feet are also kept, while passing through the wilderness, in the same way. We read, for example, in Psalm xxiii.: "He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake." That is, God has undertaken everything for us on the same ground as that on which He has forgiven our sins. The motive for all His activities of grace and love, of His unchanging attitude, of His watchful care and protection, is found in Christ, and not in ourselves. This is blessedly exemplified in the Psalm whence the above citation is taken; only here, it is the Lord as our Shepherd, acting rather from His own heart, and from the relationship which He has been pleased to assume towards His people. The simple argument is, if He has become our Shepherd, He will provide everything necessary for us, whether in our pilgrim path, or as passing through the valley of the shadow of death. But the verse quoted shows that it is for His own name's sake that He maintains these relationships of grace. If we are weary, disheartened, discouraged, or depressed, He restores our souls; and, as needing constant guidance, with every desire to tread in His paths, but often unable to discern them, He has placed Himself at our head, and leads us in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake. If, then, the name of Christ is so unspeakably precious to God, and if it constitutes the all-efficacious basis of His dealings with us, how we should zealously seek to be in communion with Him about it, and thus, having some feeble sense of its value, delight to lose ourselves in it, resting in it in our approaches to God, even as He rests in it in His relationships with us.

Communion with the heart of God, indeed, as to the preciousness of the name of Christ, is the true secret of the unwearying devotedness and courage of many of His followers. The apostle Paul may be mentioned as a special illustration of this, even though the words, "for His name's sake," be not used. In captivity, and no longer able to deliver his blessed message, it was his solace, notwithstanding the mixed motives that governed the activity of many, that Christ was preached, and in this he both did and would rejoice, in the prospect of death at any moment; for he knew not but that he might be thrown to the lions immediately. All his expectation and hope was that he might be so kept and sustained that Christ might be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. Absorbed in his object, Christ alone bounded his horizon; and hence for Christ's sake he was willing to suffer anything and everything, if he might but bring glory to His blessed name. In like manner, we read in another epistle of those who had the name of Christ so indelibly graven upon their hearts that, for His sake, they took joyfully the spoiling of their goods; of others who had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, of bonds and imprisonments; and of others again who were sawn asunder, or slain with the sword, while if some escaped martyrdom, they had to wander about in sheep-skins and goat-skins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented. (Hebrews x., xi.)

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This suffering character of the path of His disciples was often the theme of our Lord's instruction. So far from concealing from them the afflictions and persecutions which they would encounter, He warned

them on every possible occasion of what they would have to endure for His name's sake. Thus, for example, He says, in the sermon on the mount, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake"; at another time, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake"; and yet again, "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you"; "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." So it came to pass; for Paul wrote (citing from the Psalms), "For Thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter." But if our blessed Lord has forewarned us of what may be entailed upon us through the confession of His name, He has also ministered the needed sustainment and consolation. Of Himself, in His pathway through this world, it is written that for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross, despising the shame; and for our encouragement He has left on record these words, "Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life."

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To suffer with Christ is a necessity, in some measure, if we are the children of God; but to suffer for Christ is a privilege attached to fidelity in His service. As an example of this, the case of Peter and John might be adduced. Brought up before the Jewish Council, they had been forbidden to speak or to teach in the

[REDACTED]

name of Jesus; but obeying God rather than men, they proceeded with their blessed work. Once more arrested, after they had been miraculously delivered from prison, they were beaten, and commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus. Were they disheartened or daunted because of what they had to endure? So far from it, they departed from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. (Acts v. 40, 41.) What, then, is the secret of this superiority to shame and suffering? It is the preciousness of Christ to the hearts of His people, the assurance of His presence with them, and the knowledge that even death is but the path of life into His eternal presence. If He for our sakes became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich, it is surely no great thing if we are taught through grace to count, like Moses, the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, and if we are made willing to suffer persecution, and to endure the loss of all things here for His name's sake.

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Yet another instance of the power of the name of Christ may be considered. In John's third epistle we read of some who, "for His name's sake," went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles. The form of the phrase, "for His name's sake," in this scripture exactly coincides with that used of Peter and John in Acts v.; and we thus gather that it was the value of the name of Christ to their hearts that led the latter to rejoice in suffering, and the former to refuse support from the world in His service. Well would it have been for the Church of God if the example of these

devoted servants had been followed. Nothing has so corrupted Christianity as the acceptance of worldly help for the furtherance of its objects. Before the Lord was crucified, He said to His disciples, "When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything? And they said, Nothing." Is He less tender in His care over His servants now that He is glorified at the right hand of God? A noble army of devoted servants in every part of the world will gladly testify that they too, though without assured support from man, and refusing assistance from the world, have lacked nothing. And it would be the commencement of a new era in Christian service, and especially Christian missions, if those engaged in them were to go forth in the same simple faith in the all-sufficiency of the name of their Lord. In the closing days of the history of the Church on earth, may many true labourers be raised up, and be sent forth into the harvest by the Lord of the harvest—men to whom the name of Christ shall be so precious that they may find in it their only motive, the only stimulus for their zeal, and their abundant warrant for entire dependence upon Him for all their needed support.

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The reader will find much edification in tracing out other cases in the Scriptures; and our prayer is that every one who may be encouraged to do so by the perusal of what has been written may find, while so engaged, that his heart is drawn out more fully in the adoration and praise of our blessed Lord and Saviour, and that it may become his one all-absorbing desire, in all his future life, to bring glory to this precious NAME.

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## THE APOSTLE PAUL'S MINISTRY :

ITS MANNER, METHOD, AND MATTER.

ACTS xx.

PART II.

THE method as well as the manner of the apostle's ministry comes before us in Acts xx. They are doubtless interwoven, and yet distinct. The one reveals the *man*, the other the servant. In the one we see character, in the other ability. And both were combined in an eminent degree in this devoted servant. In whichever way we regard him, we see what a remarkable vessel he was, and how conspicuous was the grace of God in him. As a man he was humble, courageous and unselfish; as a servant he was gifted and devoted. He could say, "I laboured more abundantly than they all"; but truly adds, "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." (1 Cor. xv. 10.)

First of all, in verse 20, he says, "I kept back nothing that was profitable unto you." The apostle thought of his hearers and of their profit. He knew very well that what he received he was bound to communicate; he was a steward "of the mysteries of God." (1 Cor. iv. 1.) He was perfectly aware that all that was revealed to him must be for the profit of those to whom he ministered, and he faithfully delivered it. It was to this very assembly he afterwards wrote an epistle which unfolds the highest truth, the subject of which doubtless formed part of his oral instruction, and therefore the apostle considered *it*—



no less than the other parts of revelation—profitable to his hearers. The fact is, under the Spirit's guidance, it is impossible to turn to any part of revealed truth that is not profitable. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable," the same writer says in another epistle. (2 Tim. iii. 16.) There is need to emphasize that word *all*. No doubt there are chapters in God's word—as well as doctrines—of special importance, but the point to be borne in mind is that all are *necessary*. A face with any feature lacking we should consider sadly deformed. The undue prominence of others would not make amends; and so not only should every truth find a place, but its right place, and that in proper proportion.

In the apostle Paul's writings there is no lack of variety; and even in the chapter before us we find his ministry comprised the following themes: repentance and faith, the grace of God, the kingdom of God, and the whole counsel of God. As to ourselves, all scripture lies open before us. Over this vast field—every part of which in turn yields "meat in due season"—we are privileged to roam. The profit of his hearers was what the apostle ever had before him; and under the Spirit's guidance he seems to have known in a wonderful way just what was needed—like his blessed Master, who spake "the word unto them, as they were able to hear it." (Mark iv. 33.)

Here lies the secret of successful ministry—to be so near the Lord as to know what He would have given out. It is one thing to be enjoying a truth ourselves; quite another, whether that will meet the special need of others. Someone has said, "Proclaim every atom of the truth so far as God has taught it you. Harmony

requires that the voice of one doctrine shall not drown the rest, and it also demands that the gentler notes shall not be omitted because of the greater volume of other sounds. All revealed truth in harmonious proportion must be your theme. We would give every portion of Scripture its fair share in our heart and head. Let us abhor all one-sidedness, all exaggeration of one truth and disparagement of another." Such was the method of the apostle Paul; his teaching embraced repentance on the one hand, and the counsel of God on the other, and we may add, all that lies between those two extremes.

He proceeds, "but have showed you, and have taught you." This seems to give a further insight into his method. He was not content with shewing, he explained and enforced what he had shewn. A master may be perfectly acquainted with a mathematical problem, and be able to demonstrate it on the blackboard; it is another thing to be able to impart his knowledge to his pupils. Now this is what the apostle, the "teacher of the Gentiles," sought to do. Hear what he writes to the Colossians (chap. i. 28, 29), "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: whereunto I also labour, striving according to His working, which worketh in me mightily." To this end, the apostle, not content with public ministry, went from house to house. He doubtless found in his visits that much he had said in his public address had not been grasped. Is not this a most important branch of the work? Are we not often surprised when we question our hearers, to find how little they have retained? And what they

do remember they only imperfectly understand. But in another way this visiting work is most important. Not only is the opportunity afforded of meeting difficulties in the minds of Christians, but the servant gains additional experience, which cannot fail to make his public utterances far more useful.

And the apostle warned as well as instructed. "I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears," he says. Evidently this was done individually. What a watchful pastor he was! He not only fed the flock, but warned them of the dangers that threatened them. Little use would it be to feed a flock of sheep if the next moment they were to be eaten by wolves. If the apostle warned the saints at Ephesus of what was coming in, surely there is additional need for warning, now we are in the midst of it. Mark the apostle's words, "ceased not," "night and day," "with tears." May this faithfulness, zeal, and love be found in some measure in every true servant of the Lord.

The apostle warned with *tears*. What a noble example he presents! What a picture of a true servant! He not only preached publicly, he also visited from house to house; he not only taught, he also warned. He could speak to crowds, and he would care for souls individually. Nothing was too great for his mind, nothing too little for his heart. It was not merely preaching to multitudes that engaged his attention. On one occasion he could stand on Mars Hill, and address the learned Athenians, disputing with their ablest philosophers; and on another he could pen a letter of entreaty to a master on behalf of a fugitive slave.

Amidst all this he was constrained to remember

that he was only a servant, and that he was passing off the scene. He could not continue, and so we find him commending these Ephesian elders "to God, and to the word of His grace." The most faithful, the most indefatigable servant must go, but God and His word remain. It is eighteen hundred years and more since *the great apostle of the Gentiles* went to his rest, and all that he predicted has come true; but God and His word are unchanged. What a comfort!

But the apostle had no regrets as regards his own service. While he had opportunity he did all he could. Let us think of what he was able to say in the closing moments of his active service. "I kept back nothing"; "I am pure from the blood of all men"; "I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears"; "I have shewed you all things."

And in addition to all his accumulated labour and the "care of all the churches," he could say, "These hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me." To the Thessalonians he also writes, "For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God." At the same time he fully recognised our Lord's maxim, "the labourer is worthy of his hire." (See 1 Cor. ix.; Phil. iv.; Gal. vi. 6.) Why then, it may be asked, did not the apostle take more advantage of it? On the one hand, this devoted servant would not assert his rights, for fear he should be misunderstood; and on the other, he felt such was the state of some of his converts, who had only just been reclaimed from the grossest darkness, that they needed an object lesson in him, how to gain an honest living.

He says to the Thessalonians, "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you; *not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.* For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat." (2 Thess. iii. 8-10.) These are the reasons, or some of them, why the apostle took this additional burden upon himself, and nobly did he sustain it. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that there were occasions when he did receive, and he fully recognised that to be the divine order. "I robbed other churches," he wrote to the Corinthians, "taking wages of them, to do you service" (2 Cor. xi. 8): and again to the Philippians (chap. iv. 18), "Having received . . . the things which were sent from you, an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing to God." What pure disinterestedness is thus observable in the apostle! What absolute forgetfulness of self! He was a great teacher, a most gifted servant. He could not have a more fitting epitaph than that provided by his own words, "*Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live—Christ.*"

Well may he say to the Ephesian elders, "I have shewed you all things." And well it is for every servant whose life is an exemplification of his own teaching.

And lastly, having spoken to men, he turns to God; "he kneeled down, and prayed with them all." Thus the curtain drops upon the scene, for the record of his active missionary labours closes here. It ends as it began. "Behold, he prayeth." (See Acts ix. 11.)

## THE DELIGHT OF CHRIST IN HIS PEOPLE.

MATTHEW iii. .

HERE we get the principle of Christ's whole personal course, and we get not only what He was, but the delight He took in us. He took us up. His interest is in us, and the expression of this delight was not simply He acts graciously towards men, but He Himself becomes one of them. He went down to death. We go down to death by sin, He by grace; we by disobedience, He by obedience. So He gets by obedience and grace what we get by disobedience and sin. From the first step that we go He takes us up till He has us where He is. Speaking in a general way, I cannot look at Christ in His life and walk till my soul is at peace and settled. If a soul has not settled peace you will find it wants the epistles first, not the gospels; because the epistles are the reasonings of the Holy Ghost on the value of Christ's work. John's writings bring God down here in grace to sinners. Paul takes man up there in righteousness to God. Paul takes man up to God in the light; John brings God down to man. You get in the gospel of John, God brought down to us in our need, get Him talking to the woman at the well, and His disciples wondering, and she finds that in this tired Man at the well she had been speaking to the Lord of glory. I thought, she said, He was a poor, tired Jew, who wanted a drink of water. Oh, He says, if you knew how that God has come so low as to

be dependent on you for a drink of water, you would have confidence in Him at once.

This poor, weary Man was the Lord of life and glory, who not only could lay all her life bare before her in its sin and shame, but could fully meet her heart, meet her need, and attract her to Himself, so that she loses all her sense of fear and shame in her anxiety to bring others to Him too. When our consciences are awakened, we want then to know how a sinner can be just with God, and so we turn to Romans and the reasonings of the epistles; but when the heart knows I am a child, and that the same favour rests on me as on Jesus, I turn back to the gospels and say, I must look at Jesus, what a Saviour He is! I want Him *close, close* to me then, brought close to my eye. Then I look back to the gospel of John, and see God come down in Him. I get in Him One who, instead of driving the one who had the defilement away, drives away the defilement and leaves the poor leper *clean and near Him*. Where do we find the blessed Lord going as soon as He is called out to His public ministry? To the baptism of repentance. Why does He go there? Oh, He says, these poor people going there are those in whom God is working. They are taking the first step in the right direction, and I must go with them. I find this perfectness and love in Him. I cannot leave them to go alone, He says, I must go with them. I need not say He needed no repentance, but it was the first step of that poor remnant, and He will be associated with them. This is not your place, says John. Yes, He says, but "suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." He does not haughtily say

“becometh Me,” but “becometh us.” He takes His place in grace along with us (here it was with the Jew), and the heaven is opened for Him, and the Holy Ghost descends upon Him, and the Father’s voice proclaims Him Son; the model of our place in grace through redemption.

I get heaven opened four times. At His baptism, the Holy Ghost comes down on Him. Then heaven is opened, and the angels of God ascend and descend on the Son of man; that is, the highest angels become His servants. Heaven is opened, and He comes out on the white horse to judge. And between these two I get heaven opened for Stephen to see Him. The heaven was opened to Stephen as to Christ. But mark how the glory of His person is always maintained. When heaven is opened to Stephen it is that he may look in and see Jesus; but when at His baptism heaven was opened, it was for heaven to look at Him. He was not looking at an object in heaven. Heaven was looking at Him. Heaven was never opened for heaven to look down on anything in this earth till that divine blessed One is there. The fulness of the Godhead is in Him, but He is sealed as a Man. The Father says, All My delight is there. What is most despised on earth is the One heaven cannot but be opened to, and the Father cannot keep silence about Him. A Man is the delight of God. Heaven is opened to Him, the Holy Ghost comes down upon Him, and the Father’s voice proclaims Him His Son. And it is of profound interest to see that here first the whole Trinity is fully revealed, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

J. N. D.



## “LO, WE BE HERE”

**THERE** are times when self-concealment is infinitely better than activity, and humiliation than zeal. But self is learned slowly, and we often make the mistake of doing deeds when we should shed tears, and of running when we should be on our knees in true self-judgment.

So it was with Israel in Num. xiv. 40. The twelve spies had returned from their forty-days search of the land, bringing with them the token of its wealth, and saying indeed, that it was a land that flowed with milk and honey. So far so good, but they added the fact that the cities were walled and very great, and that they had seen the children of Anak.

This sufficed to discourage the people; or rather to feed the flame of their unbelief—for the mission of the spies, though allowed by the Lord, was after all but an evidence of the irresolute heart of the people. Granted that the cities were great and the inhabitants tall, what of that if God were with His people? Had He not already triumphed over the power of Egypt? Had He not dried up the waters of the sea? Was His hand shortened now? No, but they left that hand out of account. They walked by sight. Faith was inoperative. The aspersion cast on the land by the spies, or, at least, by all save Joshua and Caleb, seems to have been welcome. It suited the state of the people, so that, when these two urged them to advance, saying that if the Lord delighted

in them He would bring them in, they bade stone them with stones!

The occasion was as critical as it was solemn. A general mutiny had arisen. The whole assembly had rebelled against God. "Let us make a captain," they said, "and let us return into Egypt!" In a moment they would undo all the mighty victories that grace and power had won. Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before the assembly in the silence of humiliation, whilst Joshua and Caleb stood with more than human courage in the face of that six hundred thousand mutineers, and pleaded for God and duty.

A wonderful sight, indeed! Four men confronted this host of rebels—two of them, old and heart-broken, on their faces before the God who had been offended; two of them, young, valorous, and faithful, men for the crisis, risking their lives for the sake of the truth, and pleading with their fellows with an energy that only love could produce! These men acted for God! Such crises occur, and if in Moses and Aaron we see absolute dependence on God, in Joshua and Caleb we may witness the self-renouncing devotedness of love. What a picture! Shall we weep as we regard the perverted multitude, or rejoice as we behold the grace of the four faithful servants of God? Shall not each side of the picture influence us aright? Shall we not shrink from the unbelief of the one, and seek to emulate the bold courage of the other? But how could four feeble men stay such a tide of evil? Well, they could not; but let us remember that God is ever a spectator of His people's ways, and so we read that "the glory of the Lord appeared in the tabernacle of the congregation." He interposed for further encouragement of faith, and for

the punishment of rebellion. Better to side with God and four men, or even alone, than to have the company of 600,000 in a path of sin. If alone *with God*, you have His grace, even though you may be tried in various ways. If surrounded by crowds of unfaithful men, you lack the one spring of power—you have not God.

The people now discovered the awful mistake they had made. They had acted against God. Their carcasses should fall in the wilderness, and their children alone, with Joshua and Caleb, should know the land which they had despised. They spent the night in contemplating their sin, and early in the morning they rose, and gat them to the top of the hill, saying, "*Lo, we be here*, and will go up unto the place which the Lord hath promised; for we have sinned."

Ah! had the result of that night's deliberation been that they went down into the valley, instead of up to the top of the mountain, had they gone down instead of up, had they humbled instead of exalted themselves, how different the result would certainly have been! Grace is so ready to pardon! But the top of the mountain, the appearance of zeal, the glamour of an armed host, the noise of high sounding words, "*Lo, we be here, and will go up*"—all that was far more pleasing to the flesh, and more in keeping with the unjudged spirit of rebellion that marked them, than self-judgment before an offended God could have been. "*Lo! we be here.*" Who are the "*we*"? Just the same crowds as had said so flippantly a few months earlier under Sinai, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." (Ex. xix. 8.) The same "*we*" who had never learned their absolute need of grace, and their own spiritual

inability to obey one of God's words, or to advance one step towards the land of promise.

Alas, that treacherous "*we*"! How often has God been shut out by the idea of our own sufficiency. But just in proportion as "*we be here*," so is God not here. The excellency of the power is of God, and not of us. Then, inversely, just as the Spirit of God is our power, so is self sunk, and morally displaced. This last is beautifully true of the four men to whom, in their day, the interests of God were paramount, whilst the former is fearfully visible in the rebellion of the people.

How bright a contrast to the "*We be here*" of Israel in Numbers xiv. are the words of Paul, whilst he realized that to him had been committed the unfolding of the mystery in Ephesians iii. It was undoubtedly the contemplation of that revelation, so wondrous and so blessed, that led him to say that he was not only the least of saints, but the least of all saints; and not only the least of all saints, but less than the least of all saints. Could he have taken lower ground? Impossible! Then where was *he*? Self was nowhere. There was no "*I am here*" in such a case.

And depend upon it, beloved, that self is not overcome by efforts to get rid of it. Its roots are too deep for that. There is but one way. "Our old man is crucified with Him." (Rom. vi. 6.) That is the blessed foundation. Then "reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin." (v. 11.) Not dying, but "dead"; for the Christian is nowhere in Scripture told to die to sin, but to carry about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ, and, practically, to be so heartily occupied with Christ and His interests, as Joshua and Caleb

were with those of God, that the mind, otherwise the instrument of evil, becomes the servant of what is good. That Christ might be magnified in the body, whether by life or by death, was the consuming desire of His servant Paul. (Phil. i. 20.) And again, “Not I, but Christ.” (Gal. ii. 20.)

Instead of the “*We be here*” of Numbers xiv., may we seek more diligently to show out Christ in all our ways.

J. W. S.

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WHEREVER there is conscious strength, there is real weakness; and wherever there is conscious weakness, there is real power.

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THE soul that has Christ for His own sake has Him when it wants Him.

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THE heart that keeps close to Christ gets nothing apart from Him.

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A THING with a will is not a vessel. A person is acting for himself if he has a will; he must not think or will anything for himself, and therefore it says, “Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus.” This is obedience.

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To have Christ instead of ourselves before God, and to have Christ instead of ourselves before the world, is the Alpha and Omega of the Christian life.

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## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

## CHAPTER ii. 28—iii. 3.

THE twenty-eighth verse of the second chapter applies to all Christians. The "children" compose the whole family of God upon earth. The earnest desire of the apostle was that the full effect of his ministry might be known in their abiding in Christ, so that those who had taught them (the apostles) should not be driven out of the Master's presence, as bad workmen,\* at His coming. It has been remarked that we have a very striking instance, in what follows, of the manner in which John writes by the Holy Ghost, that is, of the abstract view taken of the divine nature. The twenty-eighth verse alludes clearly to Christ's coming, whereas the twenty-ninth speaks of being begotten of God; one runs into another. No Christian need fear the word *abstraction*. I recollect one, no longer with us, saying that to understand the New Testament, this faculty was necessary. It is a divinely-given faculty in the things of God; so that the simplest may contemplate the moral beauties of the nature, whether in Christ, or in His own, quite separately from anything else.

And now comes a very precious part of the Epistle, where attention is called to the greatness of the Father's

\* The expression bears this meaning; that is, of bad workmen, driven out of their employer's presence as inefficient. There is the thought of being driven *from* before the Master's face—not merely the confusion of the workmen, but His disapprobation of their bad work.

love, that we should be called the children of God. We are invited to contemplate it. The world knows nothing of this, nor can it know the children of God. It did not know the Son of the Father, when He was here, and there could be no greater antagonism than that which exists between the Father's heart and the spirit of the world. It knew Him not, and to say that our Lord's blessed communion with the Father was manifested to the world, would be to make an egregious mistake.

The children of God have nothing in common with the world; they are unknown. I have often experienced the lonely feeling peculiar to being in some little foreign village, where I had nothing whatever in common with the inhabitants; and this, on a small scale, gives us an illustration of Christians living in the midst of those who do not know them. They are known, of course, as men, as neighbours, as employed in one way or another, but they cannot be known as children of God; and though it be blessedly true that they should be known as being very different to their neighbours, yet the world can never know them as loved of the Father, in their true character as new creatures, and in all the blessed relationship to the Father, and position of children of God. We belong to an order of things that is quite outside the world.

Now are we the children of God, and though we feel all the pressure of the world, and the need of constant dependence upon Him who has called us, as we follow our rejected Lord, yet we have already the blessed liberty of children, knowing the Father's love, which more than repays us for the isolation we feel in the midst of this ungodly world, where our Lord was

crucified. We are immensely happier than the world, and a hundred times repaid, even now, for the scorn and reproach (the little we meet of it) of those who know us not because they knew Him not. May we feel more and more our place of rejection here, and our absolute dependence.

It has not been yet manifested what we shall be. I recollect, in Switzerland, some worldly people coarsely deriding a Christian who was a cripple, and the poor man's reply, as they said to him, "A fine son of God art thou!" "Wait," said the child of God; "ere long I shall come forth in power and splendour, wearing the image of the glorious Christ. I shall be glorious in that day, when the sons of God shall be revealed; and you will not mock then! Beware, lest that day overtake you in your scoffing!"

Notice that here (in 1 John iii.) it is the *children* of God; a term expressing the Father's love, and our dependent position in a world where Christ was rejected.

If He be manifested, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. This is our most blessed hope, and the full accomplishment of our Lord's prayer in John xvii. Everything might fail us here; but the blessed prospect of being like Him, and of seeing Him as He is, can never fail; and the more we have this hope before us, this hope in *Him*, the more do we practically purify ourselves from all that is not according to Him. In the sense of having much more to learn of *His* purity, whose robes are whiter than snow, we have still to purify ourselves; and the more we see the beauty of His absolute holiness, the more do we feel that we have much to do in the work of practical purification.



Soon we shall walk with Him in white, in those courts of the Father's house where no shade can enter, and no spot defile our robes. In the meantime, may this bright and blessed hope be so before us that we may judge everything that is not according to Him!

E. L. B.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

### I.

PHILIPPIANS iv. 8; 1 PETER ii. 9, etc.

THE word translated "virtue" is only found five times in the New Testament—once in Philippians, once in 1 Peter, and three times in 2 Peter. Its meaning may best be gathered from a consideration of these passages. In Philippians iv. 8, it keeps its primary signification of "goodness" or "excellence," and this is in entire harmony with its context, "whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue (any goodness or excellency), and if there be any praise, think on these things." The mind of the believer occupied with such things, and steadfastly excluding what is evil and defiling, will be preserved in the state suited for a growing knowledge of Christ, and for the exhibition of an increasing conformity to His likeness.

The same meaning is attached to the word in 1 Peter ii. 9. In the "royal priesthood" there is an undoubted reference to the Melchizedek glory of our blessed Lord, which will be displayed in Him when He shall sit as a Priest upon His throne. (Zech. vi. 13.) Of this the garments of the high priest of Israel—the

garments for glory and for beauty (Exodus xxviii.)—were the intended symbol. Through association in grace with Christ, believers share with Him in His exaltation and glories (Rev. i. 6); and knowing this by faith, in anticipation of their actual display in glory with our blessed Lord, they are reminded by the apostle that they are called upon, even while in the wilderness, to show forth His excellencies, the moral features of His perfections. In another aspect, it is the life of Jesus, of which Paul speaks, manifested in our bodies. (2 Cor. iv. 10.) The next case gives a different use of the word. "According as His divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue." (2 Peter i. 3.) Without discussing the translation, it may yet be said that "by" glory and virtue would be more exact. Assuming this, we have "glory" as the goal of our divine call, and "virtue" as the quality necessary for treading the path which leads to the goal. To understand this, it should be said that "virtue" was used also to indicate not only moral, but also human excellence, such as courage, energy, etc., and hence "manliness" as expressive of such traits of character. If, then, "glory" in this scripture is set before us as the end of the Christian path, seeing that this path runs through hostile territory, and is beset with enemies and difficulties, what is needed for perseverance in it is spiritual courage, or energy of spiritual life, and this is precisely what "virtue" here means. So also in *v.* 5, having faith, the very next thing required by us is this spiritual energy or courage, to press onwards, so that we may be neither barren nor unfruitful in

the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ, lest otherwise we fall into a cold, indifferent, and backsliding condition.

## II.

REV. i. 17, 18.

Undoubtedly the words "the first and the last" are a divine title, and yet, as the following clause shows, it is "He that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore." To borrow another's language, "He lays His right hand on John, declares Himself the first and the last, Jehovah Himself, but withal the Same that died in love, and has complete power over death and Hades; the Deliverer from it, not the Subjector to it." It is not that Jehovah, the self-existent One, died—though grammatically it so reads—for this was impossible. But the truth is, He who died was—blessed be His name for ever!—Jehovah, yea, God manifest in the flesh. Therein lies the mystery of the unity of His Person; for while as the eternal Son, the second Person of the Trinity, He was, and always will be, unchangeable, immutably the same; as having become man, He is "one blessed Person, God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Even in saying this much, the Lord's own words need to be remembered, "No man knoweth the Son but the Father." The Person of the Son is thus inscrutable. To cultivate increasing intimacy with Himself is ever permitted to the humblest believer; but he has nothing more to learn concerning His Person. "Christ is God, [and] Christ is man, are facts for faith realized in the simplest soul"; and the more they are realized, the more will the heart overflow with praise and adoration,

## A PRAYER-SONG.

WHY should I crave for pleasures  
 In this poor world of sin,  
 When to God's boundless treasures  
 I soon shall enter in ?

Why should earth's idols hold me,  
 Or captivate my heart,  
 When, Lord, by faith I've seen Thee  
 In glory, where Thou art ?

Why should the world's ambition  
 Rage in this heart of mine,  
 When right to give position  
 Should, Lord, be only Thine ?

Should I by lust be driven,  
 Even for what is good ?  
 Surely my God has given  
 All that He wisely could.

\* \* \* \* \*

Nay, then, in Thy sweet favour  
 My pleasure I would find,  
 And where Thou sittest, Saviour,  
 By grace I'd set my mind.

So may no earthly object  
 An idol prove to me ;  
 But may my heart be subject  
 Entirely, Lord, to Thee.

Be my ambition solely  
 To do the will of God,  
 And follow Jesus wholly  
 In the blest path He trod.

Until in glory dwelling,  
 In God's eternal rest,  
 His praises ever telling,  
 In Christ for ever blest.

J. F. Mc B.

## “UNTO HIS NAME.”

IF the term—name—as used of our blessed Lord and Saviour, is expressive of all that He is, it will not cause surprise to find it presented to us in so many different ways and aspects. The necessary connection, indeed, between the living Word and the written word, inasmuch as the latter contains the revelation of the former, affords the explanation. It follows that the more we have Christ Himself before us, in reading the Scriptures, the more fully are we in the mind of the Holy Spirit, and the better are we prepared for the discernment of the rays of His glory, which shine forth from every page. To regard the Scriptures as the display of Christ, of God as revealed in Christ, is a sure preservative from error, as well as the antidote to the rationalistic teachings of the day; while, at the same time, it tends to produce that reverence and adoration in the soul, without which it is impossible to receive the divine communications therein made. Too much stress cannot be laid on this point; and the remark is earnestly commended to the attention of the reader.

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In passing now to consider the phrase, “unto His name,” we propose to select two or three examples of its use to illustrate its significance, and to point out how, in every case, it brings into prominence, whether as Leader, Object, or Centre, the Person of our blessed Lord. We take, first of all, the expression, “Baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts viii. 16; xix. 5.) In both instances, in our translation, it is rendered

"in the name of the Lord Jesus"; but the words are *εἰς τὸ ὄνομα*, etc., which could only be accurately given, we apprehend, as "unto the name," etc.\* This, indeed, can be shown from renderings of the same word in other places. Thus in Acts xix. 3, where the apostle says, "Unto what then were ye baptized?" And they said, "Unto John's baptism," the same word is used by both. Similarly in 1 Cor. x. 2, where we read that "they were all baptized unto Moses," the same word is also employed. It is, therefore, abundantly clear that "unto" should be substituted for "in" in the two scriptures cited; and it is necessary that this should be done, from the fact that "in the name of the Lord" is also found in connection with baptism. (Acts x. 38.) The meaning in this case, as explained in a former paper, will be that those who baptized Cornelius, and those who heard the word with him, acted, by the direction of Peter, on behalf, and under the authority, of the Lord.

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Having now elucidated the force of the term, its meaning may engage our attention. The similar expression in 1 Cor. x. may help us to ascertain it. There can be little question that to be baptized unto Moses, implies the bringing of the people into association with Moses as under his authority. In like manner, to be baptized unto the name of the Lord Jesus, brought those who were baptized on to the ground where His authority was supreme, and into the company of those who owned that authority. The name of the Lord will then express, in this connection, what Christ is, as exalted and glorified as Lord; and the

\* The *Revised Version* has "into" instead of "unto," in both places.

baptized confess Him as such, and own also His claims upon, and His authority over, them. It is not the whole truth of baptism, for Paul teaches that as many as were baptized unto Christ Jesus, were baptized *unto His death*. But we do not enter upon this here, as we desire to confine ourselves to the scripture before us, and to call attention to its meaning. To go no further, then, its import is the absolute authority of Christ as Lord, and the responsibility of the confession of it on the part of those who have been baptized. In a day of profession and declension, it is well to enquire whether souls who have been led on to the ground of Christianity are aware of the responsibilities which they have assumed. Surely the Lord might also say to many of us in this day, "Why call ye Me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" For there never was a time when the spirit of lawlessness was more prevalent, even in combination with the confession of the name and authority of Christ. If the first duty of a soldier is unquestioning obedience, surely a Christian should ever be marked out before the world by his unqualified subjection to the authority of his Lord as expressed in His word, and by his unwearied zeal and devotedness in maintaining the honour of His blessed name. "My people shall be willing in the day of My power."

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Another example of the use of the same phrase may be cited from the Epistle to the Hebrews. There we read, "God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward [or "*unto*"] His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister." (Chap. vi. 10.) In many

respects, this is a most remarkable passage for the preciousness of the truths it contains. It will be observed that here it is the name of God; for Christ, in this epistle, is seen as the High Priest at the right hand of God, where He both represents and intercedes for His people. Still, it is the name of God as revealed in Christ, for in chapter i. we are reminded that the Son is addressed as God. This being so, we have to enquire as to the meaning of the words—unto His name—in this passage. First of all, it is plain that the apostle alludes to ministry to the saints. These Hebrew believers had been doing good, and "communicating," that is, sharing what they possessed, with their fellow-saints who were in need, for they had apprehended the truth that with such sacrifices God was well pleased. (See chap. xiii. 16.) In thus caring, with true brotherly love, for the needs of the saints of God, they were, the apostle says, shewing kindness unto His name.

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But this requires further explanation. It must, then, be remembered that our blessed Lord fully identifies Himself with His people, and that His name is called upon them, as well as entrusted to them to bear, and to maintain His honour, before men. Hence it is that to receive a Christian in the name of Christ, is to receive Christ Himself; and, further, to receive Christ is to receive Him that sent Him. God is thus identified with Christ (not now to speak of their essential unity), and Christ makes Himself one with His people. Turning then to the other side, it will be at once understood, that whatever is ministered to His own, is kindness showed to His name. He Himself has



explained it in the ever-memorable words, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me." So too, in a still deeper sense, he could say to one who had been the bitter and relentless enemy of His people, "Why persecutest thou Me?" How blessed an encouragement, to remember at all times that the Lord regards what is done to His saints as done to Himself! And herein lies also the secret of all true service amongst His people. If they are our object, much as they might benefit by the service, it is not such service as the Lord can commend. In such a case there might be brotherly love, or at least the semblance of it, in exercise, but that which should be the divine spring of it, Christ Himself, would be wanting. To be imbued with this truth, would produce unwearying and incessant devotedness.

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As another instance, we may refer to Matthew xviii. We give the whole passage, "Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name" (the words here are also *εἰς τὸ ἐμὸν ὄνομα*; that is, *unto My name*), "there am I in the midst of them." (Verses 19, 20.) To understand the blessed instruction of this scripture, it should be borne in mind that the chapter "supposes Christ rejected and absent, and the glory of chap. xvii. not yet come. It passes over chap. xvii., to connect itself with chap. xvi.;" and the reason of this is that it deals with the two subjects introduced in chapter xvi., the Church and the kingdom, which should occupy the place of Christ on earth, during the period of His

absence, His session at the right hand of God, where He will remain until His enemies are made His footstool. (Psalm cx.) It may also be pointed out, that in connection with the mention of the assembly in this chapter, provision is made for three things: First, the question of trespass against a brother; second, the administration of discipline, binding and loosing, with its divine ratification, when done according to God; and, lastly, what more immediately concerns us in this paper, the condition of prevailing prayer.

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It will be noticed by the reader that verse 19 commences an additional instruction, as shown by the words, "Again I say unto you," etc., though we cannot doubt that the company, the "two of you," or the "two or three," is connected with the assembly in verse 17. What is added, is the teaching concerning agreement in prayer, rather than anything as regards the Church, except, indeed, the revelation of the wondrous grace which associates the Lord's presence and union in prayer, with any two or three who may be gathered unto His name. So understanding it, everything depends, as will be perceived, upon what is meant by being thus gathered. Speaking generally, it may be said that the essential point is, as "name" expresses the truth of the Person, that the Lord Himself must be the Centre and the Object of the gathering. But then it must also be remembered that His full name is the Lord Jesus Christ in this relationship. His name, as such, speaks therefore of His authority, His Person, and His work. The gathering then must be under, and as subject to, His authority, and also to maintain the truths of His Person and

work. That the gathering power is the Holy Spirit, is evident from the fact that He is here to glorify Christ; and being so, He could not sanction any assembly where the supremacy of Christ was not owned, or where there might be any indifference to the glories of His Person, or to the character of the atonement made upon the cross. Every company, therefore, claiming to be gathered unto His name must answer to these tests.

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This is the condition which the Lord Himself lays down for His own presence—"Where two or three are gathered together unto My name," there am I in the midst of them." It is not even, there *will* I be, but there *am* I; and we then learn that the gathering together, according to His name, ensures His presence. The realisation of it may depend upon our states of soul, as it must do; but the Lord's presence is a fact connected with the fulfilment of a condition. What grace! And what a fount of blessing and power in the midst of His own! An example of this, indeed, is given; for He tells us that He Himself present in the midst of His saints gathered after this manner, is the power to produce agreement in prayer, and the assurance that every such prayer shall be answered by the Father. What room for heart searchings, as to the character of our gatherings, is thus afforded! And what a call it gives to us to examine our own individual states of soul, even if we are truly gathered unto His name! One of Satan's snares is to lead us to take things for granted; the means of avoiding it is to be constantly before God, desiring to have everything, as to ourselves and our associations, exposed by the light of His presence, and to have everything tested by His unerring Word.

## THE EXHORTATION OF BARNABAS.

LIVING, as we are, in the last days of the Church's history here on earth, it is very interesting, as well as helpful, to be able to learn what characterized its earliest days,—what was the teaching and manner of life of the Apostles and their co-workers, and the results of their ministry, as also what they set before those who were converted through their means, for their guidance, encouragement, or warning.

In Acts xi. we have the account of the spread of the gospel amongst the Gentiles, through the agency of some unnamed disciples of the Lord Jesus from Judea, who had been driven out of their own country by persecution. It is very beautiful to see these early Christians, when thus persecuted and scattered, carrying amongst the Gentiles, into whose society they were thus thrown, the precious news of the love and grace of God, as declared by the death, resurrection, and exaltation (as Man) to glory of the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom alone, all the grace of God could flow out to sinful men.

The Lord owned in a marked way their simple, yet powerful, testimony. He honoured these poor suffering disciples, who were enduring, patiently and joyfully, "for His Name sake," the loss of house, home, and country, and much more besides. He, up in heaven—the Man Christ Jesus—was looking down, and marking the sufferings and faith of His loved ones, and while sustaining and comforting them in their fiery trial, He was owning and honouring them as those who could thus suffer for Him, and glorify Him in it all.

What effect *their lives* must have given to the testimony they bore! And this is what the Lord can own, and set His seal upon. Hence we read "The hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed, and turned unto the Lord." (v. 21.)

Let us mark well the expression, by which the Spirit of God describes their conversion,—they "believed, and turned unto the Lord." This is very beautiful and instructive. It furnishes the true key to, and the basis of, the words addressed to them by Barnabas shortly after—he "exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord." This exhortation necessarily supposes that they had first "turned unto the Lord," and flows from it.

But we may here notice another expression which adds its testimony to the above, in making known to us what was chiefly and primarily before the minds and hearts of these early disciples, producing a corresponding effect in so powerful a way on those who received their word. I allude to verse 24, where we read "and much people was *added unto the Lord.*" It was this blessed Person, whom they loved, and in whom believing they rejoiced "with joy unspeakable and full of glory" (see 1 Peter i. 8), who was borne witness to, and presented to the Gentiles as the object of faith, by these despised and suffering saints; and it was *His hand* that wrought with them by the power of that Spirit whom He had sent down from heaven at Pentecost. (See Luke xxiv. 48, 49, and Acts i. 8, and ii. 33.) Hence it was *unto Him* that these believing Gentiles turned, and *unto Him* they were added, and consequently it was *unto Him* that they were exhorted to cleave with "*purpose of heart.*" It is evident, then,

that before this latter exhortation can be rightly understood and acted upon, the blessed Lord must be personally known to the soul as the object of faith and love. We *could* not cleave to Him if there were not faith in Him,—if He were not personally known by faith; and we *would* not cleave to Him if we did not know the love of His heart to us, so as to have “won our heart’s affection.”

For those who do know Him thus now, there is much food for meditation, and much profit to the soul, in this brief but comprehensive summary of the exhortations of Barnabas (“a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith”) to these early Gentile converts.

Let us briefly consider the two parts of the exhortation. To “cleave to the Lord” was the burden of his desire for them. But the way by which alone this could be rightly effected and *insured* is also pressed upon them. “Purpose of heart” must be found in them; and in us too, if we are to *go on* with the Lord here, walking in His ways, doing His will, and growing in the knowledge of, and in moral likeness to, Himself. We must be prepared for the test which is sure to come for all who confess the name of Jesus, and own Him as their Saviour and Lord. It may be, and generally is, first the flood of persecution raised to terrify the heart, and cast down the spirit. If this does not succeed, the enemy seeks to attract the heart from Christ, to allure into some carefully prepared snare. But I need not here enlarge on the various ways of the enemy to destroy all true attachment of the heart to Christ, and devotedness to Him. Their name is legion;—anything and everything that we are most susceptible to, or most unwatchful about, are used by him.

Hence we need "purpose of heart." Woe to them that are at ease as regards this, that think, because they have made a good start, all will be well, or that would use the truth of God's unfailing grace and Christ's unfailing love, to walk carelessly!

The word of God plainly warns against any such thought or course. Not only have we the warnings and teachings of the New Testament, but the living examples of the Old Testament, written for our profit. How striking in this respect is the record of Scripture respecting Rehoboam! We read in 2 Chronicles xii. 14, that Rehoboam sinned "because he *prepared not his heart* to seek the Lord." The negative as regards purpose of heart, led to the positive as regards sinning against the Lord, and what a sad history was the result!

We are as those going through an enemy's land, and unless watchful, and keeping practically near the Lord, with our hearts set upon refusing all the attractions here, and fortified against all the opposition—as we read elsewhere, "in nothing terrified by your adversaries" (Phil. i. 28)—we are sure to be overcome, and the result will be that we shall practically fail to answer to the purpose of God in having us *here*, namely, to be led by the Spirit, to walk in the Spirit, so that God may be glorified in us and by us, by the life of Christ being displayed where He was rejected and refused.

I would again repeat that there can be no cleaving to Him, and no purpose of heart in reference to Him, unless we are *first turned to Him*. Otherwise all will be vain efforts and legal striving. No, He must first be known as "the Object, bright and fair," to our hearts, Who has redeemed us by dying for us,

and our hearts must have the sense of the glorious worth there is in Himself, as well as of the love of His heart, so that we can *truly* say :

“ We love Thee for the glorious worth  
Which in Thyself we see ;  
We love Thee for the shameful cross  
Endured so patiently ! ”

We have a beautiful sample (indeed there are many others) of this purpose of heart and cleaving, in the touching Old Testament story of Ruth and Naomi. “ Ruth clave unto her.” (Ruth i. 14.) Naomi was more to Ruth than all other ties and attractions. Hence we read of her declared purpose to abide with her at all cost, in all places, and through all circumstances. I leave my readers to turn for themselves to the beautiful and eloquent expression she gives to this purpose of her heart, and to notice how constant she was in her attachment and obedience to Naomi. We may also recall what “ a full reward ” was granted to her from the Lord. And oh ! what a reward will be ours if we, while here, are found in the same spirit, and walking in the same steps in regard to Him, Who is “ fairer than all the earth-born race,” and “ perfect in comeliness,” Who appreciates all that tells of devotedness or affection to Himself, and Who will in due time own and reward it as He only can do !

Surely we need to remember and lay well to heart, in these evil days in which our lot is cast—days of indifference and easy-going profession—the blessed Lord’s *own* word of exhortation, “ I come quickly, hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.”

S. M. A.



## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

CHAP. iii. 4-12.

AND now comes the absolutely righteous character of that which is born of God.

It is a great mercy for us to have the reciprocal sentence at the end of the fourth verse, "Sin is lawlessness." It may be said in this case, too, "Lawlessness is sin." It is not, as translated, "Sin is the transgression of the law"; but it is the unbridled will which is not subject to any restraint.

I suppose that there can be no doubt that the lawless and ambitious will of the "anointed cherub" in Ezekiel xxviii. 14, *et seq.*, was sin, nor that he, after his fall, brought it into this world. This contrast between this, and Him who was manifested to take away our sins, is complete. It might be well to compare the eighth chapter of the gospel of John, where the Son, perfect and always absolutely the same, is presented in all the moral glory of His obedience in contrast with Satan, who abode not in the truth.

Notice the use of the perfect at the end of the sixth verse.\*

Righteousness characterises those who have been begotten of God, and it is very remarkable and blessed, in that which follows, that righteousness and love are so connected, I might say blended, that there can be no separating them in the children of God.

\* "Perfect; but 'has not seen nor known Him' implies the continuously present state of not seeing nor knowing: so that with these words the English gives the sense of the Greek perfect."

We shall be obliged, I think, to look again at the twenty-eighth of Ezekiel in order to understand the expression, "from the beginning the devil sins."

He that practises righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous. Practising righteousness is answering to all the different relations and responsibilities in which we are found.\*

He that practises sin is of the devil; I suppose that the beginning here in the eighth verse refers to the first occurrence of iniquity, "till iniquity was found in thee." (Ezekiel xxviii. 15.) Again, in John viii. 44, our Lord says to the unbelieving Jews, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it." I think that this will suffice to show what is meant here by the beginning. Sin, which is lawlessness, began at a certain moment; it is not for us to go beyond what the word of God says of it, and the passage in Ezekiel is enough.

The Eastern Church (as it is called) wasted much time and blood in disputing about the entry of evil into the universe. Milton has some very highly imaginative allusions to it. I believe that all this would lead us astray, and that we have the Scriptures to keep us aright in this, as in everything else. Sin (lawlessness) has entered into the world; its votaries are of the devil, who sins from the beginning. "Thine

\* Notice that this goes much further than barely paying taxes, tradesmen, and using just weights, etc.; it is the responding to all moral relationships and duties.

heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom because of thy brightness."

But now comes the clearest possible distinction between the children of God and the children of the devil. The ninth verse speaks, as indeed does the whole epistle, abstractly of the nature received from God. God's seed abides in him who has been begotten of him, and He cannot sin. This must not be confounded with chapter i. 8-10. In this are manifest the children of God and the children of the devil; righteousness and love on the one hand, unrighteousness and hatred on the other.

I recollect, some time ago, in a small town in France, some one telling me that it was not easy for any one to distinguish between true believers and mere professors in the place. It was a bright day in July, and the deep black shade of the roofs was well-defined along the middle of the street. "Tell me," said I, "is it necessary to attempt to draw a line here, along the edge of the shadow?" "Oh, no!" "Then, if this line of demarcation be so clear, assuredly that one which divides saints from sinners should be clearer."

The children of God and the children of the devil are manifest in this; that is, the question of righteousness and love draws the distinct line. All is shadow on the one side, and all is sunshine on the other (to follow my illustration).

Righteousness and love go together, and when the "beginning" is referred to in verse 11, we understand at once that it is a very different beginning from that of verse 8. It is rather the "beginning" mentioned in the first chapter of this epistle.

Righteousness and love cannot be separated, and we

have a very remarkable instance of the contrast of the two classes just mentioned, seen in the very beginning of history. Here is an ancient story, full of meaning—that of Cain and Abel.

Cain was of the wicked one, and slew his brother. Hatred came out, in this first-born of Adam's race, against the one who was of God. It would be very interesting to compare other accounts of this atrocious murder, and what led to it, with the brief one given to us here. It is evident, from the fourth of Genesis and eleventh of Hebrews, that Abel had God's mind as to the gift he should offer, and approached Him in a right way, through the death of a victim. We learn something more here, for in John's epistle it is a question of the nature that is of God. Cain killed his brother, because his own works were wicked, and Abel's righteous.

It is a very striking example, occurring at the very beginning of all history, and brings vividly before our minds two grand classes, the children of God and the children of the devil. If we remember that righteousness and love characterize the first of these, we may leave the rest of the passage for another time. It will be seen that righteousness, love, and the presence of the Holy Spirit are the three great facts that are seen in the family of God here on earth. May it be given to us to pursue this blessed study with hearts subject to the Lord, and desirous of knowing the true value of this part of His Word.

E. L. B.

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WE are not free to follow Christ until we are delivered from man.

## THE APOSTLE PAUL'S MINISTRY.

### THE MATTER.

HAVING looked at the manner and method of the apostle's ministry, we have now to consider its matter. We have it indicated in the chapter before us.

1. Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The gospel of the grace of God.
3. The kingdom of God.
4. The whole counsel of God.

The apostle naturally begins with man's side, "repentance toward God." He begins there, but he does not stop until he has declared the whole counsel of God.

The repentance spoken of is towards *God*. It is more than mere sorrow for sin, which may be found even in an unconverted person. We truly repent when we see our sins as God sees them. David knew what repentance meant when he exclaimed, "Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in Thy sight." Yes, when we realize what it is to have sinned against a God of holiness and love, we know what true repentance is.

And further, it involves justifying God, and condemning ourselves. In the same verse just quoted from, David continues, "that Thou mightest be justified when Thou speakest, and be clear when Thou judgest." And the next thing is, he entreats God to cleanse him. "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash

me, and I shall be whiter than snow." So the next mark of true repentance is the felt need of a Saviour. This leads us to what the apostle connects with repentance, "faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." Repentance and faith must go together. The bitter herbs were eaten with the flesh of the lamb roast with fire after the blood had been sprinkled outside. It is as we enter into what Christ endured, that repentance becomes more real. Not until there is repentance can there be a felt need of a Saviour, and the deeper the work of repentance, the greater the appreciation of the work of Christ, and the more ardent the love to the Person of Christ. True repentance and faith are connected.

In addition to testifying of repentance and faith, the apostle did not shun to declare all the counsel of God. This embraced both Jew and Gentile; if the Jew would not have it, Paul was pure from the blood of all men. We read that at Corinth, "When they opposed themselves and blasphemed, he shook his raiment, and said unto them, 'Your blood be upon your own heads, I am clean; from henceforth I will go unto the Gentiles.'" Thus, if the Jew refuses the salvation of God, it goes out to the Gentile—God's counsel must stand. And so we read, further on, in the same chapter, what the Lord says to Paul, adding, "for I have much people in this city."

There are two things presented here,—the responsibility of man, and the counsel of God. The endeavour to reconcile these apparently opposing principles has led to endless dispute. The fact is, we arrive at the truth, not by setting one against the other, but by accepting both. It is like a chain, of which both ends can be seen, but which passes out of sight in the

centre. The chain is really one. Some have looked exclusively from one end, others exclusively from the other. One end, so to speak, begins from God, the other begins from the sinner; where they unite, God alone can decide. Our privilege is, without troubling ourselves with what really concerns God alone, to look from both ends in turn. If we read such scriptures as John iii. 16, Rom. iii. 22, Rev. xxii. 17, we are looking from man's side, but if we want to look from the other side, we have only to turn to Rom. viii. 29, 30; Eph. i. 4, etc. The first is for sinners, the other is for saints. The first can be proclaimed everywhere, and to every one; the other is for those who become members of the family circle. Paul observed this distinction. He testified to the Jews and to the Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, but, he says, "I have not shunned to declare unto *you* all the counsel of God." (v. 27.)\*

What was the gospel of the grace of God which Paul preached? It was that which is peculiar to this dispensation; and is not to be confounded with the gospel of the kingdom referred to by the Lord in Matt. xxiv. 14. Paul preached the kingdom of God, but not the *gospel* of the kingdom. The *gospel* he preached was that of the "grace of God." It may be asked, what is the difference? The gospel of the "grace of God" is what He is pleased to do, on the ground of what Christ has accomplished, for those who in themselves deserve nothing but wrath and

\* It may be questioned whether this is an exact interpretation of the "counsel" of God, whether it does not refer rather to the whole scope of Paul's message as minister of the mystery. (See Colossians i. 24-28.)—ED.

endless misery. Righteousness of God is now declared to all, because all have sinned and come short of His glory. It is unto all, but only upon all them that believe. Both Jews and Gentiles are shewn to be "under sin,"—equally deserving judgment—every mouth is stopped, and all subject to the judgment of God. But instead of judgment, grace flows out to all "through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." "Christ has suffered for sins the Just for the unjust that He might bring us to God." Christ has ended the state in which man was, in death; He has been made sin, God has glorified Him, and now begins again from that. Therefore, all who believe see their old state ended in the cross, and every blessing the heart of God delights to bestow becomes theirs; because of the One who in His death was a sweet savour to God. Sin having been dealt with, God's grace is free to have full exercise, in accord with every attribute of His nature.

Having seen that the "gospel of the grace of God" is connected with Christ having been glorified at God's right hand, the answer to His having been made sin, it will help us to see the distinction between that and the "gospel of the kingdom," if we state that the latter is connected with his return to earth. We cannot enter into all the circumstances, but it is well known that after the Church's history on earth is closed, there will be a terrible upheaval, everything will be disorganized, the "man of sin" will be revealed, the Jews will have returned to their own land in unbelief; and it is during this period the "gospel of the kingdom" will be preached, announcing the coming King and a reign of righteousness. As the Lord said



“Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel till the Son of Man be come.”

\* \* \* \* \*

If Paul did not preach the *gospel* of the kingdom, and yet preached the kingdom of God, what was it that he preached? He preached it in its moral aspects. “The kingdom of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.” (Rom. xiv. 17.) He also declared that “no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.” (Eph. v. 5.) He taught them “that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God”; “That if we suffer we shall also reign with him”; and at the same time pointed out that the kingdom of God would be visibly established on earth at the Lord’s second coming. (See 1 Cor. xv. 24–28; 1 Tim. vi. 14–15; 2 Tim. ii. 12; 2 Thes. i. 5–10; ii. 8.)

\* \* \* \* \*

Another thing connected with the kingdom, is *suffering*. “That ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.” (2 Thess. i. 5.) Of the apostle himself, it was said, “I will shew him how great things he must suffer, for My name’s sake.” We do not take kindly to suffering, but if we are faithful to Christ, in His absence, we cannot escape it. “Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you, but rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ’s sufferings; that, when His glory

shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy." (1 Peter iv. 12, 13.)

We are wonderful adepts at settling down. "This is not your rest," needs continually to be sounded in our ears, with the blast of a trumpet. How many are digging in the *earth*, and hiding their talent, or seeking their own things. Is this "loving His appearing"? Do not put it off, by saying, "All true Christians love His appearing." The question is, are we acting like those who do not? We have been considering the Apostle Paul's ministry; it will be well, at the close, if, for a moment, we consider *him*. Very soon, we shall be where he is, and with the One he loved so well; in the meantime, we are left here for a little season. May we make the most of present opportunities. May we serve as he served; that is, from the same motives. His motto was, "the love of Christ constraineth us." He loved Christ's appearing; he fought a good fight, he finished his course, he kept the faith. "Serving the Lord," as he himself says, "with all humility of mind, and with many tears and temptations." "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus." R. E.

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It is better to be thinking of what God is, than of what we are. This looking at ourselves, at the bottom, is really pride—a want of the thorough consciousness that we are good for nothing.

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WHEN we are absorbed in God's presence we lose sight of ourselves.

## EGYPT AND SODOM.

BOTH of these represent the world. Egypt, is the world in its oppression, in which man is treated as the slave of the enemy (Satan), represented by Pharaoh, its prince. Man may groan under it, as he will, when the light shines in, or he may be ignorant of the chains that bind him. In either case, he is but a helpless slave in this world.

Sodom, represents the world more in its *friendly* aspect. It is thus, not oppression, but patronage. It is that active side of the world's policy, which seeks to make me contented with the order of things here. It made a great man of Lot. Everything which has the tendency to make me satisfied with the present order of things, is Sodom.

The opposite of "Egypt," is *Canaan*, and the opposite of "Sodom," is the *Wilderness*, the pilgrim character seen in Abraham, in contrast to Lot. That is "going on," and not settling down, in things here.

If I accept Sodom, instead of the wilderness character, I forfeit communion with God. God declined friendly intercourse with Lot, but sought it with Abraham. To lose communion with God, is no small loss. Many Christians are living without present communion.

H. C. A.

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To accept the truth, in the power of the Spirit, that the first man has passed away for ever from the eye of God, under judgment, is the way of deliverance (though to be experimentally learned) from sin, the law, and the world.

“UNTIL HE COME.”

“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death until He come.”—1 COR. xi. 26.

THY Death, Lord Jesus, death wherein we died :  
 This Jordan saw Thee ; vanished at Thy voice.  
 Thou, Ruler o’er the judgment’s harvest tide,  
 Hast brought us where we now with Thee rejoice.

Man hears not, sees not ; though Thy Death we show :  
 Apart, Thou stayest us with bread and wine,  
 Thy many angels, watching, long to know  
 The marvels of Thy greeting us as Thine.

We show Thy Death, Thy name is shed abroad,  
 No speech nor language could Thy glories tell ;  
 Sent of the Father, Thou, O Son of God !  
 Hast glorified Him here, and vanquished hell.

Sent forth, Thou camest, Lord, of woman born,  
 And, under law none else had honoured, made  
 Last Adam—second Man—Thou, Seed of Corn,  
 Would’st DIE, alone, would’st in the ground be laid.

Seed sown in tears, God’s waterfloods arose ;  
 Went, in His wrath, His terrors, over Thee.  
 God, scorning all the raging of Thy foes,  
 Alone creator of Thy Death must be.

Thou could’st endure the malefactor’s place,  
 Thy friend’s desertion, Thy betrayer’s kiss ;  
 Thou could’st endure the hiding of His face,  
 Whose love, Thy due, sought from Thee *even this*.

Thou in Thine agony wert stretched, *alone*,  
 Earth shook, with mantling horror overspread.  
 The Spirit wrote, for us in light, the groan  
 Thou gavest forth in bowing there Thy head.

Brought low—God's chosen One—beneath the knife,  
 Without assuagement, far from Thy redress ;  
 Exalted, crownèd now, O Prince of Life !  
 Adoring Thee, Thy Father's name we bless.

His will, His pleasure, ever was Thy joy,  
 Him to declare, Thy service, Thy delight.  
 One with Thee, part have we in Thine employ,  
 Part in Thy glory, where shall be no night.

And if a little while Thou bidst us stay  
 Where Thou hast set Thine own, whom Thou dost love,  
 What sweetness in thus learning to obey,  
 Communing with Thee where Thou art, above.

Until Thy voice for us the clouds shall part,  
 Until we meet Thee, Saviour, in the air,  
 Until we see Thee, even as Thou art,  
 Thy cup of blessing, here on earth, we share.

What can earth show us, but Thy Death, Thy tomb ?  
 What but Thy Death have we on earth to show ?  
 Sin-wasted scene, that found for Thee "no room,"  
 World that usurps Thy rights, that wrought Thy woe.

\* \* \* \* \*

Thy death, O Lamb of God ! the fount of song !  
 Deep basis of all triumph and all peace ;  
 Thine enemies were myriads, and strong,  
 Thou, only Victor, makest wars to cease.

Thou unto us art over all things, Head.  
 Robed in Thy perfect likeness we shall be.  
 Come ! Thou who livest, Thou who hast been dead,  
 All things, made new, shall ever worship THEE.

H. K. B. E.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

## I.

## ROMANS iii. 5.

It would completely mar the apostle's argument, we cannot doubt, to attach the same meaning to "the righteousness of God" here as in verse 21, 22. The order of the words is, in fact, different. In every case where it sets forth God's action in grace, but in consistency with all that He is, on the ground of the death and resurrection of Christ, it is "righteousness of God" (chaps. i. 17; iii. 21, 22; 2 Cor. v. 21); here it is "God's righteousness." It is a very distinct proof of the minute accuracy of Scripture in distinguishing between things that differ. This is all the more remarkable here, because fundamentally, the same meaning must be ascribed to the phrase, whether in our scripture, or in the other passages cited; for whatever the sphere or character of God's actings, whether in grace or in judgment, He must act in harmony with all that He is, according to the revelation He has made. And this is God's righteousness—God displaying Himself in what He does in consistency with all His attributes. In the commencement of Rom. iii., the apostle is taking up the Jew on the ground of his privilege and consequent responsibility. Possessing the oracles of God was indeed a privilege, "and if some did not believe, their unbelief would not make the faith—that is, the faithfulness of God, of none effect. God would be true if every man were a liar.

He would fulfil His word. But if His accomplishing it, in spite of man's unfaithfulness, only the more proved His faithfulness, so that He was more glorified through man's unfaithfulness, this did not hinder His judging the evil. Were it so, He could not judge the world at all. If man's unrighteousness made God's righteousness more conspicuous, why should God judge him for it? . . . But it is a general principle (here affirmed) that man's unrighteousness, commending or proving God's righteousness, did not make it unjust to judge." This concise presentation of the apostle's argument explains very clearly the sense in which he uses the phrase, "God's righteousness," in this part of the chapter; and also the difference from its use and application when dealing in verse 21, 22, with the subject of justification. Here all the world has been proved guilty before God; by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified, but, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, God can step in, and justify, and righteously justify, freely by His grace every one who believes in Jesus. Therein is His righteousness seen in that, on the ground of the death and resurrection of Christ, He can righteously account us righteous, "if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." God is light, and God is love; and light and love are blended in all their perfection and excellency in our justification. To see this enables us all the more fully to understand that "being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

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## II.

## SOLOMON'S SONG vii. 9.

A FRENCH version, well known to some of our readers, gives a striking meaning to this verse by dividing it after the words, "the best wine," and making the remainder the language of the Shulamite. If we accept this, it will run as follows (the bridegroom speaking, continues the expression of his delight), "And the roof of thy mouth like the best wine." Here the bride breaks in, and says, "That goeth down sweetly for my beloved, causing the lips of those that are asleep to speak."\* The "best wine" here will be a symbol of the joy begotten by the sense of the Lord's delight in His bride, and when this is experienced, the soul is awakened, and moved to speak, in response to such unutterable love. This, indeed, is the secret of all praise and adoration, for where the heart is filled through the contemplation of His love, it must overflow in worship. Hence the bride proceeds to add in the next verse, "I am my beloved's, and His desire is toward me." She no longer thinks of herself, nor does she dwell upon the fact that she possesses her beloved, but she is now lost in the blissful thought that she belongs to Him, and that, loving her, He finds His joy and delight in her. This is very blessed, and it is at the same time a very precious foretaste of heaven and heavenly joys.

\* See for an alternative translation the *Revised Version*.

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“A NAME WRITTEN . . . HIS NAME IS CALLED THE WORD OF GOD,” ETC.

REVELATION xix. 12, 13.

It is only when we perceive that Revelation is a book of judgment, that we are prepared for the unwonted aspects in which our blessed Lord is here presented. In chapter i., He is seen as judging in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, and in such a manner that even the beloved disciple fell at His feet as dead. Here also—only now in relation to the world—He wears the same judicial mien, betokened by the same feature in that “His eyes were as a flame of fire.” Indeed, it is expressly said in this scripture, that “in righteousness He doth judge and make war.” It is the same Jesus who once sat in lowly guise upon Samaria’s well, but who now, after His long session at God’s right hand, is returning to this world, which had rejected and crucified Him, to vindicate His rights, and to establish His throne, and thus to glorify God, by making good all that He is, in His righteous government. All things are to be put under His feet, and in His sudden appearance through the opened heaven, we see Him coming to subdue, enter upon, and possess His rightful inheritance.

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Before considering the significance of the names here mentioned, it will be for profit to call attention to the connection. In the previous part of the chapter, events of great importance in the divine ways are introduced.

All heaven is filled with praise when the great corruptress of the earth meets with her righteous doom at the hands of God. Thereupon we have the celebration of the marriage supper of the Lamb, for which His wife had made herself ready, and was, through grace, arrayed in fine linen, clean and white—the righteousneses of saints. In Ephesians, we have the private and intimate presentation of the bride, as "a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish." Here it is rather the public marriage, to which guests can be invited, and with which all the heavenly hosts can be in communion. It marks the termination of the time of the patience of Jesus Christ; but if He is about to be exalted in the former scene of His shame and humiliation, He will share the glory of His throne with His beloved bride.

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This is the fourth time the opened heaven is mentioned in the New Testament. The first occasion was at the baptism of Jesus, when "He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him: and lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." The lowly Jesus, fulfilling all righteousness, and identifying Himself with His poor and afflicted people—the saints in the earth, and the excellent, in whom was all His delight—is here seen as the Object of the heart of His God. Next, He Himself speaks to Nathanael, and says, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter (or "henceforth") ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man."

Here on earth, at that time, and also in the future, we apprehend, He is seen as the Object of angelic ministry. At the death of Stephen, the third instance occurs, as thus described: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." The Object of the heart of God has now become the Object of the believer, who has thus, through grace, been associated with God in His own delight in His beloved Son. Now lastly, the heavens open that the Son of Man may come forth, as we have seen, in righteousness to judge and to make war.

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After the personal description is given, it is said, "He had a name written, that no man knew, but He Himself." The introduction of this statement in this especial place, is very striking: "His eyes were as a flame of fire, and on His head were many crowns"; and then, before relating that He was "clothed with a vesture dipped in blood," the secret, written name is mentioned. There must be a reason for this; and as the explanation we cannot forbear giving the words of another: "But, though thus revealed as man, He had a glory none could penetrate into"; and the writer adds, in a note, "So it was as to His person and service. No one knew the Son but the Father. It was the secret of His rejection. He was that, and so necessarily such in the world. But the world under Satan's influence would not have that. In His humiliation His divine glory was maintained in the unsounded depths of His person. Now He is revealed in glory; but there ever remained what none could search or penetrate into—His own Person and

nature. . . . As revealing God in grace or power so as to make Him known, we know Him. But His Person as Son always remains unsearchable. His name is written, so that we know it is unknowable—not unknown but unknowable."\* These weighty words deserve the careful consideration of the reader—especially at the present moment—for they contain a wholesome reminder of the inscrutability of the Person of the Son.

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First comes the written name, unknown to all but its divine Possessor; and then, in connection with the vesture dipped in blood, it is said, "And His name is called the Word of God." This must be carefully distinguished from what is found in the first verse of John's gospel. "The Word" there who was with God, and who was God, if it be taken, for the moment, as a Divine Title, cannot mean less than that (as has been well said) "He is, and He is the expression of the whole mind that subsists in God"; and this absolutely as relating to all that God is. But in our scripture, while the "Word of God" is the revelation of what God is, it is the revelation of God in a special aspect or character. The very details of His appearing out of heaven sitting on a white horse will make this plain. There is not a word of tenderness, grace, or affection; He is "called Faithful and True, and in righteousness He doth judge and make war. His eyes were as a flame of fire. . . . He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood," etc. All speaks of holy and unsparing judgment; of judgment according to the standard of a righteous God; as indeed it is said: "He

\* *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible*, Vol. v.

treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God." (v. 15.) It is of all this, of God so presented, that Christ, as the Word of God, is the revelation. So in the gospels, for example, while Christ was ever God manifest in flesh, it is sometimes in the aspect of power, sometimes of grace, sometimes as light, and sometimes as love. But in whatever way, He expressed that which was divine; He was never less than all that He is.

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Yet another name is given: in verse 16 it is said, "And He hath on His vesture and on His thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS." The context explains at once the force of this title, showing that, in harmony with the whole book, it has relation to the earth. In the preceding verse, we are told that He will smite the nations, and rule them with a rod of iron; and the name or title, we are considering, indicates that it is consequent upon this that our blessed Lord will establish His throne of universal supremacy upon the earth. Already exalted at the right hand of God, "angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto Him," He will in the day of which our passage speaks, be exalted also in this world, when He will "have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." It will be the fulfilment of the promise, "Also I will make Him My Firstborn, higher than the kings of the earth." (Psalm lxxxix. 27.)

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As showing the delight of the Spirit of God in directing our attention to the future glory of Christ in

this world, it may be mentioned that twice before in this book it has been introduced. At the very commencement, in John's address to the seven churches, we read, "And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth." It is the past of our blessed Lord, what He was when down here as the faithful witness; it is the present, what He is as risen from the dead, the First Begotten; and it is the future, what He will be, when He shall have taken His great power, and when all the potentates of the earth will render their homage at His feet as Lord of them all. In chapter xi. we find also the same blessed era. When the seventh angel sounded, "there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become [the kingdoms] of our Lord, and of His Christ;\* and He shall reign for ever and ever." (Chap. xi. 15.) At the present time, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together"; in that day, "the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God:" and under the rule of the rightful King over all the nations of the earth, the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever.

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Such is the blessed future which awaits the earth; but before that can arrive, all the believers of this period will have been caught up in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. The marriage of the Lamb, as we

\* A better translation is: "The kingdom of the world of our Lord and of His Christ is come."

have seen from our chapter, precedes the appearing of the Lord. The hope of the Church, therefore, is the return of the Lord for His saints. For this they daily wait in communion with His own heart. To be with Him will be the consummation of their joy, inasmuch as it will be His joy in presenting His bride to Himself, which will fill their hearts and overflow in perpetual praise at His feet. But their vision is not bounded by this prospect, glorious as it is; for they look forward also, with earnest longing, to His appearing in glory, not because, in the grace of their God, they will be displayed in the same glory with Himself, but rather because the time will then have come when their Lord, who was once rejected and crucified, will be publicly exalted and enthroned as King of kings and Lord of lords. Yea—

"Our longing eyes would fain behold  
 That bright and blessed brow,  
 Once wrung with bitterest anguish, wear  
 Its crown of glory now."

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It ennobles a Christian immensely to know and to feel that he is a channel through which the life of Christ is to flow out.

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It is sweet to have communion with saints in the truth; but after all the heart has to live with God.

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THE life of the Lord Jesus was the great moral illustration of all divine glories.

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## THE CLAIMS OF GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND HOLINESS.

NUMBERS i.-iv.

THESE chapters have been just awakening in my mind some meditations of interest, at least, in connection with other scriptures. I perceive in them an expression of God's jealousy of His *sovereignty*, and of His *holiness*, of His rights as *Lord of the people*, and as *the God of their Sanctuary*.

They open with His commandment to Moses to take the number of the tribes, and this is done with great exactness and care. The number of each tribe, except Levi, is again and again set down in chapters i. and ii., and that of Levi in like manner in chapters iii. and iv. This was an expression of His rights as *Lord of Israel*. He had title to take their number, for they were all His own. Had He not had a right to them, had He not prospects in them, He would not have counted their sum, as is said of His divine title in another part of His dominions, "He telleth the number of the stars; He calleth them all by their names." This is the expression of His sovereignty amid the heavenly hosts. (Psalm cxlvii. 4.) So the Lord says of His saints, "They shall be Mine . . . in that day when I make up My jewels." (Mal. iii.) He may *make up*; *i.e.*, number, and hide, and secure them, because they are *His own*.

He was careful thus to assert His title, and survey His possessions. He would have the number of Israel exactly brought to Him, for they were all His own.



He called them by their names, and knew their numbers.

It was an offence against this peculiar right of the Lord that David was guilty of. He affected something of the divine glory, when he sought to number Israel, as though they had been his own people. It savoured of the old attempt of Adam, and was done under the influence of the same spirit. It was a trespass on the divine rights, and an affront to the majesty of Him who was Lord and King of Israel, who might number Israel because they were His peculiar treasure. But this care and jealousy respecting His rights as Sovereign of Israel, is accompanied in those chapters with the same jealousy respecting His holiness in the sanctuary of Israel.

The Levites are separated from the midst of the people, to be the peculiar servants of the sanctuary, and from their midst the house of Aaron is, in like manner, separated, to be the only priesthood of that sanctuary. Israel was not to affect the services of the Levites, nor were the Levites to affect the priesthood of the family of Aaron. God was to be sanctified in them that drew near to Him, and to be approached in His holiness in the due and ordained order.

But even more than this. Aaron himself had not to trespass, or to advance too far, even in his own appointed place. He was not to eye the sanctuary anxiously. When the camp moved onward, the sacred vessels of the house of God were to be duly and reverently hid from the eyes of even the bearers of them, and the Ark itself from the eye of even Aaron. All this order of the house, in its servants and priesthood, and the deep reverence to be paid to those

mysteries which it contained, tell out the sensitiveness of the holiness of Him, whose house, and servants, and priesthood, it all was. The nearest possible place He would take to His people, dwelling in their very midst, and going before them, as long as they continued their journey in the chariot of the cloudy, fiery pillar, by *night and by day, whether their way lay right onward, or whether it were back again by the sea and the mountain, being the willing and serviceable Companion of their travels.* But still, He was God. He was the Sanctifier, and they but the sanctified. And this could never be foregone, nor allowed to want its abiding and most jealous witness, for a single hour. Whether moving, or at rest, this must be had in remembrance. He will declare both His sovereign power, and His unapproachable holiness; He will testify His rights both as *Lord*, and as *God* of Israel, though His blessing and His service, and His land of desire, shall be theirs.

Such are the truths brightly reflected in these chapters—in the commandment to take the number of the people, and in the watchfulness to guard all the avenues of the sanctuary. As the vengeance taken upon David, for the intrusion upon the rights of the *King* of Israel, is a witness to us of the divine jealousy over those rights, not allowing, for a moment, another to assume them, so the vengeance upon the men of Beth-shemesh, for looking into the ark, is a kindred witness of the same divine jealousy, touching the place and holiness of the *God* of Israel.

How all this commends itself to our souls! We bow with delight to these claims of the Lord. We rejoice to know that He dwells in light, that no man can

approach unto, and that Him no man has seen, though He, who is in His bosom, has declared Him. All that is just as our souls would have it, and as this scripture displays before us!

J. G. B.

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## THE TESTIMONY OF OUR LORD.

WHAT is the Lord's present mind about your path and mine to-day? I find it in 2 Tim. i. 8, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner." The essential thing for us, at this moment, is the maintenance of what has been recovered. The direction for the Church-remnant, in her weakness and little strength, is "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown," and never was it more needed than now. The watch-word for to-day is *retention*—holding fast—not *recovery*, excepting so far as we have been letting slip what we had. Let us not be dislodged from where the grace of God has set us. We are called upon, as never before, to stand our ground. Nor is the danger that confronts us the *ruin*. Why should that dismay us? It is too late in the day to allow ourselves to be upset by the ruin. We began with ruin—complete, total, irremediable ruin. We recognized the utter failure of the structure which Paul, the architect, reared, to *start with*, and have nothing to find out about it now that was not even better known and realized then. Remember, however, it is the *house* that is in ruin. It is the *house-keeping* that is a failure. It is in what has been committed to man that the confusion *is*, as always, so now. Ample

proof of this is afforded in 2 Tim. ii., and there we go for divine instruction and guidance in the midst of it.

We find that everything in or about this edifice was in question, *except the foundation*, before ever Paul left the scene. Thank God, that stood sure then, and it stands sure now, whatever else may go. No matter what the confusion and evil, there is divine security. Still, all this is in relation to what *man builds* upon the foundation; it never touches what Christ builds. It is the visible profession. It is that which names the name of the Lord. But when it has reached such a condition as to be compared to a "great house," with vessels to *dishonour* as well as to honour there, what are we to do? We cannot put things right, nor can we put others right; but we can put ourselves right. I must begin with myself. "Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity." Whatever is iniquity I must depart from, and surely not the least in the house of God; not only moral or doctrinal, but ecclesiastical iniquity—"great house" iniquity.

Yet there is no direction to *leave* the house. That would be giving up the profession of Christianity altogether. I find vessels to honour there, and vessels to dishonour, and I have to distinguish between them, when the question at once arises, "How am I to be a vessel unto honour?" The Word of God answers, "If a man therefore purge himself from these (vessels to dishonour), he shall be a vessel unto *honour*, sanctified and meet for the Master's use, and prepared unto every good work." There is no other way of becoming a vessel unto honour in such a state of things. I am not called to purge the house, nor to purge myself from the

house, but from the vessels to dishonour in the house. The moment I have done this, I find others have done so before me. What is the path to follow then? I have to follow *with* those who have done likewise—"with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

But this is the unchangeable character of our responsibility in the ruined state of the Church nominally, our conduct with regard to what names the name of the Lord, *separation* from the iniquity, and following with those who *have separated*. This, however, is negative, and is how I am to act with reference to the *ruin*. But this is not all. I have a responsibility, and I am bound to act with respect to that which *cannot be ruined*. I have a *positive* duty as well. Following is one thing, gathering is another. To what spot am I to follow with these? That is the point. I reply, to where the testimony of the Lord is. Gathering that God can own, is gathering to and with Christ, according to the testimony of the Lord. The snare of the moment, I repeat, is not the *ruin* which is unreservedly admitted and confessed, but lest the ruin should be misused to make us ashamed of what is above the ruin, for the testimony has to do with that.

The condition in chapter iii. is even worse than chapter ii. There we have the perilous times of the last days, whose most subtle feature, as has often been pointed out, is imitation. The number of imitations is, indeed, sad, and we suffer from them undoubtedly. Still, the existence of the imitations is not our special danger. They can be detected, and further, we may be protected from them; only what serves for the one will not suffice for the other. What exposes Jannes and Jambres, as has been well said, is life; but though life

is excellent for detection, we must remember it is altogether insufficient for protection. Life is not union. It is short of the Church. It does not reach to the testimony of the Lord. Life, important as it is in its place (and we are not underrating it by any means), is no safeguard against our becoming an imitation ourselves; for that is what threatens us now, unless we are steadfast. Nothing will prevent us from that pass, as chapter iii. shows, except *Paul's doctrine* and *all scripture*, or, in other words, the unity of the Spirit, and the unity of the faith.

The ruin is beyond question. We owned it as our common sin and shame to commence with, and we do so still, but we found it our strength and blessing to have faith in that which never has been, or can be, ruined, and it is with this the testimony of the Lord is connected. Let us not be ashamed of it. The imitations, too, are manifest. We admit their existence as indisputable. But the snare of the enemy lies neither in the fact of the ruin, nor the fact of the imitations, but lest either or both should be wrongfully employed to shift us off the ground of God's church, and make us ashamed of the testimony.

What I feel so solemn at this moment is, that one of the most wonderful things God ever did for us, opening our eyes to see His present mind, and recovering to us what the testimony of the Lord is, should be the very thing we are in danger of losing. Bear with me if I seek to stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance as to

WHAT THE TESTIMONY OF OUR LORD IS, with regard to which Paul makes this touching appeal to Timothy, the servant of the hour, "Be not thou

therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner." I do not mean testimony *to* or *about* the Lord, though there has always been some special revelation with which for the time such a testimony has been connected. I refer to something more precise and definite than that. It is truly and literally what it says—the testimony *of* our Lord—that which the very lips of the Lord of glory uttered *from* the glory *to* the apostle Paul, and *through* him made known to us. Its main burden is the mystery which had been hidden from ages, and is essentially wrapped up in those wonderful words, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" Not my people, but "Me." This is emphatically the testimony of the Lord, declared for the first time in Acts ix., to which were added other revelations from the Lord in glory about the Table and the Coming, as we shall see, but the blessed fact itself is its grand and glorious feature which is distinctive of the dispensation, and claims our earnest attention.

If we trace it up to this point, its peculiar character becomes marked, and stands out with singular clearness. Having died and risen, Acts i. shows us the Lord *gone up to heaven*, and the testimony of the angels in view of His ascension was, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" In chapter ii. the Holy Ghost had come *down from heaven*, and we have His testimony through the apostles to the exaltation, as both *Lord and Christ*, of the One who had been crucified and slain, with an additional offer to the Jews, giving them the opportunity of receiving Him in heaven whom they had rejected on earth. But so far from repenting, and embracing the offer, not only had they refused Him on earth, but they do so also from heaven, and

send the messenger after Him, in stoning Stephen to death, saying, "We will not have this Man to reign over us."

Then, not only have we the Lord gone up, and the Spirit come down, but now *heaven is opened*, and opened to us. It is no longer, "Why stand ye gazing up into heaven?" Mark the change. Looking up "stedfastly into heaven" is henceforth the Christian's proper attitude, of which Stephen here is the pattern, as it is written, "But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God."

Not only are the heavens opened; in chap. viii. the *earth is closed*. All question of His return to bring in earthly glory for the Jew is over when Stephen is martyred, and Jerusalem is to be done with. Accordingly the eunuch has his back on Jerusalem, and while reading the prophet Esaias comes to that portion, "His life is taken *from the earth*." The moment he sees water, he says "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" His life is taken from the earth, and I want to go out of the scene, too, he says. The Lord had gone up, the Spirit had come down, heaven is opened and the earth closed, now the time has arrived for the testimony of the Lord in chapter ix.; not of angels, nor of the Spirit, nor of Stephen, nor of the eunuch; but *of the Lord Himself*.

Saul sees Jesus for the first time in heavenly glory, too resplendent for human sight. It is not Jesus known upon earth made Lord, but the Lord of glory who, as such, declares that He is Jesus. But for Paul



where is He found on earth? In those who are His. Seen unequivocally as Lord in heaven, Saul asks "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am," replied the Lord, "Jesus whom thou persecutest." The saints were Himself, His body.

Thus we have, and that from the mouth and heart of the Lord Himself, the strongest expression of our union to Him—that He considers the feeblest member of His body as part of Himself. The Lord did not say, My people, My disciples, My servants, My friends, but "*Me*." He does not say "us," nor "Me and them," but "*Me*." The language was distinct enough, but the idea wholly new. Jesus of Nazareth, then in glory, had a body on earth. The assembly and God's house were thoughts familiar to every Jew, but now, for the first time this was expressed, that the closest union known to us existed between the Lord in heaven and His people on earth, viz., body-union.

Peter preached the Man of Psalms cx. and ii., but the testimony of the Holy Ghost through him to a glorified Christ having been rejected by the blinded nation, the transition to Psalm viii. takes place, and Stephen sees Him as *Son of Man*, in the glory of God in heaven, not returning to Israel here below, but receiving the spirit of His faithful martyr above. Then comes out the testimony of the Lord to the effect that the Man of Psalm viii. was not complete without His body. As God, nothing could be added to Him; but as the mystical Man, He had to get His body before He could take the prophesied dominion. Consequently everything is in abeyance till this is accomplished.

This is the mystery made known to Paul, who preaches this Son of Man as *Son of God*, because it is not Christ, as the object of promise and prophecy, but Christ revealed in the fulness of His Person as Son of the living God, who is the foundation and Head of the Church, though it is to Him as *glorified Man* we are united, not as Son of God. How precious it was to speak of it thus from heaven, that saints on earth (for it was not from the "seated together" side, but as to persecuted ones here it was first revealed) should learn from His own lips their intimate union to Him in heaven. How blessed, too, as well as fitting, it was that He, who is the Head of the body, should Himself break the silence as to it, and be the first to announce the marvellous fact—from its Colossian aspect also, be it observed, the simplest way to apprehend it. The rejected Christ has a body on earth, over the members of which He watches with unremitting care, and all told out to our hearts in that little word from heaven, "*Me.*"

The doctrine of how this mysterious union was effected is afterwards taught by the vessel chosen for the purpose, viz., by the baptism of the Holy Ghost, showing that it existed before it was revealed, but no one knew it till the Lord first declared it. What we have here is the blessed reality itself. And mark its nature and character. Christ had prayed to His Father, in John xvii., that His own might be one on earth, and we have the short-lived answer to it in that lovely picture of oneness in Acts ii. 44. But that bright and happy scene, like Eden and innocence, soon disappeared, never to be seen on earth again. That was a unity, or rather, family oneness, which could not,

and did not, exist apart from its manifestation. When it ceased to be manifested, it vanished. But Acts ix. discloses a unity which does not depend for its existence on manifestation, but on the union of every part to the Head. It is a body, not a family merely.

W. S. F.

(*To be continued.*)

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## "SUCH A HIGH PRIEST."

CHRIST saves completely, and to the end, those that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever lives to intercede for them.

Accordingly "such a high priest became us." Glorious thought! Called to be in the presence of God, to be in relationship with Him in the heavenly glory, to draw near to Him on high, where nothing that defiles can enter, we needed a High Priest in the place to which access was given us (as the Jews in the earthly temple), and such a One as the glory and purity of heaven required. What a demonstration that we belong to heaven, and of the exalted nature of our relationship with God! Such a Priest became *us*: "Holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, exalted above the heavens"—for so are we, as to our position, having to do with God *there*—a Priest who needs not to renew the sacrifices, as though any work to put away sin still remained to be done, or their sins could still be imputed to believers; for then it would be impossible to stay in the heavenly sanctuary. As having once for all completed His work for the putting away of sin, our Priest offered His sacrifice once for all when He offered up Himself.

J. N. D.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

CHAP. iii. 13-24.

WE must not be astonished if the world hate us. Righteousness and love go together in this remarkable passage, and Cain, unrighteous and hating his brother, is the moral representative of the world; he really founded the world, and gave its true character to it.\* The passage from death to life implies an immense transition; love in the place of hatred and murder, righteousness in the place of injustice. Hatred and murder go together, and no murderer has eternal life abiding in him; what could there be in common with the Father and Son, in the heart of a murderer? Notice the line of demarcation drawn here between the "brethren" and the world.

But now the active character of divine love is presented to us, and we have an objective knowledge of it. We have known (and know) love, because He has laid down His life for us; and *we* ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. The proof of His love was seen in His laying down His life (as in John xv.); and the proof of our love to the brethren will be seen in our conduct towards them. We ought to lay down our lives for them.

Then a very simple example is given; of helping a

\* The great feature of Cain's town is that God was carefully excluded; one remembers, with a shudder, the speech made by a leading man in France, not long ago, . . . "That they had driven God over the Rhine," *i.e.* out of the country. This is the world.

poor brother. It is a *bonâ fide* case of need, and some one who has means to help; love makes itself known by giving material help to the needy man. "Let us not love with word, nor with tongue"; it would not be divine love to dismiss the poor brother with a blessing (I mean a verbal one, so well known,) and the latest improved tract, but there is real giving, material help.

This introduces the interesting question of the state of heart. A Christian's *heart* could not be at rest if he had sent away a needy brother, as in the above example. There are two things which compose the moral nature of man, conscience and heart; and I think that in this case the heart is alluded to as being, in a certain sense, higher than the conscience. I mean that it might be said in this case that one was not bound to help the man, that one must be careful of one's money and so on; but although the conscience might not be reached, yet the *heart* would accuse, and the image of the forlorn brother, sent away without help, would constantly appear before it. The divine affections are very precious, and the exhortation here is to the end that they may be in exercise. It is a question of free and happy communion; if our heart condemn us, we cannot possibly be in the full enjoyment of happy intercourse with God, who is greater than our heart, and knows all things.

It is in the practice of righteousness and love, that true communion is known; and if our heart does not condemn us, we have boldness\* towards God. There

\* This is a remarkable word, and I think is always associated with true Christian liberty; I mean happy freedom in God's presence, the very opposite to legality. See, for instance, Hebrews x. 19, iii. 6; 1 John ii. 28, and v. 14.

is that sense of His approval, that one goes forward without any hesitation. Then there is the answer given to prayer; whatsoever we ask we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments and do that which pleases Him. (Compare John viii. 29, xv. 10.) It has been well said that all true prayer comes down from above before it goes up again; that is, that all true requests for the glory of God will have been formed in communion with Him. Obedience and a happy walk in pleasing Him accompany such petitions as go up, and are granted at once. There will be no prayer when we shall have arrived in the glory; but we pray now as we meet with countless obstacles, and with the power of the enemy, and our prayers are heard as we walk in obedience and true Christian liberty.

And now we will very briefly notice the fact of the gift of the Holy Spirit; for there are three things which characterize the Christian in this passage—righteousness, love, and the Holy Spirit.

In verses twenty-three and twenty-four we have two views of the Christian state: one external—the commandment, “that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another, even as He gave us commandment.” I mean, by external, that we have here the true faith and love of the children of God; the two things (faith and love) can never be separated.

The second fact is internal, in the sense of the inner operation of the Spirit given to us; the intimate condition of the man is seen. “He that keeps His commandment abides in Him, and He in him: and hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit

which He has given to us." In speaking of what is *internal*, I mean that we have not here merely the outward dependent conduct, faith and love of a believer, blessed though this subject be, but we see the inner state, the Holy Spirit given, the love of God shed abroad in our hearts, and the sense of His presence by the blessed indwelling of the Spirit Himself.

This completes the picture of the family of God on the earth ; and the three things which are here brought into prominence (and which we have studied in these two last papers) are righteousness, love, and the Holy Ghost. We may well take heed to what the Spirit teaches us as to the divine nature of the children of God.

E. L. B.

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"There is not a single spring of gladness in the heart of God but was found in this perfect One, entirely. God as well as man. Oh the thought of God having sent this Son down from His eternal glory, this Son of His love, all His bosom's ineffable delight, sent down to the Cross for me! It puts me in the dust. What am I that He should not only have brought me salvation, but have sent that Son of His love to bear all for me—as man essentially perfect, divine in every way, yet made sin for us. It is a matter of deep moment to look again and again into the place of the Son of God on the Cross, and to study all the divine attributes of that divine One who hung there."

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“WITH ME WHERE I AM.”

“So shall we ever be with the Lord.”

ALWAYS to be with Thee,  
 Saviour, where'er Thou art!  
 Perfect companionship with Thee  
 Ever our blissful part!  
 Wisdom of God—His Power  
 Thus to adore, as meet,  
 Marvellous Prospect! every hour  
 Growing more vast, more sweet.

Always to be with Thee!  
 Safe from the ways of men.  
 Never again beguiled: set free  
 Lord, in Thy glory, then.  
 Cherished in Love supreme,  
 Nourished by Truth divine,  
 Never did mortal's fondest dream  
 Image delights like Thine.

Always to be with Thee!  
 God hath ordained it so.  
 Gift of Thy Father, “chosen,” we  
 Go where His Son doth go.  
 “Father of Glory”—He  
 Wrought in the Christ, with might,  
 Willing that “all” His thought should see,  
 Shown for His own delight.

Always to be with Thee!  
 Thou wilt from heaven descend,  
 Coming for us, and we shall be  
 Thus at the journey's end.  
 Thus in the realms above,  
 Thee for our great Reward  
 Ever with Thee, where Light and Love  
 Crown Thee in glory, Lord.        H. K. B. E.



## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

## I.

## MARK ix. 17-20.

IT is clear, from chap. iii. 15, that there was no excuse for the inability of the disciples to cast out the demon from this poor child. The power had been bestowed upon them, but when this opportunity for its exercise was presented to them, they could not use it. Combining the narrative in Matthew with this in Mark, we learn the whole secret of their failure. In answer to the disciples' own question, "Why could not we cast him out?" Jesus said, "Because of your unbelief"; and He, moreover, told them that nothing would be impossible to them, if they even had faith as a grain of mustard seed. We learn likewise, from both gospels, that for such faith, for the exercise of such victorious power, over the enemy, there must be a corresponding state of soul: "This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting." (Mark ix. 29.) Prayer is the expression, in confidence in God, of the realization of absolute dependence; and fasting will mean that Nazarite state which refuses lawful things and lawful enjoyments (See Numbers vi. 3-7) for the sake of more entire devotedness to the Lord's service. It may sometimes include abstinence from food, but to confine it to this is to miss its main import. A fasting soul is one so filled with the marrow and fatness of heavenly joys, as to be superior to, and independent of, the gratifications of earth. In this condition, faith will be in such

vigorous exercise that "mountains" will be removed. (Matthew xvii. 20.) The same blessed instruction concerning the action of faith may be gathered from the Lord's words to the father of the child, who had cried, "If thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us." The answer was as to its meaning, "the 'If thou canst,' is, 'If thou canst believe'—all things are possible to him that believeth." Whether, therefore, in the Lord's service, or in deep personal need, the indispensable requisite for calling in divine power for succour and deliverance, is faith—faith that looks beyond all difficulties and obstacles, and lays hold of the arm of Omnipotence. And this unutterable grace and privilege are of divine permission and appointment.

## II.

## HEBREWS x. 34.

THOSE who have at hand the *New Translation* will see that three alterations may be made in this scripture. Instead of "me in my bonds," read "prisoners;" for "in yourselves," substitute "for yourselves;" and omit the words "in heaven." (Compare the *Revised Version* and its alternative renderings in the margin.) The passage will then read as follows: "For ye both sympathized with prisoners and accepted with joy the plunder of your goods, knowing that ye have for yourselves a better substance and an abiding one." (*New Translation*.) It was thus a time of persecution; and the saints courageously, in fidelity to Christ, showed their sympathy, and identified themselves, with those who were imprisoned for Christ's sake, and, exposing themselves in this way to the hostility of their adversaries,

they incurred the forfeiture and loss of their earthly possessions. But so active was their faith, and so real was Christ to their hearts as their treasure, that they "took joyfully the spoiling of" their goods, knowing that they had for themselves a better inheritance, and one of which they never could be deprived. They had provided themselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that faileth not, where no thief approacheth, neither moth corrupteth, and this possessing their hearts, they willingly suffered the loss of all things for the sake of Christ. It is a blessed record, and, at the same time, a powerful testimony to what Christ is for His people in the midst of the fires of persecution.

## III.

2 SAMUEL XXIV. 14 ; HEB. X. 31.

It is needless to say that there is no contradiction between these scriptures. The difference in the circumstances will explain the difficulty. David, although a man after God's heart, had fallen into sin, and now convicted, and confessing his guilt, the Lord offered to him the choice of one of three methods of chastisement. The Lord's name had been dishonoured by His anointed king, and the Lord must publicly vindicate it; and thus He sent the message to David through the prophet Gad. David's reply was, "Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord, for His mercies are great: and let me not fall into the hand of man." None but a real saint, one who had had to do with God in the past, and had learned in measure what He was in His tenderness and mercy, could have used this language. It was as knowing the Lord that David, in his penitence, said,

“Let us fall now into the hand of the Lord.” In the epistle to the Hebrews the apostle had been supposing the awful case of sinning wilfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, and for such, he declares, “there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,” etc. In other words; he deals with those who might become apostates, those who had made a confession of Christianity, but who, never having been really converted, might publicly abandon their profession, and thus tread under foot, before men, the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified (for they had been Jews) an unholy thing, and do despite unto the Spirit of grace. It is for this class — once professors, but possibly now avowed apostates — that the apostle says, “For we know Him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge His people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” The Lord may, and does, chastise His people, when they turn aside from His ways, but however heavily His rod may fall upon them, they will surely confess with David that His mercies are great. He will also, sooner or later, deal with professors and apostates, and for them His rod will be one of vengeance and “recompense” for their high-handed rebellion, and then they will learn, when, alas! it is too late for repentance, that “it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.”

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“HIS NAME SHALL BE IN THEIR  
FOREHEADS.”

THIS last mention of “His Name” may fitly conclude our meditations upon this subject. There is, however, another company of saints who are shown to us with this distinguishing mark, with the addition of “the name of His Father.” The words are omitted in our *Authorised Translation*; but, inasmuch as they are accepted in the *Revised Version*, as well as in most recent translations, they may be received with all confidence as genuine. To begin with the latter, we are introduced to a company of saints, an hundred forty and four thousand in number, who are with the Lamb as He stands on Mount Sion—“having His name, and the name of His Father, written on their foreheads.” (Rev. xiv. 1, R.V.) That this company occupies a special place of blessedness is seen from the context, and indeed from the express statement that they “follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.”

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If we enquire who they are, it will help us to understand the import of the written name upon their foreheads. It is very clear that they are earthly, and not heavenly saints. In the previous chapter we are permitted to see the terrible power of Satan, as embodied in the rule and authority of the first beast, and as wielded by the second, who is the man of sin—the antichrist. It is this incarnation of evil who will cause all within the sphere of his authority to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads, as

indicative of their allegiance to the beast. It might seem that evil had completely triumphed; but the opening of chapter xiv. reveals to us a multitude who, redeemed from the earth, and during the reign of unchecked evil, are associated with the glories of the Lamb in the very seat of His earthly kingdom. Remembering, then, that it is in Jerusalem where anti-christ will exercise his deputed power, it is evident that this company with the Lamb on Mount Sion is composed of Jewish saints—saints who, whatever their sorrows, have been brought victoriously through the fiery furnace of Jacob's trouble, that time of great tribulation, the like of which will never have been, or will ever be, witnessed.

But it is not sufficient to say they are Jewish saints; for we read of another hundred and forty-four thousand in chapter vii.—made up of twelve thousand from each tribe. These are the symbolical number of the elect of all Israel; but those in our chapter, it must be recollected, are redeemed from the sphere of antichrist's sway; and hence, since only the two tribes will be in the land at that period, it is another symbolical number, made up of those who were preserved through grace from surrendering to antichrist's claims and threats, and from his moral contaminations. They are, in fact, the faithful from among Judah and Benjamin, who have now entered upon the glorious recompense of companionship with the Lamb in His exaltation in the kingdom. The very number (as in chapter vii.), twelve times twelve, speaks of intensified perfection in governmental administration, and hence of Messiah's perfect reign. It is an unclouded scene of joy and blessing, the bright promise of the issue of all God's ways in

government and grace, which we are permitted to behold, ere the desolating storm of judgment breaks upon an apostate people and a rebellious world.

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What, then, we may now ask, is the import of His name, and His Father's name, upon the foreheads of this blessed company? Two distinct things are indicated, as is apparent from their having the Lamb's name, and His Father's name. The first is a contrast with what is found in the previous chapter. There we read, as already seen, that men generally receive the mark of the beast in their right hand, or in their foreheads, as the token of their acceptance of his Satanic rule, and as giving them certain rights and privileges within his realm. In like manner, having the name of the Lamb on their foreheads proclaims that this redeemed company, "the firstfruits unto God and to the Lamb," belonged to their glorious Messiah, and that they had maintained their fealty to Him in the midst of the unparalleled sorrows of the dark persecuting days through which they had been brought. Hated, and perhaps martyred then, they are now publicly acknowledged and honoured with special marks of favour and approbation by Him for whose sake they had suffered, it might be even to death.\* In addition, they have His Father's name; for "by their open confession of God and the Lamb, they had been witnesses of it, and suffered as Christ had suffered in His life in owning God His Father."

\* Whether they were brought alive through, or had died in, the tribulation, is not revealed; but from certain indications, as, for example, in v. 5, we incline to the conclusion that they are, whether "changed" or raised, in a resurrection condition.

We pass now to another scene. That which we have just considered is on earth, on Mount Sion; this is in the heavenly Jerusalem. It is true that the holy city is presented in its relation to the millennial earth; for it is said that the leaves of the tree of life are for the healing of the nations. But when we come to the description of the blessedness of its inhabitants in its positive character, this of necessity is eternal. It is remarkable that the eternal state, as given in chap. xxi. 1-5, is presented on the side of relief—"there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain"—and that in the heavenly city we have rather what is actually possessed and enjoyed. But even so, it must be remembered that it is not the Father's house; so that, in accordance with the character of the whole book, it is still government (see *v.* 3); and hence the redeemed here are looked at as servants. It is profitable to observe these distinctions; and we are reminded by them that every aspect of the bliss of the redeemed must be taken into account and combined in order to comprehend, in any measure, what God has in store for His people when all His purposes are accomplished.

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Three things, then, mark the condition of the heavenly citizens: "His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads." They had served Him on earth, it might be thought, and many among them indeed had served Him devotedly, even as Paul was enabled to say, "Neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of



God." But whatever perseverance, spiritual energy, and singleness of eye had characterized such as Paul and others while on earth, their service was never perfect. There was only One, the Perfect Servant, who could say, "I do always those things that please Him" (the Father). In heaven, in the new Jerusalem, every one of the countless throng of the redeemed will respond entirely and perfectly to God's will. When, therefore, it says, "His servants shall serve Him," it means that they will serve according to the perfection of the thoughts of God. They will, moreover, see His face; they will enjoy unhinderedly the intimacy of His presence, for then, like Christ, they will see Him as He is, and be able to enjoy the beatific vision which will be the source of all their delight and their eternal joy.

"For ever on His face to gaze,  
And meet the full assembled rays,  
While all His beauty He displays  
To all the saints in glory."

Finally, and this is our immediate subject, "His Name shall be in their foreheads." It has already been shown that the primary signification of the name borne thus upon the forehead is, so to speak, ownership; that it marks out those who have it as belonging to Christ. And this conveys much; for to be His is really the sum of eternal blessedness, inasmuch as it brings us into everlasting association with Him, both now and also in heaven itself. There is, however, another thought. In chapter xiv. the Name is "written" on their foreheads; here it is only said to be there. We gather from this distinction that here the predominant feature is moral conformity to the One whose name they bear. As seen again and again

in these papers, "name" expresses the truth of the Person; and hence we regard it here that full likeness to Christ is displayed on every redeemed brow. That all believers will be conformed to the image of God's Son, we learn from another scripture (Rom. viii. 29); and here we are allowed to behold it actually accomplished. What joy, we may be permitted to say, it will be to the Lord Himself to see, as He surveys the unnumbered hosts of His glorified saints, His own likeness beaming from every face, Himself mirrored and reflected in all the redeemed! It helps us to enter more fully into the words of the prophet: "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." Then indeed Christ will fill the scene. Old things will have forever passed away, and all things have been made new; for then, not to faith as now, but in actuality, Christ will be Everything to all His own, and this in full and unclouded display. To Him be all the praise now and throughout eternity!

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## THE TRUTH.

### I. "THE" TRUTH, NOT "A" TRUTH.

IF the subject be examined we shall come to but one conclusion on it, namely, that truth is presented in the Word of God now as a *whole*. We read of "truth," of "*the* truth," and of "*all* truth," but we do not read, anywhere that I can find, of "*a* truth," as though *many* existed. If truth is in the mind of God one complete *whole*, then, however much anyone has learned of it, or however long through grace he has been walking in it, there is that for him yet to learn and yet to walk in, beyond anything that he has yet attained to.

When we speak of "*a truth*" (and it is a common but, I think, wrong way of speaking, as though we had grasped a something independent in itself) the tendency is to puff us up. This is not the case when we view what we know as only a part of one great *whole*, which exists for us in the mind of God. To attempt to pass the little we know of as *all*, and to feel superior to others on account of it, is folly and assumption. "For we know in part, and we prophesy in part."

God, who dwells in us, must necessarily be beyond us; and in the truth, which he knows, no man knows all, so as to be independent of the whole, or of what the others have. God dwells in all believers alike by His Spirit, but the Spirit does not ignore the condition of soul of any believer, and no man can really go in present enjoyment beyond the truth which the Holy Spirit makes good to him in his own soul, nor say that in the truth which he knows, he knows all. In God he has the *source* of all, of course.

## II. WHAT IS TRUTH?

God is called "the God of truth," and also "the true God."

If I may be allowed to suggest a thought, it is this: There are two vast systems of things working actively all around us. The one is, in the smallest detail of it, founded upon "A LIE"; the other is, in all its parts, founded upon "THE TRUTH." The first took its rise in sin in the garden of Eden, where the first man is seen as its victim, with Satan as the seducing spirit—all this goes on to-day—and ends with "*believing a lie*," and the judgment of God. (2 Thess. ii. 11, 12.) The second takes its origin from God's thoughts and

purposes regarding the second Man, with the Holy Spirit on earth now to effect those purposes in so far as they concern *us*, and to build up the whole system of "the truth," whether for heaven or earth, in connection with Him, who is both its Centre and its Head. (Col. i. 16, 17, 18.) The result is seen in glory, and a new heaven and a new earth. The following passages indicate the two systems: "No lie is of the truth." "I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth." "As the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." The truth, as I understand it, is all that system of things which God will have for the glory of Christ; the opposite of that which exists now, and which is based on Satan's lie.

### III. WHAT IS THE RELATION OF THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE TRUTH?

We cannot, I think, separate the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us, and the truth. The Spirit is called "the Spirit of truth," and "the Spirit is the truth." (1 John v. 6.) Whatever there is of truth in any of us, is of the Spirit; and whatever is of the Spirit in any of us, is the truth. The Spirit is the truth. He is the embodiment of that which is only made known to us in parts. In Him we have all. So the Lord says to the disciples, "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 shew you things to come"; and John says, "Ye know all things." (1 John ii. 20.)

## IV. THE TRUTH VERSUS ASSUMPTION.

The ship *Allendale* (Sunderland) ran aground in a fog. Judgment given respecting her in the Board of Trade enquiry was, that J. W., the master, "*had not used the lead, but had shown too much confidence, having gone the voyage so often before.*" This was assumption. There is peculiar danger, lest in the ministry of the Word we assume (because the Lord ministers through us known truth) that we are abreast of Him in the truth thus ministered. It may be taken as the only safe sign of spiritual health, that we seek ourselves to be under the present power of the truth ministered through us. We must, so to speak, "use the lead," or take soundings. As we think of possessing *a* truth, we are in this very danger; as we think of "*the* truth" we are humbled.

In old time the ministers sought the meaning as to *themselves*, of what "the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify." (1 Peter i. 11, 12.) The principle herein was a right one. The servant of God now, in whose ministry there is power, will be found similarly exercised. There were teachers in our Lord's day, as also there are now. They occupied the place of authority, they sat "in Moses' seat." Many things (speaking thence) they bade the people to "observe and do," yet they themselves did them not! The Lord pronounces a solemn "woe" upon them in Matt. xxiii. But even the people detected the hollowness of it. Why? It lacked authority. There was not power with it. How different the Lord's ministry! "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." There was no assumption. He *was* what He *ministered*. "Altogether that which I also say to you." (See N.T., John viii. 25.) May all those who minister the truth know more of the life of Him, the *true Servant*. H. C. A.

## THE TESTIMONY OF OUR LORD.

THERE was a momentary exhibition of the oneness of John xvii., when the multitude of them that believed were together, and had all things common, but it passed away as soon as they discontinued its expression, because it consisted in manifestation. This having hopelessly failed, the testimony of our Lord is about a unity that cannot fail, because it is the mystic Christ Himself — the “one new Man” of Eph. ii., the “so also is the Christ” of 1 Cor. xii.—He the Head, and we the members, making up one whole, just as my body is the complement to my head to make up a complete man. This exists in all its integrity, whether manifested or not manifested; but it is the privilege and responsibility of every member to act as one, and thus to express what he is, in common with the other members.

COME what may, we are not to be ashamed of this testimony of our Lord as to what He is to us, and we are to Him. It has been revealed. We have been born since it was revealed, and cannot go back to what was prior to its revelation, without sinning. We cannot excuse ourselves on the ground of ignorance. We never can be in the position of those who lived before it was revealed, and to go back to that, so far from being of God, would be of the enemy, whose effort has always been to divert from what is distinctive—which the principle of the body can never cease to be, since its revelation—till the Lord

Himself comes. Let us never forget that what is special to the dispensation, is the power and testimony of the dispensation, and not what is common to all. Whatever God is most set upon, Satan most opposes; and faith in God can alone enable the faithful to surmount opposition, and give strength to maintain the testimony at any given time. The gravest question that can occupy your soul or mine, now, is whether we are answering to this urgent appeal of the apostles. Satan will allow us to do any amount of active work, he will let us be earnest preachers, he will even take away opposition from the gospel, if we will only consent to compromise the testimony of the Lord committed to Paul. The delinquency of all them "which are in Asia," is the very danger of the hour—that tendency to return to a previous testimony, in order to escape the peculiar and exacting nature of this—the greatest of testimonies. The servant of to-day ought to realize that he has one duty, paramount to all others, and that is not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord nor of His prisoner, the chosen vessel of it.

Let there be no misunderstanding. We are not gathered to a truth, a charge that has been brought against us by the opposers of the testimony ever since a divine position was taken. We are not gathered to the body, we are gathered to *Christ*, on the *principle* of the body, which is the opposite of sectarian; indeed, nothing else is unsectarian. There may be those among ourselves who have so little apprehension of where they are, as to imagine they are gathered to the body as a mere doctrine or truth, instead of to Christ, the

Centre and Head, on the *principle* of something that is in living *union* with the Head, what the Spirit of God has actually made us, and not a dry theory. Such might as well be with a sect; but gathered to the body is one thing, and gathered on the *principle* of it to *Christ* is another; and we must be very careful not to allow ourselves, in this day of confusion, to abandon the only divine ground of gathering for this age, on any pretext whatever. Let us beware, in seeking to avoid one form of sectarianism, of rushing into another. For what is a sect? Being gathered on any principle other than that of the body, constitutes a sect.

Let us not deceive ourselves; we cannot be gathered in the *truth* of the body, if we go back to what obtained prior to the revelation of it. It would be nearer the truth, in that case, to say we were gathered in defiance of it. We assume nothing, we pretend to nothing. We simply recognize what God says we are, in common with all our fellow members, and seek, through grace, to act on it. Shun spurious imitations, avoid pretensions, and keep clear of assumptions, but let us be true to the principle of the Church of God, and not go below the Lord's purpose concerning us as the body and bride of Christ.

We have seen what the testimony of the Lord is in its primary and essential element, and the supreme importance of not being ashamed of it. But Paul had also fresh revelations from the Lord in glory respecting the Supper, and the coming of the Lord, so that the testimony of the Lord comprises the three things, (1) the revelation of the *mystery*, (2) the *table* as its expression in fellowship, and (3) the *rapture* out of the



scene altogether. In fact, it takes in the whole scope of Paul's doctrine, which Timothy fully knew, and was instructed to hold fast, even to the form of sound words as learned from the apostle. . . . Thank God, whatever else may fail (and the house of 2 Tim. ii. has failed), the body of Christ cannot, because it is that which He nourishes and cherishes as His own flesh. The body consequently abides intact in all its integrity, whatever the confusion as regards its manifestation. It remains an unbroken, existing reality, to be expressed as long as the Spirit is here, and Christ is at the right hand of God, by all who have faith to own and act on it; and a feeble, but faithful remnant may find in doing so an excellency of grace not known at the first.

But that remnant must be a church-remnant—a bridal remnant, to be the one that God can acknowledge, for no company gathered on the ground of the *filial* relation *only*, could possibly meet the mind of Christ in this age, much less one calling on the name of the Lord, which merely goes the length of *profession*. If *real*, of course, it is salvation, but even that would reduce the Church to a mere aggregate of saved individuals instead of what it actually is—*union and fellowship*, over and above the thought of being saved.

Salvation is a thing which, though complete in Christ, supposes in the heart of the person enjoying it personal exercises, which go on necessarily and exclusively in his own conscience, and which bring his soul into immediate connection with God, and without which, all relationship, all happiness—the very existence of spiritual life—would be impossible. If but *one* individual were saved, his salvation would be equally perfect and sure, but *he* would not be the

Church, which includes an additional thought, a super-added relationship to that of saved individuals. Hence, calling on the name of the Lord, real or nominal, though the basis of *profession*, never was, or could be the basis of *Church* fellowship. Indeed, you have it as far back as Genesis iv., in Seth's time.

Basis is a vague term, as it may mean basis in the sense of *foundation*, in which case the Person and work of Christ is the basis of everything. Or it may mean basis in the sense of *principle*, that is, what they were gathered *as*. Now, all through the Acts, the basis of fellowship, in the sense of principle, was the *reception of the Holy Ghost* over and above life. It was not calling on the name of the Lord, which, except the quotation from Joel (chap. ii.) as to the future, is only once referred to, and that by Ananias, in association with baptism (chap. xxii. 16) as the visible door of entrance into that which names the name of the Lord, and is quite distinct from the testimony of the Lord.

We must remember that at the beginning it was the Lord who added, not only saved, but added; and He knew *what* He was adding *to*, and on what *principle* He did so, even if they were so sectarian that, had their prejudices not been preternaturally overcome, they would have excluded all but Jews; only until the fresh offer to the nation had been finally rejected, He did not see fit to disclose it. Yet, whether it were the 120 as the original formation, and the consequent adding of the 3,000 on the day of Pentecost, the subsequent inbringing of the Samaritans, the still later introduction of the Gentiles in the household of Cornelius, or, lastly, the believers at Ephesus, every question of

fellowship was decided by the reception of the Spirit of God. What settled the letting in of the Gentiles was, they "have received the Holy Ghost as well as we." After all, that was virtually membership of the body, because from the baptism of the Spirit, in Acts ii., the *fact* was there, though not revealed for wise reasons till chapter ix., while the positive doctrine is to be found alone in Paul's epistles.

The testimony of the Lord concerns a divine unity, having a divine basis, accomplished redemption; a divine Centre, the Christ of God; a divine principle, that of the body; a divine power, the Spirit of God; a divine Authority, the Word of God; and composed of all those sealed by the Holy Ghost. It exists to-day for us to observe, and its expression in fellowship is on the same principle as ever, and acting on it—if only two or three, we can count on His presence, and find His blessing. He expects us to be true to Him, and acknowledge the united relation, into which He has brought us to Himself. The house-keeping has been a miserable failure, but the vital unity remains, and the bride, in company with the Spirit, can say "Come" to the Bridegroom, notwithstanding failure, scattering, and general confusion. It does not affect the reality of the relationship one iota.

Let us not, then, be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of Paul, His prisoner, but be found strenuously maintaining it to His glory, keeping rank, and standing shoulder to shoulder, in the witness of a good confession of that which is nearest the heart of Christ in this evil day.

W. S. F.

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## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

CHAP. iv. 1-6.

“PROVE the spirits!” is now the exhortation; for since the Holy Spirit was given, the enemy has tried in many ways to imitate His power and action, and it is necessary to put everything to the proof. One must not believe every spirit; and, as we have often noticed, the false prophets are always more popular than the true ones. There were many prophets of Baal in the time of Elijah, and many are now gone out into the world.

The test is very simple; every spirit which confesses Jesus Christ come in flesh is of God; and every spirit that does not confess Jesus Christ come in flesh is not of God. There is one thing that will manifest the true character of every spirit, and that is the blessed person of the Lord Jesus Christ come in flesh. The real and perfect manhood of the Saviour, when the Word had become flesh, is brought before us here: there had been a new beginning in the ways of God when the Eternal Son became flesh, and this perfectly obedient Man, who fully accomplished the Father's will, is a test for the evil spirits. Their very system depends upon their *not* recognizing Jesus Christ come in flesh; for were they to do this, they must recognize Him to whom all authority has been confided, and their own independent position must fall.

Happy they who study with reverence the perfect manhood of our Lord Jesus Christ; who have received by the Holy Spirit, the wonderful, unfathomable glory

of the incarnation, and confess Him, the perfect Man full of divine grace. We must not be astonished if He be the point of attack; nor must we be dismayed at hearing that to ignore Jesus Christ come in flesh is the power of the antichrist, which is already in the world.

The power of the antichrist would deny the fall of man, and the necessity of a "beginning" that is the manifestation of light and love in a Man quite different to all the sons of Adam. The antichrist's principle is to exalt unregenerate man, and to place him on such a pinnacle that the vertigo *must* cause him ignominiously to fall;\* it was already in the world in John's time, and now as we draw near to the end of the history of the age, it becomes more and more manifest to us that the enemy has succeeded in leading away the mass of Christendom in this direction—that is, where the first man is indulged, and the blessed Jesus ignored. Judgment swift and sure shall fall on the antichrist; how art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! But the important thing for us is to be able to discern and to keep clear of the spirit of the age, wherever it may appear; and for this we have a sure and simple test, the blessed Lord Himself, Jesus Christ come in flesh.

The "children" are stronger than they who are of the world, because He that is in them is greater than he that is in the world; the power of God is there by the Holy Ghost's presence, and is superior to that of the restless, remorseless spirit who is in the world. It is very interesting to compare the end of John's gospel

\* I recollect seeing in a Review, that men would soon find out that the god they had been looking for so long was man himself! So they will, no doubt, and in a very terrible way.

with that of the first epistle, and to notice the immense consequences flowing from the presence of the Holy Spirit—what a true remedy for worldliness (that is, the spirit of this age)! These poor, weak creatures (as the world would say) are yet superior to all the world's power.

“We are of God!” God sent out His apostles, and with so definite a message that the reception or rejection of it would at once stamp those that heard it as being in the truth or in error. God has been pleased to use men to carry forth His missive in such a way that there is the positive character “of God” or “not of God” brought out in their simply delivering it.

Before John says “we are of God” he gives us to understand that the world will listen to those who speak according to its own (antichristian) principles. The finest discourses on philanthropy, morals, and political economy are probably going on at this very moment; they would not be bad in themselves were not God and Christ carefully excluded from them. St. John himself would be classed amongst the exclusive and narrow-minded by many a philanthropist, not because he hated men (for he loved them), but because he insisted upon there being no blessing but in Christ. Certainly the world will not listen to you if you insist upon the excellency of Jesus, and the utter ruin and evil of Cain and his company; and I believe that many philanthropists would still be glad of John's being sent to Patmos. “It is the best place for him,” they would say. May we listen to God's inspired apostles, and be kept from antichristian snares by knowing more and more of the divine virtues and excellence of Jesus Christ come in flesh!

E. L. B.

## THE HISTORY OF KING JOTHAM.

2 CHRONICLES xxvii.

MANY instructive lessons may be gleaned from the brief record of Jotham, King of Judah. Before he came to the throne, on the judgment which befell his father in consequence of his wicked intrusion into the holy place to burn incense, he had governed the land (chap. xxvi. 21); but the divine estimate of his character and reign refers to him after his father's death. As the anointed king, he was held more directly responsible to God, both for his own individual state, and for that of his people and kingdom. It is everywhere a principle in Scripture that the more exalted the position, the greater the responsibility, that, in the Lord's own words, to whom much is given, of him much is required.

The first thing mentioned of Jotham is that "he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord, according to all that his father Uzziah did." It is good to notice, before examining the force of this statement, the plain indication here given of parental influence, and, on the other hand, of filial reverence for, and imitation of, his father's example. It is very blessed to see, although all is of grace, the piety of parents reproduced in their children, and when it is the case, it is a striking testimony to God's blessing having been bestowed upon the home training.

Acknowledging this, we may yet inquire what is exactly meant by Jotham's walking in his father's steps. It signifies, we judge, that it was good as far as it went, but that it was not piety, nor obedience, of the

highest kind. Both of Hezekiah and Josiah, it is said that David their father was their model. (See chaps. xxix. 2; xxxiv. 2.) David was the man after God's own heart; Uzziah was not, and to remember this, is to see the difference. It is the oft-repeated truth, that to see what God's mind is, we must go back to the beginning. Jotham, therefore, should have considered the example of David, if he desired to obtain the full favour of God. Even believers now fall into the same mistake when they make their parents' walk, or indeed the walk of some other Christians whom they specially admire, their standard, instead of the walk of the only perfect Example. (See 1 John ii. 6.) Let us heed the lesson.

What we have pointed out will explain Jotham's next feature. It is said, "Howbeit he entered not into the temple of the Lord." We do not read that his father did, except on the sad occasion of his unholy and presumptuous transgression. It may, therefore, have been that Jotham was also in this, his father's imitator; and the effect on his mind of the terrible chastisement his father received, might have had some influence in keeping him out of his privileges. Cases are not unknown, even in this day, where the maintenance of the holiness of God's house has led the relatives of the subjects of the discipline to withdraw from the place where the Lord manifests Himself in the midst of His gathered saints.

Be this as it may, Jotham *was not a worshipper*, and thus he did not meet the mind of the Lord. Worship, according to the revelation of that day, was the special characteristic of David, as his Psalms again and again testify. He even desired to dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, to behold the beauty of



the Lord, and to enquire in His temple. And nothing short of this satisfies the heart of God, even as the Lord taught the woman of Samaria. "The hour cometh," He said, "and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him." (John iv. 23.) The object of His blessed, seeking grace, is not realised unless He has His redeemed children around Him as His worshippers. It is plain, therefore, that the Spirit of God marks it as a failure that Jotham entered not into the temple of the Lord. If so, is there no admonition for us through Jotham? Alas! how many professors, and among them some real Christians, are not worshippers; they have no thought of entering into the holiest, according to the teaching of Heb. x.; and to them the language of Peter, concerning believers as living stones, as being built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, is well-nigh unintelligible. May this word respecting Judah's king exercise us all in the presence of God.

Connected with this feature is added, "And the people did yet corruptly." If we turn to the account in 2 Kings, we shall learn the nature of their evil practices. It says, "Howbeit the high places were not removed: the people sacrificed and burned incense still in the high places" (chap. xv. 35), and an exactly similar statement is made of the state of things in his father's reign. (*v.* 4.) May there not be a connection between Jotham's not being a worshipper, and the idolatrous practices of the people? For if Jehovah had occupied His due place in his heart, it would have been an intolerable grief to him to witness such

flagrant disobedience and rebellion. How different was the conduct of his grandson, Hezekiah. He in the first year of his reign, in the first month, opened the doors of the house of the Lord, and repaired them; and then, when he had caused the Levites to sanctify themselves, and the house of the Lord God of their fathers, and when everything was duly ordered, together with the celebration of the passover, we read that, "all Israel that were present went out to the cities of Judah, and brake the images in pieces, and cut down the groves, and threw down the high places and the altars out of all Judah and Benjamin, in Ephraim also and Manasseh, until they had utterly destroyed them all." (Chap. xxxi. 1.) All this was but the moral consequence of recognizing the claims of God's holiness in His house. Beginning there, as Hezekiah did, in the first circle of his responsibility, he could not but maintain the honour of the name of his God in every other sphere, even to the uttermost circumference of his obligations. This explains much in a day of laxity like the present. If we, as Christians, are not right with God in the assembly, we shall assuredly fail to maintain *His* authority in our homes, and to walk before Him in our daily lives.

The example of Jotham would also tell upon the people. As the anointed king he was under the responsibility of knowing the Lord's mind. (Deut. xvii. 18-20); and of walking according to it, so that he might lead the people in the way of God's commandments. The loftier the position, the greater the influence; and hence Jotham's neglect of the temple could not but fail to open the door to the corruptions which the Spirit of God has indicated.

As we read in the Proverbs, "A king that sitteth in the throne of judgment scattereth away all evil with his eyes." (Chap. xx. 8.) Jotham's failure was thus a fruitful source of evil in his kingdom.

Notwithstanding his failure, however, Jotham exhibited much activity and victorious power in conflict with enemies. As a builder he excelled, following in this, also, in the footsteps of his father. Whether this was done to secure the Lord's inheritance, or to promote his own might and glory in his kingdom is not revealed. There are servants in this day who labour much, and zealously, in caring, or seeming to care, for the Lord's interests; and, even though their motives may be mixed, in desiring to advance what they have especially at heart, as well as to commend the name of Christ, the Lord can use them for the good of His people. They seek to guard the people of God from the incursion of the enemy, and are foremost in drawing the sword in defence of the truth they have received; and yet they have never themselves entered upon the enjoyment of their highest privileges. They serve without, but they have not learned what it is to worship in the holiest. In the book of Revelation, we read that the seven angels "stood before God" waiting for their service (chap. viii. 2); and surely this is a pattern for all who would serve acceptably. It was in this very thing, we judge, that Jotham failed.

In verse 9 we have a kind of summary: "So Jotham became mighty, because he prepared his ways before the Lord his God." At first sight, this might appear to contradict what has been said. So far from this, it simply gives the principle on which God could bless him, and bestow upon him the prosperity and

success which he enjoyed. It is in fact an illustration of the word, "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." And governmentally, it is strikingly exhibited in the whole history of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel, that God ever prospered the monarchs who recognised, even outwardly only, His word, name, and authority. He has said, "Them that honour Me, I will honour," and this is verified even where the honour rendered may not proceed from a renewed soul. It is so in all dispensations. For example, if God be honoured in a household, if His name be called upon, He will in His government on earth bless that household; and so, in like manner, when affairs of daily life and business are conducted with the recognition of His name. But this is not salvation; it is temporal mercies according to the principles of God's government. (Compare 1 Peter iii. 10-13.) Jotham thus prepared his ways before the Lord, and became mighty. Whether there was a work of God in his soul is not here the question. There may have been; and if so, he had blessings of another and a larger kind as his portion. But, whether so or otherwise, there is much profitable instruction for us all in this feature. Jotham *prepared* his ways before the Lord; there was forethought, consideration, and purpose. He was not governed by circumstances; but he carefully arranged his paths according to the will of God.

If, therefore, his failures constitute a warning for us, some of his characteristics become an example. May we heed both alike, as we ponder his history, remembering with gratitude, at the same time, that we have a perfect example vouchsafed to us in the pathway of our blessed Lord and Saviour. And it is written, "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked."

## HIS HARVEST.

“ ET MEA MESSIS ERIT.”

YES, blessed Lord, the harvest shall be Thine,  
The seed is scattered, sown indeed with tears :  
Thy God for Thee works out Love's whole design,  
One day with Him is as a thousand years.

We bless Thee for the patience and the pain  
That school our hearts to fellowship with Thee :  
The toilsome treading o'er earth's barren plain,  
Before Thy harvest our glad eyes shall see.

How beautiful, O Saviour, are Thy feet  
Upon the mountains, ere the break of day:  
One Spirit are we now with Thee. 'T is meet  
Thy Death should mark, for us in Life, Thy way.

Behold the Sower who went forth to sow ;  
Whose path began, and issued too, in prayer.  
The Heaven of heavens—opened through His woe—  
Pours forth His glory, tells it everywhere.

The Husbandman hath patience long, till He  
Receive the early and the latter rain.  
White, wondrous, golden, shall the harvest be,  
When Christ appears, when God's own Son shall reign.

Now may the God of Hope, thus still we pray,  
Fill us, believing, with all joy and peace ;  
Thine, Lord, by right, is universal sway,  
No end shall be to Thy blest rule's increase.

For God, Thy God, builds by supreme design,  
His wisdom's " day " is as earth's thousand years:  
Well is it said " The harvest shall be mine,"  
They reap, with joyful song, who sow in tears.

In yonder heavens, ever at Thy side,  
With Thee, Lord, in Thy glory, on Thy throne,  
Shall be Thy own companion meet, Thy bride,  
Won when Thou wert on earth indeed " alone."

Thine is the patience, Thine the power, the peace  
Whereby we taste of fellowship with Thee,  
A little while, and labour here shall cease  
And evermore Thy harvest we shall see.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

## I.

1 COR. ii. 6-7.

IN this scripture we find, so to speak, the second character of Paul's testimony among the Corinthians. When he first came to their city he determined not to know anything among them, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. For this indeed was the first need of their souls; and until they had received the truth of a rejected Christ—the doctrine of the cross, with all that was involved in it—they were not prepared for any further communications of grace. But when once their souls were established upon this immutable foundation there were other truths awaiting their reception. The wisdom of men Paul refused, for God had made foolish the wisdom of the world in the cross of Christ; but he delighted to "speak wisdom" among them that were perfect—"the wisdom of God in a mystery, even the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory." The very terms used by the apostle in speaking of the wisdom of God will explain its character. It had been in "a mystery," a "hidden wisdom" ordained before the ages unto our glory. The reference, therefore, is to God's eternal counsels in Christ (see Ephesians i. 3-6), hitherto kept secret, but now made known by the Spirit through Paul's ministry (*vv.* 9, 10.) In the light of this, the meaning of the words "our glory" becomes apparent. It embraces the full accomplishment of God's purposes

in Christ for His people, and hence their conformity to, and association with, Christ in glory. (See Rom. viii. 29.) It may well be that the "mystery" in the Ephesian sense (chap. iii. 9-11) is also included, as otherwise there would not have been the full declaration of "all the counsel of God." This is the more probable, because Paul speaks of his ministry amongst the "perfect," those of full age, that is, mature Christians, those who had through grace accepted the full truth of Christianity, those, in a word, whose faces were turned fully to Christ glorified, the Second Man, and whose backs were towards the first man and his scene, like Paul himself in Philippians iii. "Our glory" will therefore refer to the future; but as faith is the "substantiating" of things hoped for, the light of that blessed future will give present enjoyment and courage to the soul.

## II.

MATTHEW xvi. 28; MARK ix. 1; LUKE ix. 27.

It is very interesting to notice the characteristic differences in the three gospels, in connection with the announcement concerning the transfiguration. In Matthew it is, "There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see *the Son of man coming in His kingdom.*" In verse 28 the Lord had charged His disciples that they should tell no man that He was Jesus the Christ. He was at this time really rejected, and hence the testimony to Jesus as God's anointed was for the time ended. The consequence was that He from this moment took the title of the Son of Man. (Compare chap. xxvi. 63, 64.) He thus says in v. 27, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His

Father with His angels," etc. In accordance with this, the three chosen disciples should see the Son of man coming in His kingdom. It is, therefore, His personal glory as Son of man; and this glory displayed before the disciples was God's answer to the rejection of Christ by His people. Passing on to Mark, the promise is that they should not taste of death till they had seen *the kingdom of God come with power*. This is in beautiful harmony with the mission of our blessed Lord in this gospel as the Servant-prophet. We read in chap. i., "Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God." And now Peter, James, and John were to see, in confirmation of their faith, that kingdom, which the Lord had proclaimed in lowliness and rejection, come in power, and their Lord as the centre of its glory, and as supreme in its authority, while acknowledged as God's beloved Son. In Luke there is yet a different feature. Here it was simply *the kingdom of God* they should see; and accordingly the kingdom, both in its heavenly and earthly aspects, is delineated in the account of the transfiguration. Moses and Elias appear here in glory, and talk with Christ; they are types of the heavenly saints who will be associated with Him in His glorious reign; while the disciples who, when they were awake, saw His glory, represent the saints on earth during that blessed era of His righteous rule. Without entering into further detail, it may be remarked that the reader of the gospels will derive great profit and instruction in following out and in meditating upon, these distinctions in the records of the same events. It is not in the attempt to harmonize the gospels, but in seizing the object of their differences, that the mind of the Spirit is apprehended.



## "THOU REMAINEST."

THROUGHOUT the whole of this year we have been occupied with the Name which is above every name, as expressive of the varied glories and excellencies of our blessed Lord and Saviour. It has been our delight to pass from one phase to another of His infinite perfections, and to call attention to Himself as the One in whom all God's thoughts and ways are centred, and as the One, also, who is the abiding and eternal portion of the believer's heart. To be overwhelmed in the contemplation of Christ, like the Queen of Sheba in the presence of the glory of Solomon, is to anticipate the enjoyment of heaven. But to enter in any measure upon this, we must follow our blessed Lord—and this can only be through death and resurrection morally known—into the holiest; into the place where He dwells. There alone can we, with unveiled face behold the glory of the Lord, and be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. As it is His own desire to have His beloved people thus in the intimacy of His own presence, may He beget in all of us that purpose of heart which will lead us to say with the Psalmist, "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."

In the subject of this last paper of the year we are invited to consider His immutability, in contrast with

the transitory character of this world. Inasmuch as our bodies are links with this creation, which still "groaneth and travaileth in pain together," there are seasons when we are oppressed with the sense of the corruption and death which are written upon the whole scene. Already under judgment, it will soon vanish; for "the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." (2 Peter iii. 7.) The works of the Lord's own hands, they shall yet perish; as a vesture He will Himself fold them up, and they shall be changed. Is it asked, Wherefore? The reply is, The first creation will share the doom of the first man. For a little season, in testimony to the rights and glory of the Son of Man, it will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God; but the judgment pronounced upon it, if postponed, is final and irrevocable.

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It is, therefore, an immense consolation to be reminded that the Lord Himself, the Creator, abideth for ever. The rapid flight of time, which is ever pressed upon our attention at the close of a year, the constant departure of those we have known and loved, the signs of mortality meeting our gaze at every turn—all these things might well fill our hearts with apprehension and gloom, if our vision were bounded by time's horizon. But thanks be unto God, we have to do with a Person who is above and beyond all change, with One who is ever the same, and whose years never fail; and He is known to our souls as Saviour,

Redeemer, and Lord. It is, indeed, a characteristic of Christianity that we are shut up—blessedly shut up—to a Divine Person, and to a Divine Person who, having Himself been here as Man in the midst of men, knows all our needs and sorrows. In the very Psalm, indeed, from which the apostle cites, we find the feelings to which allusion has been made. It will encourage our hearts to ponder a little upon what is there recorded.

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It may be first pointed out that the Divine title of the Psalm (cii.) is "A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord"; and let it be remembered that "the afflicted" here is no less a Person than the Messiah in the midst of His sorrow and rejection. But passing by the special circumstances in which He is here seen, and coming to our immediate subject, He says in verse 23, "He weakened my strength in the way; He shortened my days." And then, turning to God, He says, "O my God, take me not away in the midst of my days: Thy years are throughout all generations." How it endears our precious Saviour to our hearts, as we are permitted to contemplate Him in circumstances so closely resembling those in which we ourselves are; to perceive that He, through His becoming man, was weighted with the feeling and experience of weakness, and the brevity of human life. Yea, as we elsewhere read, He was tempted in all points like as we are, sin apart; and it is on this very account that He is qualified to sympathize with us in our infirmities, and to minister to us the needed succour. Blessed for ever be His holy Name!

Let us, however, regard the answer to His cry. It commences with verse 25, "Of old hast Thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of Thy hands. They shall perish, but Thou shalt endure: yea, all of them shalt wax old like a garment: as a vesture shalt Thou change them, and they shall be changed: but Thou art the same,\* and Thy years shall have no end." We may reverently say that God, in answer to the cry of distress of His Anointed, reminds Him of His Creatorship; and then, that if all the works of His hands perish He would endure, that in contrast with their change, decay, and dissolution, He, although now in circumstances of weakness and sorrow, was in His own being the changeless One. Such language can be only understood in the light of the mystery of His Person; but the point we desire now to emphasize is that the comfort and sustainment ministered to His holy soul was in connection with the eternity and immutability of His own being. More may not be said; but oh! how close it brings Him to us in our weakness when we read this "prayer of the afflicted," and learn the character of the answer He received.

There is another thing to be observed. As the Captain of our salvation, He was made perfect through sufferings; and He has thus become the perfect Exemplar of all His sorrowing and tried saints. But the marvel is, that the consolation ministered to Him, while treading the path of rejection, when, to all

\* As pointed out at the beginning of the year, the words *Atta Hu*, rendered "Thou art the same," have ever been regarded as having the force of a Divine title.

outward appearance, He laboured in vain and spent His strength for nought, is of the same nature as that ministered to us in our pilgrim path. Is He told, as in the Psalm, of His changeless being? So are we reminded, while passing through this world of change, that He remaineth, that He is ever the same—the same through all the centuries of time, as through the immeasurable ages of eternity. We are in this way put upon a Rock—a Rock that nothing can ever shake, and on which, reposing in perfect peace, we can contemplate, without a single apprehension, the dissolution of all things. Christ remains, if we lose all besides; nay, we should rather say, Let all else vanish from our gaze, for we want *nothing* since we possess Christ.

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All this does but teach us that we already belong to another scene which is as unchanging as the unchanging Christ. It was this lesson in which the Lord so carefully instructed His disciples. In John xiii., for example, the whole significance of His washing their feet might be thus expressed—"If I cannot longer remain with you in your circumstances, I will show you how you may follow, and have part with Me in that new place to which I am going." So also, when Mary Magdalene would have detained Him here, He said, "Touch Me not; for I am not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto My Father, and your Father; and to My God, and your God." It is the same lesson in another way. He puts His disciples, by this message, into His own place and relationship in association with Himself, and this is necessarily in heaven. Not only,

therefore, do we belong to another scene—and one outside this world—but the Lord would have us follow Him to it, and be in His company there, even while treading the sands of the wilderness.

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"Thou remainest" is thus full of blessed sustenance and encouragement. Not only does it afford us a secure and immovable foundation in the midst of change and unrest, but it also attracts our hearts to that new place, and that new order of things, which He has formed and inaugurated in virtue of His death and resurrection, and where He Himself is the centre of all the glory which floods the whole scene. For, as we elsewhere read, He has ascended up far above all heavens, that He might fill all things. Well then may we accept death upon everything here, for already the light of another world has dawned upon our souls—a new world where neither change, nor sorrow, nor death can ever enter, and where we shall be for ever with Christ and conformed to His own image. Of this new creation, He is the beginning, as the First-born from the dead, and *He remaineth*. Yea, as we are permitted to address Him, "Thou art the same, and Thy years shall have no end."

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In conclusion, the writer would affectionately enquire whether the reader is consciously reposing upon Him who is the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever? There is no other foundation for our souls before God. Building upon it, we are secured both for time and for eternity; for God is then for us; and if He be for us, who can be against us?

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

CHAP. iv. 7-19.

THE great subject of all John's writings now comes before us ; I mean, Divine love. The Divine nature is known in its exercise ; and here again it has been manifested, as to us, in the gift of the Son. It has been well said that God's love is absolute, but has been shewn forth, with regard to *us*, in the sending of the Son. There was no love in us toward God when the Son was sent ; the love was His, and the manifestation of it made by the sending of the only begotten Son into the world.

There are two things as to us :

1. We were dead ;
2. We were guilty ;

and there is the Divine answer to all our need, for the first thing we read is that the Son was sent that we might *live* through Him. We were dead until then ; and the passage from death to life was accomplished in this way—through Him. Many passages in the Gospel of John come to our minds, no doubt, in speaking of life. God's thought of love, His intention with regard to us, was that we, who had no life in us, should *live* ; that we should pass from the frigid zone of death into that one where all is peace, joy, light in the warmth of the Divine Presence. This was accomplished through the gift of the Son.

But, secondly, we were *guilty* ; we had many sins to our account, and we felt when awakened, not as a

mere formula, "the burden of them is intolerable." God, who loved us before ever we loved Him, gave His Son a propitiation for our sins; the precious blood has met all our guilt, and all our faults and transgressions have been put away for ever.

We ought to love one another; it is a debt that we should constantly be paying. If God has so loved us, we owe to one another to love, as being born of God. The debt will never be paid off, but we owe this (though no other kind of debt should be contracted) to love one another.

In the next verses another aspect of Divine love is to be noticed; that is, as perfected in us. The similarity between the first clause of verse 12 and the 18th verse of John i. has been spoken of. The two verses, however, end differently, and we should compare them. There it is—"The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, *He* hath declared Him"; here it is—"If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and His love is perfected in us." In a word, the meaning is this—that if Divine love is now to be seen, it is in the family of God upon earth that it can be known. It is perfectly true that here we have sadly failed, but the truth is none the less important.

Notice that, in verse 13, the expression is not the same as that in the 24th verse of the third chapter; there it is—"We know that He abideth in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us"; whilst here it is said that we know that we abide *in Him*; and in connection with this knowledge, it is also said that He has given to us *of His Spirit*. That is, what we have here is partitive, and implies full communion; we have not



only a Divine nature, but we partake of one communion, having the same blessed objects, the Father and Son, and it is thus in God's family that His love is perfected. I would call especial attention to this expression "*of His Spirit*" as implying communion; we know that we abide *in Him*. Then there is the active and blessed testimony that goes out to all around us: we have seen, and testify, that the Father has sent the Son as Saviour of the world. I think that the first time we find the words, "Saviour of the world," is in John iv. 42, and it is very interesting to look at this, for it expresses the love of God in so general and evangelic a way that we take courage, as we feel it and announce it, in our words and ways, to all those who surround us.

But there is a third aspect of divine love. It has been perfected *with us* (verse 17), and this should not be confounded with what has preceded.

Notice in the 15th and 16th verses that the blessings of "life" do not belong merely to apostles or advanced christians, but to *whomsoever* "shall confess," &c. These two verses are very important, as expressing God's presence in us, and our communion.

The third aspect of God's love is that in which it is seen as accompanying us the whole length of our course of testimony; it is with us the whole time, from our first acquaintance with it until the end of our service. It has been perfected with us, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; we are as He is in this world. There can be no fear or doubt, when we know that we are fully accepted in Him who shall judge both quick and dead, and that the One who shall sit supreme at His tribunal is our own blessed

Saviour, whose goodness has followed us all the way of our life. There can be no room for fear; perfect love casts out fear, and we go on in simple trust in the God who loved us, when there was nothing in us to draw out His love. We are living, and living in communion with Him; bearing testimony, at the same time, in an ungrateful world, but with the sense of His love perfected *with* us, surrounding us until the judgment seat of Christ. Blessed and holy liberty! His service is perfect freedom.

Notice that God's righteousness is not in any way set aside; there shall be a just judgment of all and everything; only we have full assurance (boldness) in the day of judgment.

May we walk as those who have been made perfect in love, as serving the God of love! We love Him, because He first loved us. E. L. B.

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"THE very finest evidence which can be afforded of true spiritual work is that it tends directly to exalt Christ. If attention be sought for the work or the workman, the light has become dim, and the Minister of the sanctuary must use the snuffers. It was Aaron's province to light the lamps, and he it was who trimmed them likewise. In other words, the light which, as Christians, we are responsible to yield, is not only founded upon Christ, but maintained by Him, from moment to moment, throughout the entire night. Apart from Him we can do nothing. The golden shaft sustained the lamps; the priestly hand supplied the oil and applied the snuffers. It is all *in* Christ, *from* Christ, and *by* Christ."

## THE TEMPORAL AND THE ETERNAL.

It is not as a mere truism that the Spirit of God declares, in the end of 2 Corinthians iv., that "the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal." As believers the eternal things belong to us, and not the things seen and temporal. We have to do with these latter for a short time, and then to leave them for ever. The Spirit of God would set our eyes and hearts by faith upon the eternal things. It is not only that they are eternal, and therefore abiding, and that we are to accept this fact; but the eternal things *are to be what our souls live in, and find enjoyment in, now*, as revealed by the Spirit, and apprehended by faith.

An unbeliever is forced, with regret, to own that present things are not abiding; but he clings to them notwithstanding, and would seek to hide the truth from his own heart, or banish it from his mind. But so should it not be with us. We do well, however, to challenge our hearts upon this point, as we draw to the close of another year, and to ask ourselves, Are we, each year, finding our hearts and minds more free from the power and hold of present things, or are these getting more hold on us? Is it, in any measure, with feelings approaching to regret, that we realize that all here is fading and passing away, and that soon we shall be done with the seen and temporal things? Are we, in short, as to the state of our souls, drifting more *worldward*, or pressing on more *heavenward*?

True, we may have sorrows here, and even bereave-

ments, that tend to impress upon us what a scene of trial and disappointment this is, and to embitter the enjoyment of things here, but this does not necessarily free us from the power of present things. Sufferings here may be, no doubt, contributive to this, but not the great and primary means employed.

It is only effected by the blessed light of the gospel shining into our hearts, and revealing to us that One in glory, in whom is expressed to us, on the one hand, the wondrous place of favour and blessing, which is ours, now before God, in that unseen and eternal realm of bliss (for He is there as Man, and as our Saviour, and thus in Him we see the wonderful place of favour that man has now—which every believer has—in the Person of Christ, exalted there as Man); and on the other hand, in whose face is revealed all the knowledge of the glory of God—all that God is towards us expressed in Him too. How marvellous, indeed, is this! What unfoldings of light and love, of grace and glory! What an interest it gives the heart in the things which are not seen and eternal! It is "the Man Christ Jesus" who is the Centre and Sun of that "vast universe of bliss." The believer looks back and considers Him in His lowly pathway of obedience and suffering in this world, and sees Him going into death in all its dread reality, but rising again in resurrection life—a life which is eternal, and which is connected with the eternal things. But this is not all. By that death He has cleared us of the judgment that rested upon us in our Adam life here, and borne the judgment of our sins, so that they are gone from the eye of God for ever. (Heb. x. 17.) Now He can bring us, by the Holy Ghost, into present participation in

that life which is suited to the enjoyment of what is divine and heavenly. The Spirit of God can, and does, unfold them, and, therefore, the believer can look upon them (for faith *always* looks at the unseen and eternal), not as things belonging to a world of which he is outside, and with which he has no part, but as that into which he is brought through the death of Christ, and where all belongs to him, because all belongs to Christ, and he is Christ's. It is indeed the Father's world which the death of Christ opens to us, and brings our souls into, and He has given all to His Son, to the One who has died for us, to bring us into His own portion—to know the Father too, revealed to us by Him, *which is itself the richest portion*, and to enjoy all that the Father has given Him as Man, having fitted us for it, and given us the life suited to it; and now, as joint heirs (according to the eternal purpose of the Father's love), we are privileged to enjoy it all as our own.

True, we are yet in bodies which hinder us in measure as to all this, and which connect us with the earthly and temporal things. We have as yet the treasure in "earthen vessels"; we still groan in our earthly tabernacle house. But we can, by faith, look "at the things which are not seen," and we have "the earnest of the Spirit." We know, too, that "we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"—a body of glory.

It is not so much in this connection, however, that our danger lies. It is rather in the tendency of our hearts to seek a portion here, to hold present things as though they belonged to us. Whereas in truth *nothing here belongs to us*. Our portion is in the eternal things.

What we hold here is only entrusted to us as unto stewards. We must give account for all—not only for the deeds done in the body, as regards outward conduct, but for the use we have made of everything pertaining to this life which has been committed to us—the motives, too, and *intents* of the heart, will all be made manifest.

It will not do to have been orthodox in relation to our belief of Christian truths, respecting the temporal and the eternal—the seen and the unseen—but the question will be, Which of the two has formed our lives here? Which has commanded our hearts (our affections)? What has been the great aim and pursuit of our lives? Does the close of this year find us more in communion with what is of Christ? with the Father's things? or more engrossed with, or overcome by, the world? "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." How can it be otherwise, when we read that solemn utterance of the Lord to His Father, in John xvii.—"Oh righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee, and these have known that Thou hast sent Me."

It may not be that we seek a large part of, or a prominent place in, the world. The question is, Do we *love* it? Are we being conformed to it? We may hold every christian truth, and yet be conformed to the world. But, certainly, the truth has not reached *the soul* in this case, nor is it rightly known *there*. The ministry of the Spirit, clearly, is to lead us to behold the glory of the Lord "with unveiled face," and *thus* be "changed into the same image from glory to glory."

It may be enquired by some, however, why is there

not more realization and enjoyment of these heavenly and blessed things, which the Holy Ghost is here to lead our souls into? Let the Lord's own words answer, and the answer is twofold. In Luke v. we read, "No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new." The meaning of this is plain and simple—if we are desiring, and finding pleasure in the things to which Christ has died, and which please the natural taste, then the spiritual taste is weakened or destroyed. But, again, we read in Luke xvi., "If ye have not been faithful in that which is another man's, who shall give you that which is your own?" This is very important to lay to heart. All that we have here, as already remarked, belongs not to us, it is "another Man's." He has secured possession *for us* of all that is "our own" in heavenly glory, and the Spirit is the earnest of it now. We cannot have the practical possession of it now (the title is perfectly and eternally secure), but as the Spirit ministers it to us. But He is here to glorify Christ, and to maintain His rights here, so to speak. Now if we use for our own gratification, or to minister to our own worldly tastes and pursuits, what is properly Christ's, we are not true to Him during His absence, but are committing a two-fold evil. First, we are seeking satisfaction, or pleasure, or comfort, in those things which are not ours as Christians, but through which we have to pass, and in the refusal of which we manifest the power of another life of which this world is ignorant; and next, we are using what is another Man's, and is entrusted to us here—our time, our means, our relationships, etc.—to secure the enjoyment of what ministers to our fleshly tastes; and the Spirit of God is sure to resent this unfaithfulness to

Christ. We lose the true and deep enjoyment of what is our own—a joy that is even now illimitable for our souls, but which can only be realized as our hearts are led by the Spirit to know Christ where He is, and all that is revealed in Him there.

But we must let go things here. "He that loveth his life shall lose it." "He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me." We know that these are our Lord's own words. He knew where the hindrances would come in, and what was likely to hold the heart from Himself. But He has done all that love could do to win our hearts, and if we dwell more on *that* love, and seek to know more of Him who has expressed it, we shall find our hearts more drawn from things here, to Him there, and, like the apostle Paul, we shall be able to say, "One thing I do, *forgetting* those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus" (Phil. iii. 14.) The apostle *had his back on the world*, and all that it would give him as to a name or place, or that would minister to him of its things, when he said, "forgetting those things which are behind." If with any of us it has rather been the reverse of this, if the first love to Christ is gone, and the world and the *earth* have a larger place with us, we do well to look back, to remember "from whence" we have fallen, and to "*repent.*" He still seeks to bring our hearts to know His love better, so faithful and unchanging, and to draw us from all here that will only disappoint, and be a terrible loss to us in every way. "The end of all things is at hand"—present things *must* go. But



are we glad to let them go, to lay hold of what is really life? Are the eyes of our hearts on the seen or on the unseen, on the temporal or on the eternal?

S. M. A.

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## THE OBEDIENCE OF CHRIST.

WE are sanctified to the obedience of Christ. Let me say one word on this obedience. I say of my child, who wants to go another way, but who yields to me, it is very pleasant to see such obedience: but it was not so with Christ, He never had a will to wish to go the other way. When the tempter came to Him, he said, "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread." What was His answer? It was as though He said, "Nay, I am a servant; I cannot command, I obey; It is written, 'That man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.' That is the obedience of Christ. The Father's will was His motive for everything. There are thousands of things we do from habit, and we say we must do them: there is no "must" for me, but Christ's will. I have to learn what His will is; for we are made epistles of Christ, and the path we are to walk in is to manifest the life of Jesus in our bodies. Everything I do should be the expression of the allegiance of my heart to Christ; and the manifestation of Him to others. The standard of walk is, what is "worthy of the Lord," not of man. Sometimes it is very difficult to be peaceful, patient, gentle, when a man wrongs and insults one; but were you not the enemy of God, and did not God forgive you when you were His enemy? Well, you forgive your enemy. I quite understand the difficulties, but

we have the blessed privilege of walking as He walked. If you want to do this, go and study Christ, learn what His path was down here, after you have learned your place in Him on high. It is a great comfort that, in looking at Christ, I not only *see* the thing I ought to be, but I *get* the thing I ought to be, "grace for grace." "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory." There is real growth there, not in fitness and acceptance, but in likeness to Christ; and it ought to be growth every instant.

We are in this place of Christ, then, before God; and what I would press upon you is to *study Christ*, so that we may be like Him here. There is nothing that so fills the soul with blessing and encouragement, or that so sanctifies: nothing which so gives the living sense of divine love, that gives us courage.

The Lord give us this courage, and enable us to study Him. "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."  
J. N. D.

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## LEVITES.

LEVITE service was to be regulated by the appointment of the priest. There was no more room for the exercise of self-will in the service of the Levites than there was in the position of the men of war. All was divinely settled; and this was a signal mercy to all whose hearts were in a right condition. To one whose will was unbroken it might seem a hardship and a most irksome task to be obliged to occupy the same position, or to be engaged in precisely the same line of work. Such an one might sigh for something fresh—some

variety in his work. But, on the contrary, where the will was subdued, and the heart adjusted, each one would say, "My path is perfectly plain; I have only to obey." This is ever the business of the true servant. It was pre-eminently so with Him who was the only Perfect Servant that ever trod the earth. He could say, "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." And again, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work."

But there is another fact which claims our attention, in reference to the Levites, and that is, their service had exclusively to do with the tabernacle and its belongings. They had nothing else to do. For a Levite to think of putting his hand to aught beside would have been to deny his calling, to abandon his divinely-appointed work, and to fly in the face of God's commandments.

Just so is it with Christians now. Their exclusive business, their one grand work, their absorbing service, is Christ and His belongings. . . . A true Levite of old could say, "To me to live is the tabernacle"; and a true Christian now can say, "To me to live is Christ." The grand question, in every matter which may present itself before the Christian, is this, "Can I connect Christ with it?" . . . It is not a question as to the right or wrong of this or that. No; it is simply a question as to how far it concerns the name and the glory of Christ. This simplifies everything amazingly. It answers a thousand questions, solves a thousand difficulties, and makes the path of the true and earnest Christian as clear as a sunbeam.

## SCRIPTURE NOTES.

## I.

ISAIAH xix. 23, 24 ; x. 5 ; xiv. 24-26.

BEYOND the fact of the special blessing of Egypt and Assyria, in the future, we are not informed. The reason of their peculiar relationship to Israel, in the days of the kingdom, is not given. But two things should be considered in connection with the subject: First, their immediate contiguity, as in olden days, to the "glorious land"—the one on the north, and the other on the south; and, secondly, that both had been employed by God as rods to chasten His people. A third thing should be noticed, viz., that both of these nations will be judged before they are blessed. It thus says of Egypt, "And the Lord shall smite Egypt: He shall smite and heal it: and they shall return even to the Lord, and He shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them." (Isaiah xix. 22.) But while we have fullest details of the judgment of Assyria, in connection with the deliverance of Israel in the last days, no account is given of its repentance and turning to the Lord, as in the case of Egypt, unless, indeed, Jonah iii. be taken as prophetic as well as historical. The fact of their blessing is alone stated. Zephaniah iii. 8, 9 may be read as setting forth the general principle on which God will finally bring the peoples of the earth into the enjoyment of His favour and blessing. It may also be gathered, especially from the prophet Micah, that

Israel, restored under Messiah's reign, will be the instrument both for the judgment and for the blessing of their former oppressors. (Chap. v. 4-7.) The presentation, therefore, of the happy relationships between Israel and their former adversaries, under the millennial sway of Christ, is all the more attractive; and surely it speaks loudly of the grace of His heart, albeit He will reign in righteousness, that the two chief enemies of His chosen nation are singled out for His special favour. Accepting the rendering of Isaiah x. 5, as "*Woe to the Assyrian,*" two things are taught: First, that he will be employed as the rod of God's anger against His people; and secondly, that he will be punished for the way in which he executes his mission. (See *vv.* 12-34.) But this punishment of the Assyrian will be prior to the blessing spoken of in chap. xix., and in connection with the deliverance and establishment in blessing of Israel. It should always be remembered that the Assyrian is the last enemy of Israel, and that his destruction is subsequent to that of the two beasts of Rev. xiii. as described in Rev. xix.

## II.

### 2 CORINTHIANS i. 5.

As to the difference between "Christ" and "*the* Christ," we prefer to cite the words of another. In a note in the *New Translation* on the above Scripture, the Translator says—"I would take this opportunity of drawing attention to the difference between 'Christ' and 'the Christ.' 'The Christ' is the designation of a condition, not a name; 'Christ' is a name. Not only are these not used indifferently, but in the Gospels,

where the word is used alone, it is almost invariably 'the Christ,' the Messiah, or Anointed; while in the Epistles it is rarely so. It is used as a name. Some cases are doubtful, because the structure of the Greek phrase requires or prefers the article: this is the case here." The last sentence should be carefully considered, as it shows the danger of pressing, in many cases, a literal translation, without an accurate acquaintance with the original language. We add another comment by the same writer—"As to 'the Christ,' there is no ground whatever for making 'the Christ' the Church. Nine-tenths of the cases where we have 'Christ' in English, it is 'the Christ' in Greek. Christ was not properly a name, but a title, meaning (the same as Messiah in Hebrew) in English 'Anointed'—'Jesus is the Christ'; but it very soon became a name, but the personal name is Jesus. The only place out of, I suppose, hundreds where 'the Christ' is used for the principle of union among saints, is 1 Corinthians xii.—tantamount to 'so it is in the case of the Christ.' It never means properly the Body, but is used for a name which brings us into relationship with Him, because the Anointed One is the Head of all the anointed ones. (See John i. 33.) Hence the change in Romans viii. 11, where Jesus is used as the personal name, and Christ, not at all as the Body, but as the Head of those who will be raised because of Him." \* If these remarks are weighed, the reader will be much helped in his examination of this subject; and he will learn, at the same time, the necessity of great care in the study and interpretation of the smallest distinctions in the Scriptures.

\* *Letters*, vol. ii. p. 388.

## III.

PHIL. ii. 15 ; REV. xxi. 11.

ONLY in these two scriptures does the particular word translated "lights" and "light" occur. It is the word often applied elsewhere to the heavenly luminaries, to the stars of heaven. If, therefore, the passage in Philippians be rendered, as it often is, "among whom ye appear as lights in the world," the force of the word becomes apparent. Christians are set to shine amid the moral darkness of the world, as the stars in the firmament. This is their office; and if the scripture in Revelation be examined the source of the light will be discovered. The holy Jerusalem is seen descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God; and then it is added, "and her light was like unto a stone most precious," etc. She appears above the millennial earth with the glory of God, which constitutes her light, shining as a luminary—surpassing all that had ever been before seen—in the purged heavens. A similar thing is seen in connection with the earthly Jerusalem: "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee." The glory of God is the display of all that He is in all His perfections as revealed in Christ; and the holy Jerusalem will be the vessel of this display in the coming age. It is this which will constitute her light. (Compare Rev. xxi. 23.) In like manner it is Christ displayed through the believer which constitutes his light. There is, therefore, a connection between the two scriptures. Believers should be morally now what they will be hereafter in actual display.

## IV.

## 1 COR. iii. 1.

It has often been pointed out that in this and the preceding chapters, the apostle distinguishes three classes. First, there is the "natural" man, that is, man as born into this world, man in his unconverted state and condition; and it is of him Paul says that he "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." (Chap. ii. 14.) Next, there is the "spiritual" man, one, that is, who is not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, because the Spirit of God dwells in him (Rom. viii. 9), and one who is also walking in the Spirit (see Gal. v. 16, 25), controlled by the Holy Spirit in his life and conduct. Lastly, there are the carnal (iii. 1-4), those who, though really Christians, "walk as men," that is, are governed, not by the indwelling Spirit, but by human principles and motives, in fact, by the flesh. Hence the apostle says, "For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?" Alas! that it should be possible for us, the children of God, to be so characterized. And as a warning, it should ever be remembered that when we are not walking in the Spirit, the flesh will assuredly assert its power and be manifested. It is on this account Paul elsewhere writes, "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16.)

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"The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer." (1 Peter iv. 7.)