

THE



NORTHERN



WITNESS.

"For by the Works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."—GAL. ii. 16.

"For by Grace are ye saved through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."—EPH. ii. 8.

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J.G. HAWKINS. { 12 PATERNOSTER SQ., E.C. ABERDEEN—MISS KEMP, ST. ANDREW ST.

PETER'S ADVICE

TO THE

"SECT WHICH IS EVERYWHERE
SPOKEN AGAINST."

—♦—

"If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you.

"But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evil-doer, or as a busybody in other men's matters. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God on this behalf."

THE SONG OF SOLOMON,

By W. LINCOLN.

THE Song of Solomon, when conjoined with the sixteen prophets whose writings follow it, holds somewhat of the same relation to the Old Testament, as the book of the Revelation holds to the New. That is to say, the Revelation, though it is the great prophecy of the New Testament, yet contains within itself many portions wonderfully parallel with this Song. Hence, probably, the frequency of allusion to this Song in the Revelation. Thus, for instance, compare Song v. 10, with Rev. i. 14; Song v. 2, with Rev. iii. 20; or the close of each book. Song viii. 14, with Rev. xxii. 20. Such language as in Rev. xix.—“the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready,” finds its aptest and fullest illustration in this Song. Likewise with the book *before each of these*. Ecclesiastes exhibits the vanity of every thing “under the Sun,” which phrase itself, as a key to the book, occurs 28 times therein. Then, contrastedly, the Song reveals the person of the Beloved, and dilates at length on the joy of communion with Him. Similarly in the New Testament, the epistle of Jude is largely occupied with a look-out at the apostasies and doom of Christendom. But whilst Ecclesiastes is concluded with a very vivid description of death, Jude, on the other hand, glances at his close at the power of God as able to preserve His own, and to present them faultless before the presence of His glory. Then Revelation amply sets forth the joy of the heavenly family when at last at home with Himself, far above this earthly scene of judgment.

The very term “Song” is itself obviously a most expressive one. For it impliedly affirms the joy which the soul must experience as the heavenly Bridegroom manifests His love. And here again we remember how this very word occurs again and again in the Revelation, and how many [times the joy of the redeemed finds utterance in song. Earth’s songs are little more than wretched attempts on the part of those who sing them, to conceal even from themselves the blank joyless state of their hearts. But heaven’s songs have a substance in them, and the hearts of those that sing His praises are so full that vent is sought and found in this supernatural way. Scripture treats at length only of two songs:—first, we have the song about the old creation, which was chanted by the angelic sons of God as they witnessed the display of God’s glory therein, Job

xxxviii. 7; and then, secondly, there is the “New Song,” in which many can join as the greatness of redeeming love breaks upon their enraptured view.*

Now this book is named the Song of Solomon. But this last word also contains a hint for those who will hear. For Solomon was the greatest earthly monarch according to God, except, of course, the expected Messiah, that the old creation has ever beheld. David and Solomon combined present a tolerably complete type of Christ as the King. The position of David to Solomon is as the servant preparing for the glory of the son. And when all is ready for the display of that glory, David at once gives place to Solomon. For the kingdom is the kingdom of the Son. And especially the building of the house of God is reserved, all of it, for the Son. The house is the sign of constancy and of abiding blessing. And if the reader will compare 2 Sam. vii. 14, with Heb. i. 5; and again, Psalm cxxxii. 11, with Acts ii. 30; and Isaiah lv. 3, with Acts xiii. 34, he will perceive that Christ, and not Solomon, is the Son of David that the eye is directed to in the Word of God. Further, as with Solomon’s glory, so with his wisdom, it all bore on the things of the old creation, 1 Kings iv. 33. But all that is seen is temporal, yea all shall pass away, even as completely as the reign of this typical Solomon has passed away and its glory faded. But when Christ as David’s antitype reigns and subjugates all things to God, then shall He as Solomon reign in peace and glory for ever. If in one sense indeed His kingdom is for a thousand years; yet in another it is for ever. Shortly after His millennial reign is over, evil will be finally subdued from off the earth, and thus His holy and righteous sway established for ever. Then shall the glory have full scope throughout heaven and earth, and God, shall have won all His own blessed way, and His rest shall be undisturbed any more for ever, even for ever and ever, and even before His millennial reign on earth is commenced, the true, the heavenly temple of God is prepared. And completed, and flooded with His glory in the heavens. But when that millennial reign is over, and all evil utterly put down, then will this tabernacle of God be with men, so that He Himself shall dwell with them and be their God. (Rev. xxi. 3.)

But now, before we look into this Song of Solomon, let each of us seek grace that we may only touch it

* For the difference of the New Song, as in Revelation, from the old creation Song, see the writer’s Lectures on Revelation, chap. v.

with holy hands, and ponder it with reverent minds. With unshod feet may we approach its investigation. Seeing that its subject is not as is that of Ecclesiastes, the vanity of all under the sun, but the preciousness of Himself who will continue "the same," when all here has departed as a dream, let us have grace to discern His matchless beauty and uncreated loveliness so as here we may behold them.

Next, let us observe the arrangement of the book. The simplest, surest way to trace out its subdivisions is to observe carefully each time when a single dialogue between the Bride and Bridegroom is completed. This will keep us from all the many and contradictory guesses of commentators as to its component parts, some of these finding in it seven songs, some twelve, some fourteen, some more, some less. The reader, if he will mark this song, will himself easily certify himself that there are eight dialogues in all, extending down to viii. 4. The last ten verses of viii. form two appendices to the book as we shall see in due time. And with the exception of these closing verses, the entire song consists of two parts very unequal in length. For down to ch. ii. 7, there will be found, if the language of the Bride be sorted from that of the Bridegroom, four distinct utterances by each of these. Now these four colloquies, concluding I say at ii. 7, may be summarized for brevity's sake as more intensely *doctrinal*. And here, by the bye, I had better at once remark that the expression thrice occurring in the song, "stir not up, nor awake my love till He please," should be read "till *she* please," in ii. 7; iii. 5; viii. 4. It is important at once to make this correction, as otherwise it will be much more difficult for the reader to ascertain when it is the Bride and when it is the Bridegroom who is the speaker, and when each have once more ended—when, in other words, a complete dialogue we have listened to. But then, from ch. ii. 8, to ch. viii. 4, there will be found, upon examination, only four more *such* dialogues. Then in each of these latter four dialogues, we shall find an invitation or call on the part of the Bridegroom to the Bride. So that, to put it plainly, the first and much briefer half of the song, and containing four dialogues which close at ii. 7, form the foundation of the argument on which the other half of the song, to wit, the other four dialogues, each having one grand and gracious invitation, proceeds. To help those who would study this book leisurely, I may add that it had been better for clearness-sake, had the chapters been divided,

thus:—let ch. i. be regarded as continued up to ii. 7 inclusive. Then that first chapter contains the basis on which all else is grounded. Then ch. ii. might comprise the *fifth* dialogue, extending from ii. 8 to iii. 5. Then likewise ch. iii. might properly be identical with the *sixth* dialogue, from iii. 6 to v. 1 inclusive. Again, ch. iv. might similarly be arranged to contain the *seventh* dialogue, from v. 2 to vi. 11, and lastly, the *eighth* dialogue might be made into the new chapter 5, commencing at vi. 12, and reaching on to viii. 4. The remaining ten verses of ch. viii., I repeat, are supplementary.

(To be continued.)

LIBERTY NOT LICENCE.

"A SUBJECT OF THE LAW OF CHRIST."

1 CORINTHIANS IX. 21.

Fulfil the Law of Christ—Gal. vi. 2.

WHEREVER God reigns, there is a sphere of law.

The revelation of His will towards each sphere, howsoever manifested, is its law. Rebellion against, or rejection of, that will, is *ἀνομία*, lawlessness.

Introduction of the distinctive law of one sphere into another is confusion, and God is not the author of confusion. Neither can two jurisdictions co-exist within the same administrative limits.

Thus, when it is contended in these days, that the Code given through Moses to Israel is not now to be imposed on Believers as the condition of Salvation, or as the Rule of Life, there is no intention thereby to deny the great binding principles which underlie all law as sustaining righteousness and condemning evil; but there is a desire to acknowledge the distinction which God Himself has drawn between the trust confided to a servant however faithful and honoured, and that confided to His own Son, who is the last and full revelation of Himself.

In that dispensation, God was revealed by the terrors of His Holiness. (Heb. xii. 18-20.)

In the present dispensation, He is revealed by the boundlessness of His Grace. (Rom. v. 21.)

In that age the Spirit of God taught Israel to worship a far off in fear. In the present, He teaches Believers in Christ to enter with boldness into the Holiest.

In the one case we see before us the subjects of a Great and Righteous King. In the other, the children of a Holy, and Gracious Father—children, yet none the less subjects, for He, though Father, is none the less King.

But in this dispensation of Grace, God has revealed, no other sphere of acceptance or favour, except that of His family. He must be Father or Judge. As Father,

He rejoices over the very weakest, who trusts in the Blood of the Lamb—as Judge, He has condemned already all who reject His Fatherhood in Christ.

Thus, Law is not* for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, and such like. (1 Tim. i. 9, 10, 11.) But within the family law reigns also, and so when Paul claims the right of addressing himself to the Heathen (who had not known the Law of the Old Dispensation) from the new standpoint of the liberty of the Gospel, he yet maintains that he is not lawless towards God, but within the law of Christ. He has not ceased to be a subject, because he has become a child, but he has become a Prince of the Blood Royal, and thus is united with the source and Head of Law, and has inherited a nature which is above all penal enactment—a nature whose very instincts and impulses would be violated by the thought of disobedience. “I delight in the law of God” he says, “after the inward man”. In this Divine instinct he condemns and loaths the presence of the flesh within him, that which is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. He would be ever delivering his powers and his members from its yoke, and bringing them into subjection to the mind of Christ.

In spiritual things he would know no commandments, save His. “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments, and His commandments are not grievous.” Paul would acknowledge no commandments of men superadded to these. Far less, would he be guilty of adding any, of himself. Much of his life was occupied in contending against human additions to the “perfect law of liberty”. He would allow neither the penal statutes of a passed dispensation, nor the vain fancies of contemporary leaders of opinion to stain that spotless mirror of God’s mind.

The need of that vigilance has been amply proved in the subsequent history of Christianity.

The Revelation of God was gradually overlaid with the traditions of men, until its Divine origin became but a tradition itself, to be sustained and authenticated by human authority. Catholicity was maintained inviolable, at least outward Catholicity, for men recognised the power of so great a principle, and used it without scruple and without mercy for their own ends, till it became little less than Catholicity in evil. And but for God’s few hidden ones, Satan would have succeeded in making the very traces of Christianity perish under the weight of abominations that overspread it through the course of centuries.

The Reformation was the great revolt from this oppression; but it was a revolt from man to God. Honest and reverent minds sought back to the source of truth. Many inestimable blessings were recovered, but Catholicity was lost. It could not be otherwise, for it

* *ὅτι κείναι*—is not imposed upon, or enforced against.

became henceforth the banner of error. And, while believing men rejoiced in their emancipation from its apostate yoke, they were not careful to see, that, though betrayed to the purposes of ambition and tyranny, unity was a truth so important that the Lord Himself had left it as a special trust to His disciples. (John xv. and xvii.)

“Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord,” was the old watchword of the Tribes. “One Body, one Spirit, one Hope, one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and Father of all,” told of new and closer ties, and a higher organisation. There is no place for independence in any sphere where God reigns. Every planet in heaven however vast its orbit, retraces its course on its appointed curve. This physical order is the shadow of that which binds the moral and spiritual spheres alike to the same Eternal Throne.

The farthest perspective picture of happiness given us in Scripture, is that of perfect obedience to perfect rule. (1. Corinth. xv. 28.)

The divine prayer that suffers so many vain repetitions from the lips of men: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven”: surely breathes the desire that His people should set forth here, the dependence and the unity which exist in heaven now, and shall yet, but not in this age, exist on earth.

Corruption has killed Catholicity, but it need slay no other principle. And if Catholicity died under the operation that aimed at separating the living from the dead—the sense of responsibility towards God revived in the struggle, and shook Europe with its awakening cry.

The Spirit of the living God had long brooded over those dark waters of Christendom, and now He was causing life to spring forth abundantly, through the voice of His own word.

Men recognised and bowed before the Divine and only giver of life in the new creation, but they did not go on to look up to Him as the only sustainer and guide of that life, during the whole course of earthly witness on which it had entered.

They chose kings and rulers to be the nursing fathers of His Church. Yielding to Cæsar claims which pertain to the Divine Head alone. Then expediency and worldly politics were admitted to share importance with Divine principles. The vigour of human thought, so long repressed, overmastered the sense of obedience in all things to God’s word, and leaving the true course of humble dependence on Him, which would have preserved union among His people, it broke into the scattered channels of National Divisions, and sectarian denominations, sweeping with it the Church of the new profession into the confusion and disintegration which so weakens and almost nullifies the testimony of Protestantism.

R. J. M.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

SHADOWS OF CHRIST.

PART VII.

"MELCHIZEDEK."

"Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek." (Heb. vi. 20.)

THREE verses in Genesis (xiv. 18, 20) contain all that the Spirit of God has seen fit to record historically of this remarkable personage.

But the inspired commentary upon these verses (Heb. vii.) is more copious. Indeed, the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is of itself an indisputable proof of the verbal inspiration of the Old Testament Scriptures—seeing that it takes up in minutest detail every particular recorded in the three verses referred to—dwelling on the names, and the interpretation of the names, and noting even the order in which they occur, and instead of charging the writer with *omission* in not having recorded the genealogy or parentage, the birth or death of Melchizedek, it finds a 'divine meaning' for these blanks, and shews that even the silence of Scripture has a voice for the ear of faith.

Conjectures as to who this person was are fruitless. Some have supposed from the language of Hebrews vii., that it was the Son of God Himself. "Without father, without mother, without descent: having neither beginning of days nor end of life." But surely it means only that he thus appears upon the page of Scripture, not that he actually was so. And to this agree the words which follow—"made *like unto* the Son of God."

In the Epistle to the Hebrews one great subject is the priestly office of the Lord Jesus. Chapters iv. v. viii. ix. x. are mainly occupied with shewing Him to be the great Antitype of the Aaronic priesthood. But even it, with all its details and ceremonies, fails to shew fully the glory of the priesthood of Christ. Therefore is the prophetic allusion of Psalm cx., taken up and used as the text, so to speak, of a discourse, the burden of which is to exalt yet further the official glory of Christ, by showing the superiority of the Melchizedek to the Aaronic priesthood, and that Christ is a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek, as well as after the pattern or type of Aaron.

The most prominent superiority of the Melchizedek to the Aaronic priesthood is the combination in one person of the two offices of Priest and King.

Thus the meaning of Melchizedek is "King of Righteousness," and he is also called "King of Salem," which is King of Peace. His was a "Royal Priesthood." In Israel the priest was of the tribe of Levi, the King was of the tribe of Judah. Hence so long as our Lord was upon earth, He could not be a priest (Heb. viii. 5). His priesthood began in resurrection. The word of the oath which was since the law, which consecrated the Son

was this, "The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a Priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek," (Ps. cx. 4). Death could not come in to intercept even for a day this new order of priesthood, it is "after the power of an endless life."

Thus in heaven not on earth—Jesus the risen Son of God and Son of man, Son of Abraham and Son of David—is invested with the new and surpassingly glorious order of priesthood. "A priest upon His throne" (Zech. vi. 13). He shall one day appear as the "King of Kings" to sway the sceptre of universal dominion, whilst as the great Melchizedek, He shall come forth with all the blessings of the new Covenant—shadowed forth in the "bread and wine," to comfort and to strengthen Abraham's seed.

And this being the character of the priesthood of the Lord Jesus, the same applies to the saints. As it is written "He hath made us kings and priests unto God," (Rev. i. 6.), and again "But ye are a Royal Priesthood," (1 Pet. ii. 9).

That which appears most prominently in the Aaronic priesthood is the offering of gifts to God; that which is presented in the Melchizedek priesthood is the bringing forth of gifts from God. In both these characters our Lord Jesus appears. He is the true Aaron, appearing before God in all the acceptance of the one offering which He accomplished on Calvary; but He is also the true Melchizedek bringing forth, and dispensing to his people the fruits of His death and resurrection. He breaks the bread, He pours the wine. Ascended up on High, He received gifts for men, even for the rebellious, and freely and gloriously did He lavish those gifts at Pentecost and after it. And still, though the presence of the Holy Spirit be not demonstrated by miraculous gifts, yet is His abiding in the saints none the less real. Still does He comfort and instruct, still does he qualify and thrust forth to service by his inward grace, evangelists, pastors, and teachers. Still is He to those who wait on the Lord "the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind," (ii Tim. i. 7), and still in the hearts of all redeemed ones, is He the spirit of Sonship, crying, "Abba, father".

It is significant, and attention is directed to the fact in Heb. vii. 2, that Melchizedek was *first* King of Righteousness and "*after that also* King of Peace."—This is according to divine order. It could not be otherwise, for "peace at any price" is not God's principle. Righteousness must first be considered, and all the claims of perfect righteousness owned and honoured before peace could be proclaimed. Thus the Gospel of Peace is based upon the Righteousness of God. The Lord Jesus, the true Melchizedek, in securing peace for guilty and condemned sinners, first "suffered for sins—the just for the unjust." He "made peace by the blood of His cross." On the day of his resurrection, He greeted his trembling

disciples with the glad salutation, "Peace be unto you," and having so said, as if to shew the righteous ground of peace—as if to declare that first He was "King of Righteousness," "He shewed them His hands, and His side." And thus it is written. "The work of righteousness shall be peace, and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance for ever." Is. xxxii. 17. "Righteousness and peace kissed each other at the cross of Christ, and are eternally united for us in His glorious person, as our Melchizedek Priest, "Justice and judgment are the habitation of thy throne: mercy and truth shall go before thy face". (Ps. lxxxix. 14.)

In accordance with this great divine principle of righteousness being first—it is written "The kingdom of God is *righteousness, and peace, and joy* in the Holy Ghost," (Rom. xiv. 17.) So also "the Wisdom that cometh down from above is *first pure, then peaceable*," (James iii. 17.)

So in Heb. xii. 14, though the order differs, the combination is the same, and the context shews that holiness is the primary consideration. "Follow peace with all men, and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord." Again in Mat. v. 9, 10, it is first "Blessed are the pure in heart," and then "Blessed are the peacemakers," and again "the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace," (James iii. 18). And it is after the same pattern that grace and truth are combined in all the ways and teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Never did He sacrifice truth for grace—never did He surrender grace for truth. How different are the ways of his erring people, continually drifting into one-sidedness, and losing the balance between truth and grace. Whilst we "love in the truth," (ii. John i.) we ought ever to "speak the truth in love," (Eph. iv. 15). If this combination be dissolved the result will be that truth and righteousness will fail of their effect for lack of the element of love, or else love will fail to knit together, because of the absence of the element of truth and righteousness.

The saint of New Testament days feels quite at home, if we may so speak in Genesis xiv. The symbols of bread and wine are so much more familiar to us than the sacrificial types and shadows of Leviticus. And surely there is much for our hearts to learn from the occasion upon which these familiar emblems were brought forth. Abram had gained a great victory, it was an hour of prosperity. Little is a saint aware oft-times of his deepest need, "We know not what to pray for as we ought." But there was an eye upon him that knew and anticipated the temptation that was coming, and fortified him for the further victory that followed.

Such was the grace that prevented Peter. "Simon, Simon, Satan hath desired to have you that he might sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee that thy

faith fail not." Such also was the watchful care that anticipated the danger of Paul, and in the hour of the rapture to Paradise, and the unspeakable revelations, permitted the adversary to buffet him with the thorn in his flesh.

To Abram it was a moment of blessed communion with God. He recognised it as no ordinary occasion. Melchizedek was not only "King of Salem," but "Priest of the Most High God," and as such, Abram owned his superiority, and received his blessing. (See Heb. vii. 7). But not only so, there is fruit found afterwards of this interview to the glory of God. First Abram gives to Melchizedek tithes of all, owning him thus as the servant of the God who is "Possessor of heaven and earth." He then meets the offered bounty of the King of Sodom in the strength of the blessing received. He had lifted up his hand to the Most High God possessor of heaven and earth, therefore would he not take from a thread to a shoelatchet, nor anything that pertained to the King of Sodom, lest he should say, "I have made Abram rich." Who can tell how the heart of Abram might have yielded to the temptation, had he not thus been met and strengthened with might, through the blessing he had received at the hands of Melchizedek? Thus Abram repeats to the King of Sodom the very words of the blessing he had received. He had treasured them in his heart. They were precious words to him. Who was the King of Sodom—be he friend or foe—compared to "the MOST HIGH GOD"? What could he give or take worth having if the God of Abram be "POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN AND EARTH"?

In the consciousness of blessing possessed, he could reject without a pang, the riches of Sodom—as Moses afterward could surrender the wealth and wisdom of Egypt, and later still—as Paul could count as *loss* what once had been his *gain*—"for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus the Lord".

And it can never be otherwise. Only as the believer realizes by faith, his high calling—his infinite blessing—his unsearchable riches—in Christ, can he surrender the honors or esteem, or wealth of the world? It was in the consciousness "that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God and went to God"—that the Lord Jesus, "laid aside His garments and took a towel and girded Himself and began to wash the disciples' feet". (John xiii. 1-5.) And so in the Epistle to the Ephesians, it is after shewing the stupendous glory and wealth and joy of the believers portion—that the exhortation is given to walk worthy of this calling in all "*lowliness and meekness*."

So in 1 Peter, it is after telling the Saints of the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, reserved for them in heaven, of the precious blood that had redeemed them, of the incorruptible seed of which they were begotten, of their being a chosen generation and a royal priest,

hood—that the apostle goes on to exhort them “as *strangers and pilgrims*” to abstain from fleshly lusts and to suffer and bear reproach with patience.

Nor can it be questioned, that such is one of the great purposes of the Melchizedek feast of bread and wine that the Saints are privileged to enjoy on the first day of every week.

Again, and again, as they tread the streets of this Sodom World, would the Lord Jesus gather around Him, His feeble loved ones, to strengthen with heavenly bread, to cheer than with that wine “which cheereth God and man”. (Judges ix. 13.)

Blessed are they who discern the Lord Himself in that ordinance of His appointing—who see the bread to be broken, and the wine to be poured by the very pierced hand of our Melchizedek. To such the human instrument passes out of sight—one form alone is seen, one voice alone is heard—the person, the voice of “JESUS ONLY”.

J. R. C.

THE RENUNCIATION OF THE FLESH.

By J. G. B.

1 CORINTHIANS 1-4.

JESUS was the only child of man who ever really separated or consecrated the human nature to God. But this flesh, as flesh, even in such an one, is now gone. All his perfectness in it contributed, with other personal worthiness, to render Him a competent and sufficient sacrifice for sinners. But having, by His one offering of Himself, perfected for ever, them who are sanctified, His cross is the end of all flesh, and as death thereon was endured for us, it was the wages of sin, whereby the enmity existing between God and man was slain. Something beside, or beyond flesh, is therefore to be looked for now; and so we find it. For now, Jesus is seen in resurrection; and Jew and Gentile are equally and together presented to God, as Spirit, or as a new creation—a new man in Christ Jesus—one body—the body of the risen Christ. The law had previously come, seeking to discover something good in the flesh, to get out of it fruit unto God. But it found none. The Son came, on the other hand, to make atonement for it, to hang on the cursed tree, as the representative of it—(Rom. viii). Paul had, in his doctrine, accordingly, done with it altogether. Could he return to it, when he saw it thus disposed of by the Son of God? He could not. He saw it to be a mighty wreck; it may be as yet, not entirely buried out of sight, or gone to the bottom; but it was a wreck, and he had left it to perish in its own corruption. He was no longer in it, but in the risen Son of God. He had been cast on a new world, whereon God's eye rests with delight for ever. He was in a new creation, with the risen Son of God. And if he had done with the flesh, he had done also

with the law, for they were one, as being bound together; the old husband and wife, as he speaks in Romans vii. The law, with its strictness, and forbiddings, and demands, was as the ropes and tacklings, and the rudderbands of that, which, as I have said, he had now left as a wreck; and if the vessel be behind him, so is all its provision. And as he could not glory in his own flesh, neither would he in that of another; for if he was crucified to the world, so was the world to him. And it is, indeed, edifying, to observe the strength with which he renounces the flesh. There is nothing that the flesh has incurred, or is exposed to, nothing that it possesses, nothing that it can do—that he does not declare his escape from, or renunciation of, in the fullest strength and confidence of faith, in Jesus. Thus, is the flesh subject to condemnation? Yes, but Jesus has borne the judgment of it; and the believer, through grace, is not regarded as in the flesh, but in the spirit; it is not he, who does the deeds of his own condemned flesh, which is thus exposed to judgment; but it is “sin that dwelleth in him” (Rom. vii. 7.) Has the flesh its religion? He counts it all as loss and dung—its ordinances, observances, and legal circumcision—its bonds and fears he renounces, and desires to be found only in the righteousness which is of God, by faith (Gal. Phil. Col.) Has the flesh its wisdom? Yes, the world has its princes—it has the wise, the scribe, and the disputer; but Paul insists that God has made it all foolishness, and desires only the wisdom which the Spirit can impart, and of which the heart of man could never form a conception (1 Cor. i. 2.) Has the flesh its excellency of speech, and other advantages, which they engaged in the ministry of the word might use? Yes, but he would use none of them, but as he was a minister of the Spirit, so would he be a minister in the Spirit. Thus he escapes from the flesh, or renounces it in all its pretensions. It was an attempt to revive the wisdom of the flesh, or the power of the flesh in ministry, with which he had to contend at Corinth, and it was an attempt to revive the religion of the flesh, which he withstood in Galatia and at Colosse, but he had no confidence in any thing that was of it. He was not in it, but in the one that was raised from the dead. He was in Christ, in new creation, or the Spirit. He had his justification in the blood of the Son of God, his personal grace, and ministerial powers in the Holy Ghost, and there only. And this glorious act of faith, which thus leaves the flesh in its condemnation, its religion, its endowments, its everything behind us, is our strength in standing against its lusts and its tempers, for when such rise to tempt the soul, it should gird itself with this remembrance, that it has done with the flesh altogether.

And the same thing is our strength in exercising the charities of the gospel, for it accustoms us to look at that which is of the flesh in our brethren, (and which is the

best of our Christian charities), as not being properly themselves, but something which is separated from them, that is renounced. In connection with this subject, I might look at 1 Cor. i. 4. The saints at Corinth had returned sadly to the flesh; though the gifts of the Spirit were exercised abundantly there; nevertheless, they had been indulging their human minds and tastes. One liked the natural boldness of such a teacher, another the softer eloquence of a different one, another the more profound knowledge of a third, and they allowed their natural minds to direct their tongues. Thus one said, "I am of Paul, another, I am of Apollos." All this was walking as men, or glorying in the flesh. The apostle accordingly exposes the unprofitableness of that in which they then boasted. He declares the worthlessness of the flesh, and that by several witnesses.

1st. By scripture, which says of all its wisdom, "where is the wise, where is the scribe?"

2nd. By the *crucifixion of Christ*, which when rightly apprehended, shews the end of the flesh.

3rd. By the *preaching of the Gospel*, which showed that the wisdom of flesh and blood had been proved foolishness, that it was unable to find out God.

4th. By the character of their own assemblies, which would be found to be made up of any materials, rather than such as would flatter the flesh, or have been selected by men. It was like the badgers' skins that formed the outer covering of the tabernacle. Thus is man, or the flesh, in which these Grecian saints were again boasting, put to shame before them. (Chap. 1.)

The apostle then tells them that he had not brought, either in his matter or manner, as a preacher, any thing to gratify their human or fleshly tastes. But what he ministered, and how he ministered, was all of the Holy Ghost, and in moral consistency with "Christ crucified," or the end of the flesh. And, being of that character, such as were spiritual alone, could understand or enjoy it. The princes of the world, *i.e.*, men, in their highest refinements and cultivation, will not know it; but the perfect, *i.e.*, those who have laid man and flesh aside, and trust only to "the mind of Christ," given to them by the Holy Ghost, will. (Chap. II.) Then, because of all this evil and mischief which had thus come in among them, he addresses a word both to the teachers and to the taught. The former he warns to take heed, that they do not thus puff up the flesh, or the human mind, by the way of their teaching, for that all such fruit would assuredly perish in the day of the Lord. He reminds the latter that they are the temple, not of man, but of God, and therefore that they are not to seat any man in that temple, where God alone is to be seen and glorified; so that if they glory in man, that temple is defiled, for while they may use all—all being theirs—they are to enthrone or hallow none but God. (Chap. III.)

He then seems to return to the subject on which he before dwelt, and to look again at their present state of glorying in the flesh, and he shews its utter inconsistency with all which they had heard from him, their father in Christ; for that all this glorying therein made them as *kings* in the earth, while he was but an *outcast*. They had found in these carnal principles that which had given them the air, and bearing, of greatness in the world, while he was going about actively employed in the service of his master, everywhere experiencing the opposition of men, everywhere encountering the scorn and persecution of that same flesh in which they were indulging. (Chap. IV.) And it has struck me, from Gal. i. 13, that God's great purpose by Paul, was to give proof of the unprofitableness of the flesh in its best estate; and of its entire renunciation accordingly, by the divinely taught soul. For after then shewing his advantages in fleshly religion (as he does also in Phil. iii.), he tells us that God had separated him from his mother's womb, then called him, then revealed His son in him; by which separation I judge, that he does not mean his own personal election as a sinner, for that was not from the womb, but from before the foundation of the world; but he means his appointment to be the minister and representative of a gospel that was not to allow any confidence in, or concurrence with, the flesh at all. And, accordingly, all his previous life, before he had been actually called to such ministry, had been an exhibition of advantages in the flesh, that now his entire renunciation of them might appear the more striking. Hence he was born a "Hebrew of the Hebrews." Hence he was circumcised the eighth day. Hence he profited in the Jew's religion and persecuted the church through fleshly zeal. Hence he was, touching the law, blameless. All this had marked the man, who had been separated from his mother's womb, for the very purpose of shewing out afterwards the vanity of all that was fleshly, so that when he actually was called into ministry to do so, he might be able to tell us how much in it, and of it, he had possessed: that his renunciation of it might be more marked. It was like a fitting of the vessel for the glory which it was destined to carry, or a preparation of the instrument for the work, which it was ordained to execute, so that we might be able to say, if flesh in Paul was nothing, flesh is equally nothing in all others. Paul made the greatest attainments in it, that he might renounce it altogether, and thus expose its utter and entire vanity. And I would here notice two instances in our Lord's ministry, where he, in like manner, strikingly, renounced the flesh. In John iii., he sets the flesh aside, in the words, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh," because he connects with this assertion the necessity of man being born again of water and the spirit. In John iv., he again sets the flesh aside in the words, "it is the spirit that quickeneth,

the flesh profiteth nothing, the words that I speak unto you they are spirit and life." And from his conversations, on the two occasions referred to, with Nicodemus, and with the multitude, we learn how we are, with the Lord, to renounce the flesh; and that is by learning, God and Christ as sinners. Neither Nicodemus nor the multitude came to Jesus as *sinners*, and therefore he had to tell them of the worthlessness of the flesh. Thus are we led, very simply and very surely, to this most needed and precious lesson. It is the sinner who comes to Jesus as such, under conviction of sin, that renounces the flesh. Happy, simple, and precious result for our souls concerning the worthlessness of the flesh and its consequent renunciation, that the way to attain a knowledge of it, is to learn God as sinners. And let me add, that death is the end or judgment of the flesh—"the body is dead because of sin"; if the flesh, or the fallen nature of man, is a tainted creation, death is the judgment passed upon it, it perishes in its own corruption.

THE INCORRUPTIBLE THINGS

OF

I. and II. PETER.

DOUBTLESS many a careful reader of the Epistles written by those men who surrounded and communed with the Lord Jesus when on the earth, have been made sensible of the inestimable blessing of the presence and indwelling of the Holy Ghost, verifying the truth of the Master's words, "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter *will not come* unto you, but if I depart I *will send Him* unto you, and when He is come He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance whatsoever I have said unto you, He shall glorify Me, shall guide you into all truth, and show you things to come". It was the service of the Son to speak, to act, and to suffer, but it was for the Holy Ghost to unveil their hearts to the nature and value of these.

Perhaps in no one of the Apostles is this more clearly seen than in Peter. Comparing his utterances as recorded in the Gospels with his writings in his Epistles, we trace the difference, and see the man once *regenerated*, afterwards *converted*, then marvellously *enlightened*. True he had made a blessed confession of his Master, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God," yet the word employed by him afterwards when speaking of Him as the Son, seems to imply how little he understood his own words, and such expressions as "What manner of *man* is this," strengthen the impression. He had afterwards to learn what the titles "Christ" and "Son of the Living God" implied and involved. It is evident what his thoughts of Jesus of Nazareth were, and what his hope (in common with the rest) in

following Him. They all regarded Him as Messiah, and hoped for Israel's deliverance from the Roman yoke, and the restoration of the kingdom.

Let us consider their words. When the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, of one mind with their mother, made their request, what was it? "Grant that we may sit the one at Thy right hand and the other at Thy left in Thy kingdom." *The kingdom* and their honour in it evidently occupied their thoughts. After this two of them as they walked, sad of heart and with heavy step towards Emmaus, told out their tale of grief to their undiscovered Lord. What was the substance of it? That He, for whom they had left their all, and trusted that He would have redeemed *Israel*, had been crucified and buried, but was reported to have risen from the dead. They had buried their hope with His body; in a word they were disappointed.

Once more; after the resurrection, when they were come together they asked him, "Wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" The thought of the *kingdom* still occupied their mind.

This was true up to Pentecost and even after it. Peter's addresses to the nation were in character with such thoughts; so Jewish were his feelings still, that he needed an express vision from heaven to open and prepare his heart to receive and minister to the Gentiles.

As space forbids more than suggestions, we will now consider his words in his Epistles. In chapter i. of his 1st Epistle, he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us *again* unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven.

THE INCORRUPTIBLE INHERITANCE.—Hope revived with the risen Lord, and was now entertained with intelligence of the Holy Ghost. The scattered disciples, tried and troubled, therefore in heaviness, rejoiced in hope of something not found on the earth, the inheritance named above. The two Epistles had for their object the consolation and exhortation of the scattered election.

Beloved fellow believer, never fail to thank God that you live not only after the resurrection of Christ, but also after Pentecost, and watch lest you grieve the Holy Ghost your teacher.

But on what ground can this incorruptible inheritance be assigned, and what is the title to possess it? The only ground is *redemption*, and the only title the *blood* of the spotless Lamb. What title has the sinner, man in nature, to this? None, his desert is nothing better than the worm that never dies, and the unquenchable fire of hell. But that which ceases from man, God in Christ supplies; Christ can redeem, giving to God a ransom, that He may give His sheep eternal life, and in Him

believers obtain an inheritance, the title to which is the blood that purchased it.

THE INCORRUPTIBLE PRICE.—This, the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot, is set in contrast with *corruptible* things, silver and gold, as the price of their redemption from their vain conversation.

Again, this can only be known and enjoyed by the children of God, by those who are the subjects of a second birth, partakers of a new life; this life is communicated, and this birth effected by the Holy Ghost through the word of God.

THE INCORRUPTIBLE SEED.—“Born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God,” so also says, James, “Of His own will *begat* He us by the *word of truth*,” and Paul also writing to the Thessalonians, says, “whereunto He called you by our gospel.”

This same word used by the spirit in giving life, becomes the food of the new-born soul, the unadulterated milk, to be sucked in without suspicion for growth. Yes, God has commanded *growth* (2 Pet. iii. 18), has made full provision for it, as above, and He expects it. Let us then, beloved, feed, in order to growth, such a growth will be up into Him in all things, who is the Head, the Holy One of God, the true Nazarite, who was separate from all that was not of the Father but of the world,” who could say, I have given you an example, and of whom one heard His words, said, “He that saith he abideth in Him, ought Himself also so to walk even as He walked. He could say, “Learn of Me for I am meek and lowly in heart, whose every step brought out the beauty of heaven on the earth, the moral glory of God. Him we are bidden imitate, put Him on, “walk in Him,” that as we stand before God in His perfect beauty, and are as the new creation, beautiful, so we might walk here in the beauty of a good conversation in Him unceasingly.

THE INCORRUPTIBLE ORNAMENT noticed in 1 Peter iii. 3. Addressing believing women, he says, “Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, wearing of gold, and putting on of apparel, but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not *corruptible*, the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit which is in the sight of God of great price.” that which no manufacturer can produce, nor price procure, but which grace effects to the glory of God. Beloved fellow believer, if our attention and time, mind and heart, are occupied in effecting this, we shall soon see our Christian men and women, and shall ourselves be seen in modest apparel, quietness of dress, a mode in harmony with the state of mind, even the mind of Christ: let us aim at it, and if consistency be singularity, let us dare to be singular.

H. H.

“THE FEAST.”

READ EXODUS XII. 1-20.

ALL Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for thoroughly perfecting the man of God unto every good work. And whatsoever things were written aforetimes, being written for our learning, these Scriptures may be a fitting introduction to this simple, and as we judge, much needed teaching of our gracious God as to the Feast and its belongings.

1 Cor. v. 7, connects the passover rites with the wondrous reality of Christ's having been slain for us—“Our passover”. Whom we do well to remember in the appointed feast, and, at the specified time—namely, the first day of the week. (Acts xx. 7.) Passing over the “keeping up of the Lamb,” as also the required character thereof, I would begin with verse 6.

“The whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill it in the evening. And they shall take of the blood and strike it on the two side posts; and on the upper door post of the *houses* wherein they shall eat it”. In these words we get the identification of the people who may eat with that offering of which they partake.

Then appears the one ground of entrance to the fellowship within, namely, *through* shed blood sprinkled on side door posts, as one *under* cover of the blood before God. Verses 8 and 9 give the *manner* of the eating. “And they shall eat the flesh in that night, roast with fire, and unleavened bread; and with bitter herbs they shall eat it. Eat *not* of it raw, nor *sodden at all* with water, but roast with fire.”

Our God would have us, His people, to share with Him. But no less the *manner* than the ordinance.

The raw, sodden, and roast conditions seem to set forth three aspects of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

The raw answering to His birth, &c., up till the beginning of (the sodden with water) His suffering for righteousness' sake, while the roast with fire bespeaks the *cross-sufferings* alone.

Now, Jehovah distinctly forbade Israel's eating the Lamb, except as roast with fire. And please note here, such things are for our learning. Bringing this on to the “Breaking of Bread,” we may perceive that which our God would have us feed upon—namely, Christ. But Him not as in His wondrous, lowly birth, nor yet on Him in His suffering life of patient grace (though on these in their proper place the devout soul adoringly ponders) but on Christ, as “Made a curse for us,” Him as suffering the “Just for us, the unjust,” Him, as He “who, His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree”; Him, who as “Our passover is slain for us”.

Let this order be simply, yet clearly grasped by each reader in Christ, and much that sometimes hinders rather than helps, when gathered to remember Him, owning

Him Lord, and so seeking to give the Father that He seeketh—shall no more be practised to the grieving of the spiritual. But “due order” being observed, the feast shall be spiritually kept and spirituality follow.

As for his “Head with his legs, and with the purturance thereof,” in aspect here treated of; we judge the kindred truth to be—the intelligent, unwavering steadfast affection unto the object before Him, of Him who so fulfilled the Scriptures.

“’Twas love that sought Gethsemane,
Or Judas ne’er had found Him—

’Twas love that nailed Him to the tree,
As iron ne’er had bound Him.”

The partaker was to eat of the roast lamb with unleavened bread, and with bitter herbs. The former is that condition of soul which is the opposite of “malice and wickedness”. While “bitter herbs” bespeak a due sense of that which He suffered for us,

“Who had the debt augmented
Which He did pay in blood.”

Verse 11, gives the position in condition of the partaker. “Loins girded” tell of the affections enwrapped by His love and truth. Shoes on the feet bespeak a sense of, and standing in relationship, while the staff in hand intimates the pilgrim life they were called to. And eating in haste indicates the brief time of such opportunities and privileges. Verses 15 to 20, intimate the entire absence of leaven (necessitated by Jehovah), from their habitations for a revolution of time—seven days being such. This carried on to the antetype feast, may teach us what becomes us during the days or time between each remembrance in ordinance of our blessed Lord. We are told that a devout Jew will not leave this cleansing-out of leaven to his servants, neither to his children, nor even to his wife, but from place to place he will go himself and see that there is indeed no leaven within his habitation!

J. B.

1 JOHN iii. 6-10.

DO these words imply that those “born again,” “begotten of God,” do not sin wilfully or habitually? or do they assert that the “God-begotten” doth not and cannot commit sin?

Is it an assertion that the “child of God” cannot sin? or is it a plain statement that the implanted seed (v. 9), is incapable of sinning.

Alas! are there not thousands and thousands of undisputed saints proud, irascible, world-loving, ease-loving, &c., all their course through? Constantly throughout the word arise before us cases of sinning on the part of

God’s people. Constantly, yea, repeatedly are the strongest injunctions given to the children of God (and especially throughout the epistles to the Church), not to sin.

Let us then accept these inspired words in their obvious sense—“Whosoever is born of God doth not and cannot (for God’s seed, *i.e.*, implanted life remaineth in him) as born of God, commit sin”?

Let no man say, when he is tempted (and overcome by sin), he is tempted of God—for God cannot be tempted by evil—(*i. e.*, cannot tempt him by evil), neither (so) tempteth He any man—but every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own lust and enticed—and when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin—and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. Do not err (make a mistake in this matter) my beloved brethren. Every good gift, and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom is no variable-ness neither shadow of turning. Of His own will begat he us by the word of truth—that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creatures.”

If then we sin, we sin because we are children of Adam and walk in that awful flesh, which we should set and keep upon the cross of Christ. (Romans vi. 6). We sin then because failing to watch and stand armed, we turn aside from that nature (the spirit engendered), in which righteous, willing, and acting, are as genial—yea, as natural, as are unrighteous, willing, and acting in our fleshly (*i.e.*, Adam born) nature, and suffer the motions of the flesh to have their way. Now, let us ask and answer this question. If the begotten of God sin and sin not, as the begotten of God, but as the offspring of Adam, to whom is to be attributed the sinning? To this, will not the almost universal answer be to the old man, to the corrupt nature, to the flesh. Are not such answers widely astray, and where made or accepted, fraught with evil. Even the evil of hiding from the sinning saint, his guilt and shame, and perhaps inviting him to vaunt and glory in his dissociation from the flesh, and in his being the new man, the regenerate man, the child of the resurrection? Nay, oh boaster! *thine* is the sin—*thine* is the guilt and shame, and *thine*, with the incalculable aggravation of thy being a child of the light and of the day, and of the new creation in Christ Jesus. It is *thou* that being in the spirit (*i.e.*, begotten into spiritual life), hast walked in the flesh.

Such an answer (as that condemned), is further chargeable with the absurdity of dividing the one person (the one subject of the two natures), from himself and of exalting a nature (whether the fallen nature inherited, or the divine nature inwrought), into an agent and a person—a substantive willer and doer. Is it not this strange breaking up of the one person into two natures, and this referring of evil-doing to the old nature that prompts

the sinning one to misinterpret the Apostle's exclamation and exultingly to cry, "It is no more I that do it, but *sin* that dwelleth in me". Ah! deluded transgressor, it is not for such as thou to catch up the strong and bold outburst-expression appropriate only to the man who though overtaken in a fault, or a fleshly inclining, hateth sin with heart and soul, and also glowingly conscious of loving God and godliness, fearless of the charge whether from man or from his own conscience of tending to lawlessness. Yes, the outburst of one who dares to view himself as God views him, and to hold himself as indeed alive from the dead, alive unto God, alive in righteousness and true holiness, alive in the sanctification (separation) of his spirit from his Adam-flesh and in everlasting, not-to-be-severed union with the Head of God's new creation, Jesus Christ, the first begotten from the dead.

(Extracted, with additions, from the MSS. of the late J. T. M.

A. O. M.

VALLADOLID, Aug. 19, 1876.

DEAR BRETHREN—I have received a letter from E. G., and was thankful to hear that the hand of God is bestowing daily blessing upon you all, and such is, and ever will be, the portion of the "children of the great King," who feed on "pulse": (Dan. i.) and yet are made great (as servants) by their "gentleness" (Ps. xviii.) Many golden "grains" the Master sowed and others reaped them after Pentecost: and many which we let drop by the wayside will be brought out of the "treasury" in Heaven hereafter. Sow in tears and reap in joy. Water your "grain" with such and it will spring up for eternity. There should never be a doubtful sigh over a "word" of God. It will *surely* do its work in His appointed way. Do not judge results. Who made thee a judge? We are but children still. "I am the Lord thy God which brought thee out of the land of Egypt." "Open thy mouth wide and I will fill it" (Ps. lxxxi. 10); as children now we feed lightly, we shall "judge" nations by and bye. Meanwhile, be not as the children in whom was no faith (Deut. xxxii. 7) as those of the world: but sit still, and "judge" thyself, which, if done with an honest and obedient heart will result in *blessing*. Do not neglect (what Satan desires you to delay) but sit down and search out the gods which "self" still cleaves to; pray for the Holy Spirit to reveal them; ask thy Father and He will shew thee (Deut. xxxii. 7.) and then in prayer break them up into powder, and burn them: count the cost; and as obedient children, *stedfast* in the word, abound in hope through the *power* of the *Holy Ghost* (Rom. xv. 13.) Do not limit the spirit by doubting the *abundance* of "his" *presence*, nor grieve the "love" which the master sheds on your path. He "feedeth them," "His own," He "leadeth," He chastens, and happy is that one walking with

God, who is tried by the Father's hand. "Watch" in the trial against the evil which would rise up as it comes to the surface. Cast it aside as the refiner of silver with the dross.

A letter from Ireland tells me of much blessing among those among whom I was working on my last and previous visit, and for whom you prayed, "Delight thyself in the Lord and he will give thee the desires of thine heart." Remember all things are ours through Him, and forget not the faith of Paul (Phil. ii. 2.), who had such confidence in the prayers of the saints at the throne of Grace; that he bids them engage lodgings (even while at this time he was a prisoner at Rome), trusting that he *would be* delivered by their prayers.

Dwell much more on the love of the Lord our Shepherd, who laid down His life because He loved us. Think of the plaintful words of God, as He saw His "chosen" people, those that he loved and had rescued by his mighty arm out of Pharaoh's (Satan's) grasp, departing from Him. "Thou art wearied of me, O Israel." How often, how often would He have gathered them and GIVEN them ALL their heart's desire, but they would not. Likewise, let your hearts be ready to learn that the Father is slow to let us be partakers of, even to *touch* that which he knoweth too well will cause grief to us by and bye. The "*name*" of the Lord is a strong tower. The righteous runneth into it and is safe (Rev. xviii. 11). In that house, at the Father's table, in the daily presence of the Master we eat the "finest of the wheat" (Ps. cxlvii. 14) not the sweepings of religious periodicals, but a pure message from the "word" itself, and in that house He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their griefs (Ps. cxlvii. 3). Tell the younger children of the flock that they will look back one day with joy upon their old pastures; and as they move on, daily determined, in their own weakness (by Faith in the Lord's help), to live this little while for Jesus, they will find the abiding love of the master with them; and not unmingled with oft sore attacks of Satan, but remember every battle ends, and when Satan comes in with the fiery temptation, look in patience to Christ, it will soon pass away. Beware of Satan's "foot" on the path to make you fall (Ps. xxxvi. 11); "let not the foot of pride come against me," make this your prayer.

The master's advice to the elder ones is not to forsake the assembling of themselves together, but rather to be holy examples to the younger of the flock.

Have a strong confidence in your work whatever it may be; a "grain" by the wayside, the Sunday School or the preaching; the not forgetting in all work to pray for it as *seeing* CHRIST in it; and not the circumstances which may please our fiftful hearts; knowing that you will reap in it by and bye.

I trust you are all well in body and working in peace, having the Lord's mind and His cross; for those who

suffer are nearest here, and will be nearest "there," for they prove their love to Him. The life is not always suffering without, but patient, heart-bruising (for his cause) within.

I trust those who were at D—at the meeting would receive profitable words, remembering before they were delivered to you they were "tried seven times with fire," and are very precious, and given only to the children of the Great King; "and now, Lord, what wait I for, my hope is in Thee;" "how frail I am" (Ps. xxxix.) Now, a pilgrim's and a stranger's walk in the meekness of Christ, seeking how, in all gentleness and humility we may bear "HIS" name in testimony to this world, and with much love to you all.

Remember me as a servant of Christ in prayer, that "I may know him" and His cross.

J. CECIL HOYLE.

THE MEAT AND DRINK OF THE ISRAEL OF GOD.

Ex. xvi.; Num. xi.; Ex. xvii.

THE new life is *communicated* by the word of God. We are born again, not of corruptible seen, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever (1 Pet. i. 23).

By the Word also that life is *sustained*. We are en-joined, as new-born babes, to desire the sincere milk of the Word, that we may grow thereby.

The written word reveals to us the Word incarnate, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the food of our souls. Through all the Scriptures God has set Him forth; and as, in the meditation of the Word under the Holy Ghost, we learn Christ, the new life grows and waxes strong. This meditation is needed; for the Word, like the material earth, does not yield its treasures to the careless. There is, indeed, an outward beauty, which even outward men can admire; but the spiritual seek the riches which lie below. The woman's box was beautiful without, but it hid the more precious ointment within. Acknowledging the exterior fairness, we seek the inward fragrance, which is Christ (Cant. i. 3).

In Christ we find the antitype of the food of the children of Israel in Egypt, in the wilderness, and in Canaan. He is the Slain Lamb, our Passover sacrificed for us, whose blood shields us from judgment, and on whom we feast (1 Cor. v). He is the Manna, the Bread of Life that came down from heaven (John vi). He is the old corn of the land, the heavenly Christ, ascended to God's right hand.

The manna, unlike the food of Egypt, the cucumbers and the melons, the leeks and the garlic, did not grow upon the ground. It came down from heaven as did Jesus, the Bread of Life; when the dew fell upon the camp in the night, the manna fell upon it (Num. xi). And

herein we see illustrated the great doctrine of Scripture—the Father giving the Son, by whom He is revealed, and who is revealed by the Holy Ghost. The manna falls upon the dew. We obey the truth through the Spirit. Not apart from the Holy Ghost do we get the Son, the gift of the Father.

Four particulars are noted concerning the manna (Ex. xvi. 14, 31). It was *small*. Here is the lowliness of Jesus, who made Himself of no reputation. It was *round*. Here is His perfectness. Read the gospels, and you will find no salient points, no angles in the character of the Lord. In others one quality, love, or faith, or zeal may exceed. In Him all is duly balanced. It was *white*. This is the purity of Christ. No stain of earth sullied God's holy Child. It was *sweet*. And does not the adoring witness of the saints take voice in the song of songs, to celebrate the sweetness of Christ? Thank God, if, in any measure, our hearts have been opened to desire Him.

And yet the children of Israel, looking backward and lusting, said, "There is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes." How often have we, in effect, said this of Christ. In the peaceful enjoyment of the greatest privilege, the voice of murmuring has been heard among us. We have wanted something else—something more than only Christ. God gave them their request. It may be that some of us have found, in our bitter experience, that His way is still the same. As in a mirror, our history has been found reflected in those words of the 106th Psalm—"Then believed they His words; they sang His praise; they soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel, but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert; and He gave them their request, but sent leanness (or loathing) into their souls." We believed then we praised Him; soon the eye turned away from the cross, and the heart ceased to wait for counsel from God; we desired the things of Egypt, and our request was given us, till we knew, among the husks that the swine eat, how great is the judgment to be suffered to walk in our own way. How terrible is that word—"Ephraim is joined to idols; let him alone." But when He slew them, then they sought Him; and they returned and inquired early after God (Psalm lxxviii 34). And we, too, have found, in our extremity, that there is forgiveness with Him, that He may be feared. Let us dread what would dull the edge of our appetite for Christ. There is One who restores our souls, but what pain and bitterness and loss are involved in departure from God.

God gave them to drink also. They did all drink the same spiritual drink, for they drank of that spiritual rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ. In Exodus xvii. we are told that the people thirsted for water, and they murmured against Moses (for he filled their eye, not God)—And the Lord said unto Moses, "Go on before the people, and take with thee of the elders of Israel, and thy

rod, *wherewith thou smotest the river*, take in thine hand and go; behold I will stand before thee there upon the rock in Horeb, and *thou shalt smite the rock*, and there shall come water out of it, that the people may drink." The instrument of judgment to Egypt was to be the means of blessing to Israel, like that cross which saves the believer while it condemns the world. The rock was smitten, and the water came out. That rock was Christ. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, 'If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink.' He that believeth on Me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' But this spake He of the Spirit, which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." The rock must be smitten before the streams could flow to us. But it pleased the Lord to bruise Him, and He being ascended, has shed forth the Holy Ghost.

We have received the promise of the Father. By one Spirit are we all *baptised* into one body (we are *in the Spirit*), and have been all made to *drink* into one Spirit (the Spirit is *in us*). In a special, distinct manner the Holy Ghost has been bestowed upon us. How sadly has the Church failed to grasp and to hold the truth. We have been like those men in the Acts who had not so much as heard whether there were any Holy Ghost. (I understand "were" in the sense "were present.")

In John iv. we have the Spirit *indwelling*. Jesus said, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." The Spirit we have received is not a fitful influence. He is a divine person, who abides and dwells. But it is one thing to have the Spirit, it is another thing to be filled with the Spirit, and this we are enjoined to be. The river reduced to a thread in summer-time is the river still; but, how different from the mighty stream filling its channel to the brim. The Christian, also, may be weak and low, while yet he is a Christian, and as such indwelt by the Holy Ghost.

In John vii. there is the further truth of the Spirit *out-flowing*—"Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." God does not bless us that the blessing may stop with ourselves. He looks for fruitfulness, for increase, for the outcome of His gifts; lighting no light to be hid under a bushel; sowing no seed but to become many seeds. If He has given the living water to be in us, it should pour from us in fertilising streams, like those of that river whereof it is said, "Everything shall live whither the river cometh." (Ez. xlvii.) This is what is needed in preaching the gospel—the full tide of the Holy Ghost bearing the quick word abroad in such power, that men must either gnash with their teeth or yield to the testimony. This is what is needed in daily living—

the gracious unction diffusing itself as Christians are about their business or in their homes—the water in the well making "all green round the well's mouth."

Such are the meat and drink of the Israel of God. Let us eat of the Manna, let us drink of the Rock. Let us bless God for that life which, having had in us a beginning, shall have no end—a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

A. S.

SAN SEBASTIAN, Sept. 14, 1876.

DEAR BRETHREN,—In reading Paul's letter to Timothy, he gives sound advice to him who was not altogether a babe in Christ, in the second chapter and 23rd verse, where he says, "but foolish and unlearned questions avoid." A wholesome lesson for all Christians to learn, so that "*Christ*" may be the *first* object seen in every believer. As we grow in Christ so will we grow less in ourselves, and learn to esteem others who think differently from us better than ourselves. Remember it is not so much our "POSITION" as our "CONDITION" which pleases God; not that we sacrifice the truth: but leave Christ to be the judge of the "word" he has given: you will remember a past letter bearing on this, and it is well to "learn" to see Christ in all who are Christ's; if we do not, then it may be that the heart is so blinded with pride, as not to see beyond itself. Outward ordinance is little compared to Christ, and much blessing is *lost* through the *simplicity* in Christ being *lost*. Paul, in speaking of his behaviour, when visiting the Christians at Thessalonica, says, "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children." (1 Thess. ii. 7), and in 1 Cor. iv. 6, he warns them—that no one of you be puffed up for one against the other. Now look at the 'gentle one' in his work. Acts xvii. 16-17, his spirit stirred up within to fellowship with his master. Knowledge of what his sins were before the Father, and the wonderful love of Jesus in bearing his guilt, thoughts of his Christ in heaven, the future glory, &c., all meditated on, so leading him to be transformed into the likeness of Him whose image and bearing the Father seeks us to have as His children. The testimony of a Christian abroad among the unsaved is a sure word which they cannot deny, and is as much or more needed at home than abroad.

The Father's love, Luke xv, the Brother's love, Gen. xlv. 15, and the Brethren's reply, Gen. l. 18, are subjects for meditation, and Gen. xlix. 22, type of him who

bore the first fruits of the harvest before God. Gen. xliii. 25, tells us that we shall be eating soon with the King, and so to prepare our present for Him, to be glad with exceeding joy at His coming. Happy is that people that is in such a case, yea happy is that people whose God is the Lord. Ps. cxliv. 15—both young men and maidens, old men and children let them praise the name of the Lord. Ps. cxlviii. 12-13. Yield yourselves unto God—test the will with God's will for a little while, every bend makes it yield more and more. Look much for the personal welfare of each other, and mark how soon God answers prayer on behalf of those who are following Him. "The Lord will give strength into his people, the Lord will bless His people with peace." Ps. xxix. 11—"My peace," Jesus says, "I give unto you." Think of John's peace, leaning on Jesus at the supper—doubtful peace or Peter's peace walking on the troubled wave. Peace in affliction and illness—"many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth them out of them all." Ps. xxxiv. 19—Peace in teaching, peace in praying, peace in walking. "My peace," Jesus says, "I give unto you," let us hold it fast, and the preciousness of the Love that gave it will make it to be more valued by all. Think too of Him who was rejoicing continually with the Father, His beloved, and in agony with our sin cried out, "all thy billows are gone over me." And He says for his rescued sheep, "Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am," "the shepherd and sheep" here. "The shepherd and sheep" there.

We read about calves on the mountains that skip for joy, and oxen of great strength for the burdens.

You will see I am not at present at Madrid (having left Valladolid), and future address I enclose. God our Father has manifestly blessed this short journey in speaking to several souls—some being wishful that we should see them again, some buying a Testament, others listening with prepared hearts, and the clerk at the Post-office buying a New Testament this morning, as well as many other mercies and privileges given: for which much praise is due to God, and which we offer with thankful hearts. The cry of help among you God has assuredly answered in a way far beyond expectations that we could have formed. You must not forget to remember the learning of the language which takes time, but prayer will help me much. I hope all are well, blessing and being blessed.

I was very glad to have a few words from home, and to hear of your prosperity. Our meeting place is not S— but "The mercy seat," there we have prayer and letters answered. I hope the children are learning to be easily entreated—even able to rebuke others by walking with Jesus, and learning in prayer from Him—also that those older in Christ are learning at the CROSS, and not at meetings so much. The preaching of the word, the casting forth the precious seed in the

meeting, in the Sunday School: all will be gathered together by and bye. None of God's seed returns void—it all has a work to do—blessed and thrice blessed those who are privileged to speak for the Shepherd and for the King. The worker watches the seed fall, and knows it is watched by the Lord of the harvest.

With love to you all. Yours sincerely in Christ,

J. CECIL HOYLE.

In one of the letters from K—, which I have now with me, a question is asked—in what chapter "Little children love another is to be found?" It is a saying probably founded upon John's Epistle, but ought to be found in every chapter of those who are living Epistles for Christ.

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7 P.M.,	-	Addresses to Believers.

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NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

BY W. LINCOLN

THE FIRST DIALOGUE.—CHAPS. I.—II.

THE Bride first speaks. She has three petitions—Kiss me, Draw me, Tell me, &c. As to the first, her vehement desire is to enjoy His love, as well as to believe in it. For the living soul requires that that love be conveyed to it anew and afresh, daily and hourly. First, leprous sinners are urged to kiss Him, the Holy One (Psalm 2); for touching Him and the being touched by Him involve the instant removal of all defilement, and the impartation of new life. Likewise the Father expresses thus the heartiness of His forgiveness, and of His joy at our return to Him. Luke xv.) Oh! how wonderful is Christ's and God's love to such unworthy ones as we. But if He is pleased so to bless us, so to own us as His own, so to set His love upon us, our part is reverently, joyfully to believe and to drink in this love of His, and to worship Him for His grace; and then, once brought into the family, we shall find like grace to be continued to us all the days of our life. This is to be the daily sustenance of our quickened spirit. And this love divine, constantly poured out into the heart by the Holy Ghost, causing us to become acquainted with the sweetness of the words of His mouth, ever revives and sanctifies us, for "His lips are like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh" (v. 13). And do we apprehend how ready He is to accord to us the fullest intimacy with Himself, if so be we set our affections upon Him? But this we may learn here, for a kiss is the pledge

of forgiveness, of love, and of intimacy. And His "kiss," or rather "kisses," tell of the love of a Father, Bridegroom, Friend! And the remarkable change in the grammar here from the third person "Him," to the second, "Thy," is immediate, following at once on the request, and proving how ever ready He is to give us tokens of His affection. So does He draw nigh, so does He delight to give us to know and to live upon His love, as to render us true Nazarites, preferring it to all the wine of this world's intoxicating and maddening potions.

Now, experience of this sort recalls to her mind how she and others first came to know Himself in truth. His name is ever and is here the manifestation of Himself in such a way as to suit and to exceed all the varied needs of the soul at the time, for a name with Him is not that unmeaning thing which it is with us. All His names and all His offices are to encourage us to reckon upon Him, and to live by the faith of Him. When as yet He had not reached our actual condition, He said, "I am that I am." But now He Himself has filled in the former blank in His words, for now He says, "I am the Resurrection and the Life;" "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life;" "I am the Bread of Life;" "I am Jesus," *i.e.*, thy Saviour and thy Lord. JES. U=I ease you. As the odour from the ointment poured out of the alabaster box (John xii. 3) made known the preciousness of what had been contained therein, so His name and offices all tend to aid us in the perception of what inexhaustible fullness dwells in Him—aye, and for us, too. Therefore, we love Him who hath first loved us, and who, moreover, is infinitely worthy of our love. Whilst

that costly unguent was yet in the unbroken box, no idea was formed of its great value. By the Cross and by the Throne we learn His glory, and through Him we come to know our God and Father. Our sins, our wretchedness, even all our wilderness trials, afford Him scope for the display of His grace towards us. And even in the glory He will yet reveal Himself more and more (Eph. ii. 7, with Rev. iii. 12).

In verse 4 we have this loved one's second request. For if God hears and answers us when we draw nigh to Him, this way of His should embolden us to ask still for more. Never is he wearied, save of our hesitation to ask very much, and of our suspicion and reserve towards Him. He would win our hearts to have confidence, and enjoy intimacy with Himself; hence, therefore, her second word. It differs from the former on this wise—then it was, draw nigh to my soul; now it is, cause me to draw nigh to Thee. The two ideas are conjoined in James iv. 8. Nor would our need, however great at any time it was felt to be, induce us to persist in clinging to Him, unless that in Him which met our case were simultaneously revealed to us. Besides all this, there is a vast fulness in Him far exceeding any need that we can feel. And this, too, He would have us live upon, even upon Himself, and all that He is unto us more than we need. Never does God bless us according to our need, though His people are often heard to prefer such a small request. True, He eyes our need; but His way in His supply thereof is to bless us according to His own riches in glory. If, for instance, we needed mercy and salvation, could He not have shown us these, without making us His own sons, and uniting us by His Spirit to His Christ, yonder. But by this magnificence in the display of His grace, we come to experience more and more His drawing—aye, and His transforming power (2 Cor. iii. 18). Then do we rapturously exclaim, "We will run after Thee" (see Phil. iii. 10-14). Wherefore, in the holy place even now by faith, and in the holiest of all abiding, we see that His own hand and grace, and the blood of Christ, have brought us there, because the heart of God and of Christ were set upon us, and because love divine would have it so (Eph. ii. 4). But only in His perfect light can we learn this; and only in that light can we acquiesce in His beautiful way of grace in that whatever else we lack and have not, we have Him as our God for ever—"We will be glad and rejoice IN THEE". (So Rom. v. 11.)

We remember His love, and not* this world's poor joys. So are we upright; so do we love Him.

In verses 5 and 6, confession appears to be consequent upon this manifested and enjoyed love of God. Similarly after the wondrous statements of Eph. ii., that we have been raised and seated with Christ in the heavenlies, then are we enjoined to remember what "we were in time past". Hence it should be noted that the word "am," in both verses 5 and 6, is in italics, and not in the Hebrew. At the same time, nothing produces self-loathing like the apprehension of His love. Repentance, as Luther was wont to say, is an ugly word to those who have not tasted that the Lord is gracious; but it is a delightful exercise of the soul in everyday life, in proportion as God is known. So the Father kissed the prodigal, ere that son said, "I have sinned". But that kiss made the confession very easy and very hearty. And albeit Peter urged the Jews to repent of their murder of the Messiah, and Paul also declared that "God commanded all men everywhere to repent" of their wilful ignorance of Him, still, these scriptures, if rightly looked at, will not be deemed to set aside the great principle that the sinner can only begin with God by faith (John iii. 36, Heb. xi. 6), even as God begins with the sinner at the cross of His Son. So when those who address the unsaved are heard not unfrequently to conjure such to *give* to God their hearts, they reverse the order of scripture, which invites sinners first to *take* God's salvation as His free gift, for the word is "Son (not sinner) give Me thy heart." When we have taken from God, then can we begin to give to God, not before; for what have we that we have not received?

But if there is confession as to what she was, or still is in herself, there is no denial through false humility of what by grace she is—"I am black, but comely". And this, indeed, is a wonderful thing, that we who were such sinners have been made "in Him, the righteousness of God". The two combined may appear paradoxical. Their conjunction constitutes one of

* "More than" is here in verse 4 a Hebraism for "and not". When this is noted, a difficulty is removed in the interpretation of such a passage as Luke xviii. 14, 2 Tim. iii. 4, &c. Also, on the other hand, "and not" is likewise used for "more than," as in John vi. 27. So in Malachi i. 3, quoted in Romans ix. 13, the language, "Jacob have I loved and Esau have I hated," means that God loved Jacob more than He did Esau. The actual import of the word "hated" in such scriptures we have explained in Gen. xxix. 31, compared with ver. 30.

those gospel-riddles which yet every believer knows how somewhat to interpret to the glory of his Lord. Whilst our blackness by nature is compared to the tents of Kedar, Ishmael's second son (Gen. xxv. 13), and which tents were made of black goats' hair, nevertheless, our comeliness resembles the curtains of Solomon himself! For why? The verse in St. John's Epistle fully explains this. "As He is, so are we, *in this world!*" Now, this perfect comeliness and standing being identical with Christ's own, becomes still more passing strange when it is borne in mind that even in the believer, the flesh is yet as bad as ever it was. Though he is not in the flesh, still the flesh is in him. This fact he knows, and deplores, too.

The painful reality of this seems alluded to in verse 6. The Bride had experienced persecution from her mother's* children. For those born after the flesh, along the course of all time, have ever hated and given trouble to those born after the Spirit. This was the case even in Abel's and in Isaac's time, and the same is true "now" (Gal. v. 29). But if man has one object in the sorrow that he causes the people of God, our Heavenly Father has quite another. It would appear here as if the Bride had allowed herself to put outward service in lieu, or at least before, communion and worship, and thus in her confession there is the acknowledgment of that which even to this very day every believer bewails the tendency of in himself—I mean the allowing one's work to get in between the soul and the Lord. "They made me keeper of the vineyards, but mine own vineyard have I not kept." However, it is something gained, when we are cognizant that this is only a snare against which we should be on our guard. Work is one thing, but the work of faith is another. Contrast the striking variation of language in 1 Thess. i. 3 with Rev. ii. 2. Also observe that

* These were slaves, according to the old proverb, "*Partus sequitur ventrem*"—the child's condition is like its mother's. If the *mother* by nature be a slave, so is her offspring. By the "sun looking upon me," we are to understand, persecution. For compare Rev. vii. 16 with 14. And this expression, therefore, as likewise those in verses 3 and 4, is much more intelligible if regarded as the experience of God's saints, as such, than merely of the literal Pharaoh's daughter. Which being so, it is a great pity that many who should know better, are wont to conceive of this song, as primarily referring to this one woman and to her earthly husband, and as if the language were only applicable in a strained and accommodated sense, to the love of Christ and His people. Whereas, on the contrary, verses like these are almost unmeaning, save in their spiritual sense. See also such verses as v. 7.

the Thessalonians themselves began to relax as to their grasp of the blessed hope, for compare 2 Thess. i. 3 with 1 Thess. i. 3. Mary in the gospel chose the good part in her sitting at Christ's feet, and in drinking in His words. Presently, when the actual time came for service, so conversant was she with His mind that she rendered to His heart a little tribute of love, so especially grateful, as not even any one of His apostles did.

In her third request, the Bride enquires of her Beloved where He may ever be found, lest she should resemble a suspected woman.* For whilst God calls to hearty and entire separation from all evil and at all cost, it is far from His will that we should keep ourselves isolated from His other children. At the beginning of the dispensation "all that believed were together." Nor is there now, notwithstanding all the confusion everywhere around us, a more express intimation of His will than that we should "keep together." (Heb. x. 25.) Whilst we may each draw nigh to Him in secret, still, His delight is to draw nigh to us when assembled to His name † (Matt. xviii. 20, John xx.), and this fact is here deemed of such importance that the Bridegroom in His reply, wherein He makes allusion to each of her three requests, adverts in the first place to that which she had just spoken.

(To be continued.)

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

By J. G. B.

BY the original order of creation, glory belonged to God, and blessing was man's portion. But the serpent beguiled the man, to disturb this order, and led him to seek the glory for himself by intruding into God's place, listening to Satan's assertion, "Ye shall be as Gods". So that, immediately on the fruit of the forbidden tree being eaten, the whole order was disturbed, and man lost his place of *blessing* in the attempt made by him to take God out of His place of

* For "one that turneth aside" the margin has "one that is veiled." The allusion here is plain by comparing Gen. xxxviii. 14 and 19.

† Even that grand, not promise, but assurance of His in Matt. xviii. 20 may be wrested, and is when the idea is educed, thence that the smaller the assembly, the more likely is He to be there. The true sentiment is that *even though*, owing to circumstances, the assembly only should number two or three, yet will he be with it. And evidently it is assumed in Heb. x. 25 that, as a general rule, the assembly will number more than two or three.

glory. The work of redemption restores the order by putting back again what had been thus displaced, by reinstating God in the place of glory, and man in the place of blessing; and it is the doctrine of Faith, or of redemption through grace, which does this, for it both excludes *boasting* and brings in *blessing*. It reserves the place of glory for God, and secures the place of blessing for man (see Rom. iii. 4). This is all right—it is according to the order of creation, as it came forth in Eden from God's hand. But this is a hard lesson for man to learn, as he is a creature who has already sought to exalt himself, and whose nature would lead him to desire to be like God. But the lesson which they who are redeemed learn is to put man and God in their right places—God conferring blessing on man, while He receives glory for Himself. And it is instructive to see, in different instances, how the Lord has been teaching man this lesson. He did so among the patriarchs—in the case of Job. Job *murmured*, which is an act of rebellion, and the Lord asserts His sovereignty against Job by addressing him out of the whirlwind, and then when He had humbled him, and made him know that the place of sovereignty was His place, He blesses Job. So with Israel. He led them into the wilderness, and then taught them His own divine sufficiency. He taught them to know that He alone was God, and, when He had thus instructed them, He planted them in Canaan, the place of blessing, as it will be in their second or final blessing. He will exalt Himself to His own place of glory. He will entitle Himself to say, in the face of apostate Israel, "I live for ever;" and, when He has thus set Himself again in His place of glory, He will put Israel again in their place of blessing. "He will be merciful to His land and people" (Deut. xxxii.). So with Nebuchadnezzar—he walked in the pride of a king, but the Lord humbled him till he knew that the Heaven ruled, and then, when the blessed God had thus re-asserted His own place, He put Nebuchadnezzar into the creature's due place of blessing (Dan. 11), and so with sinners now. He is teaching them that He is God. The resurrection of Christ testifies of His divine power and goodness; of His power, in destroying the head of all offence; of His goodness, in imparting blessing to the offenders. And when we have learnt that lesson, by faith in Jesus, and thus give all glory to God (Rom. iv.), He puts us into the place where, as saved and loved sinners, we can receive abundant blessing. This is the way of God. He cannot own man in his

pride, but having humbled him, and asserted that *glory* is *His*, He will then shew that blessing is man's. He can honourably, and will willingly, bless him. For blessing is as much the creature's due place as glory is God's. God's love makes it so. He as surely consults for man's blessing as for His own praise. He will shew himself just, and thus provide for his own glory; but He will then be a justifier, and thus provide for the sinner's blessing. Gideon first threw down the altar of Baal, but then as surely rescued Israel out of the hand of the Midianites. But this lesson of His sovereignty, and that He is God alone, alone entitled to exercise His will; the Lord asserts, too, in His dealings with us, as well as by the doctrines taught in His word. He did so in the face of Israel, by the rests and movements of the cloud. It rested or moved just as it pleased, without giving account, but simply calling on the camp to obey. And so, oftentimes now, in His providences, He seems to act according to His own pleasure, and we have only to submit, to allow that He has a right to have a will, and to do His pleasure. This, not unfrequently, appears very strange. Was it not strange that a famine should first meet Abram in that very place to which God had sent him? Was it not strange that the first step of Israel in the wilderness was to prove that it was a thirsty place? Was it not strange that a prison should receive the apostles just as they entered Macedonia, at the call of the Lord to preach the gospel? But all this shews that the Lord must be allowed to fill His place as Sovereign Lord, who has right—sole right—to do His pleasure. And the end will make all plain and all profitable to us also. For in the kingdom we shall find that it is both our security and our blessing that our God has asserted His glory in the face of hell and earth—that he reigns without a rival, having proved all else to be vanities; that He has resumed His place of glory, and can thus again put the creature in the place of blessing. Then He will restore the first and only righteous order, in the way of abounding goodness and wisdom—having destroyed him, and all connection with him, through whose subtlety man was led to disturb that order at the beginning. And the whole bearing of that noble strain of prophecy in Isaiah xl.-xlviii., seems to be in concord with these truths. Israel had been entrusted with the honour of the name of Jehovah. They had to maintain testimony to Him as the only true God against the Gentiles and all their gods. But instead of doing this, they became idolatrous themselves, and then, in right-

eous judgment, the Lord sends them down as captives to Babylon, the stronghold of the idols. This was a great catastrophe—God's witness surrenders the testimony, which was God's praise, to the enemy, and then becomes the captive of that enemy. For, like Adam, when Israel touched God's place of glory, Israel must lose their own place of blessing. But the Lord in this part of the prophecy pleads His own cause. He challenges the idols—He exposes their vanity—He asserts that He Himself is God alone—and in proof of this He brings forth many witnesses to testify of His divine foreknowledge and power. But beyond them all, He offers now a new witness. He prophesies of Cyrus by name, and tells of his coming victories and kingdom, and, as it were, throws down this in the face of Israel, and before the Gentiles and their idols, as closing the testimony that He was God alone. Having, then, thus asserted His place of glory, He was ready to turn towards Israel and restore them to their place of blessing, guilty as they had been. And he says to them, "Go forth from Babylon, flee ye from the Chaldeans, with a voice of singing, declare ye, tell this, utter it even to the end of the earth, say ye, the Lord hath redeemed His servant Jacob". And, with Israel, He can now also bless the earth, and say to it, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else". And thus He not only restores the primitive order, taking the place of *divine glory* Himself, and giving the creation the place of *blessing* again, but He does more. He brings good out of evil. He establishes a testimony to His name far brighter than that to which Israel had been unfaithful. He is now to be known not only as God, separate from idol vanities, but as God the Saviour, displaying the riches of His grace in His kindness to the guilty. And it is in connection with this testimony to His grace that "the servant Messiah" is here brought in, for as Israel was to be the saved, or the object of this grace, so He was to be the Saviour, or the instrument of this grace (xlii.), and there was the Holy testimony perfected in the mouth of the Saviour and of the saved; as is here said, "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and My servant whom I have chosen". He must assert that to be all His own, and with a present judgment, He judges the unfaithful steward of His glory, giving Jacob for the present to the spoil, and Israel to the robbers. But then he rises up to the full display of Himself and shews Himself—shews grace,

and makes mercy rejoice against judgment towards Israel. And this is just His dealing in this world. He had given Adam blessing, but Adam was unfaithful to the trust, and, of course, lost the blessing. But God has arisen to plead the cause of His glorious name by "His servant," and He does so. In Jesus He establishes a brighter testimony to Himself than ever He did in Adam. Adam was His image (Gen. 1), but Jesus is His express image (Heb. 1). Creation told us *much*, but redemption told us *all* about Him.

NOTE.—Chapter xli. is a kind of appendix to this strain of the prophet Isaiah. It is Messiah publishing His testimony to the whole world, as He had been appointed one of the Lord's new witnesses (xliii. 5).

LIBERTY NOT LICENSE.

CONCLUDED.

LET us in no wise underrate the great struggle for the truth that has made those days of the reformation illustrious.

Let us remember, with honour and affection, that cloud of witnesses—men, women, and even children of the family of faith—who loved not their own lives to the death, and many of whom glorified God in the fires, counting the gain of all things loss for the sake of Christ.

Let us cherish, and hold fast with our lives, the great doctrines recovered and confessed by them, according to the grace given them.

Let us confess humbly, as we rejoice in the liberty wherein we meet to worship God, no man making us afraid, that "other men have laboured and we have entered into their labours".

But, while endeavouring to render honour to whom honour is due, let us take heed that we reverence not the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever—Amen.

God was pleased to give teachers to His Church in that day, to lead them back from man's errors to the source of truth.

And if their lives and testimony have left any tradition behind them, it is surely a charge to turn still from man to God.

This is always the path of true liberty, for it is well said that "His service is perfect freedom".

The course, then, on which they entered was progressive. It was the "path of the just shining more and more unto the perfect day". Holding boldly this

onward way, they would, as they advanced, have shaken off the errors and false principles that still hampered them, like the mixed multitude that clung to the skirts of Israel as he came forth out of Egypt.

But it was not to be so. They saw, with the sagacious eyes of earthly politicians, that human license was the special temptation that beset the steps of those who trod the high road of Divine liberty, and they halted that they might raise human fences to keep the danger out, and to secure that which they had gained already.

And the halting place became a camp, and the camp became a city.

The truths that had been restored were embanked within creeds, articles, confessions, and liturgies. Imperfections and errors were enclosed with them. As time passed on, the imperfections and the errors found their exponents as well as the truths found theirs, and the factions that followed them have distracted Christendom with their controversies and appeals, sometimes to divine truth, generally to human formula.

It is only natural that those who take the latter course should feel drawn towards that formula which is the oldest and most self-asserting. And so, many have openly fled back to Rome for shelter. Others, closing alike the book of divine revelation, and the written codes of men's devising, have struck out boldly into the pathless desert of scepticism, having but one community of purpose or direction among them, viz., their backs shall always be turned towards the "True light that has come into the world to lighten every man".

Here, then, is a special danger which besets these days in which we live.

It is time to take a fresh departure. Expediency has run its course. Formula, Article, and Confession do not satisfy, and cannot control the speculative mind.

The confusion of dispensations, the misappropriation to Christendom of promises that were given to Israel, the contradictory doctrines that range themselves against one another in the same page, transferred from scripture most probably in reverence, but certainly at random, cannot meet the keen investigation of logical minds.

Surely the time has come to say, "Take away these battlements for they are not the Lord's". If the enemy is coming in like a flood, let him find a rampart of living men gathered round the standard raised by the Spirit

of the Lord, not scattered here and there, in vain efforts to defend human outposts that have proved untenable.

Thus, and thus alone, shall unity be regained, so far as it is in God's will to restore it; unity, not circumscribed within the limits of a denomination, and bound to the articles of a confession, not a league of sects which agree to differ, but a union of heart and loyal purpose to know no name on earth but Christ the Lord, to acknowledge no allegiance which could compromise simple obedience to Him in all things.

But let us remember that sect and division were not the cause but the result of unfaithfulness, and that, therefore, unity must not be regarded as the first object of attainment.

To seek this, would be to strive to grope our way back again to the site of that Babel of Catholicity which has broken up into the confusion of Christendom, and will be restored only under the crown of antichristian apostacy.

Obedience must be the first point now. It is surely time for each Christian to consider whether human convention, or human tradition, or any other human consideration, however venerable, however expedient, stands between him and any command of his Lord. "Let us go forth therefore unto Him, without the camp bearing His reproach."

It may well be that (in this age of speculation) impatience of rule, or scorn of the conventional profession of religion, drives many a one out of the denomination in which birth or circumstances placed him. And herein lies the danger of these times beyond those of the Reformation, to which reference has been made. It was the grasp of positive truth, the Spirit's hand laid on them, that led men then to give up all things, and to force their way through blood and flame to the side of Christ. But a creed of mere negation is born, not in persecution but in liberty. It grasps no object, knows no enthusiasm, enrolls no martyrs. It is a luxury of the fleshly mind, not an expression of the resolve of a chastened spirit. In its mildest form it is license, in its ultimate development it is lawlessness—*anomia*—a deliberate rejection of the authority of God.

We speak of this peril of the day generally, as not called upon to sit in judgment on the motives of individuals who hold loosely, or who abandon, the religious systems of this world. But if any, leaving such systems, seek to associate themselves with those who own no Head and know no name but the Lord Jesus Christ,

to them we desire earnestly to extend the hand of fellowship, and to speak words of counsel as to this special danger.

The Holy Spirit has given us an illustration, in the history of David, which may be of use to us in conveying teaching for the present time.

We read that, when he was in the Cave of Adullam there came to him his brethren and his father's house. These formed a staff or body guard. Then we continue to read of those who were in distress, discontented, and in debt, who gathered to him, and he became captain over them. Whatsoever their previous history, whatsoever their motives, they soon learned to know his hand over them as a wise and able ruler, they accepted his discipline, they became bound up for life or death in his cause, they proved in many a field their attachment to his person, their confidence in his leadership, their willingness to lay down their lives in his defence.

Thus, though first despised, then feared and hated in the reign of Saul, they became trained into a corps of heroes, and their names were afterwards enrolled and their deeds registered in the chronicles of the kingdom.

Thus should it be with those who gather round the Lord Jesus Christ in these days of His rejection. They must not suppose that they are merely to form themselves into an association to escape from restraint; that they have delivered themselves from the irksomeness of human ordinances to revel in freedom from all rule or all order; that they have lessened their responsibilities and enlarged their impunities.

This would indeed be "making provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof".

Our Lord Jesus Christ truly left a simple and intelligible command to His disciples throughout this dispensation, "Do this in remembrance of me". It is, therefore, the duty and the privilege of his people to assemble to obey it in breaking bread together on the first day of the week. But the responsibility of their association neither begins nor ends here. Neither, because it can be explicitly complied with, at least in outward form, should it be concluded that this is the only bond of peace and the only expression of unity. The degeneracy of life and faith which attends all formalism must follow so shallow an interpretation of the sublimest of mysteries.

To have unlearned reverence and submission for that which men have dared to add to the Lord's command is indeed a beginning in the right direction, but it is

only the first step towards entering God's school. There we must take our place humbly, to learn the character and spirit of His government (Matt. xi. 29), (Philipp. ii. 5), and the order of His house (1 Cor. xii).

The former of these two lessons is the hardest to flesh and blood. But, till it is learned, the latter cannot be rightly administered (1 Cor. xiii.).

When we take our place in the youngest class of that school, the first word of the first page of our first lesson is GRACE. And eternity will not fathom the full depth of meaning in that word.

But if we cannot arrive at all its meaning now, we should learn to witness to that world over which God's grace lingers, that there is a sphere even on earth *in* which, as well as *over* which, "Grace reigns".

In that spirit we may go reverently to learn the order of God's house. Without it, rule will harden into tyranny, and order degenerate into machinery.

No earthly form of Government, no human expedient, will help us in learning how God's house is to be administered. It is not despotism entrusted to an earthly delegate. It is not constitutionalism. It is not a republic. It is, or should be, God's will done on earth as it is in heaven. Each creature will there wait only for command or revelation from Him, and rejoices to carry them out with every power that He has given. But these mighty beings minister to those who are charged with the higher duty of carrying out His will on earth (Heb. i. 14). The order, the attitude, the advance of God's church on earth in this age is a higher trust, and should be a more wonderful expression of His grace and power than the bright array and perfect service of the angels in heaven.

"Strength made perfect in weakness" is more wonderful, more glorious, than strength made perfect in power. Angels partake of their Lord's joy in the efforts of His feeble children on earth to learn and obey His will. Angels surely wonder with holy amazement that feeble beings on earth have learned so little of the power of the omnipotent arm within their reach at a moment's need, of the omniscient wisdom pledged to guide them when they turn to it.

In human records of human wars, we have read of regiments surrounded by countless foes, torn by ceaseless fire, menaced by apparently inevitable destruction, yet closing up their ranks with steady discipline, obeying their leaders' commands as calmly as if on the parade ground, and, by their majestic attitude and perfect

order, overawing their foes and clearing their way to victory.

How many victories are recorded of God's army against sin and satan, against the hatred and scorn of the world, against the evil that dwells within?

And if it is not so, at whose door lies the blame? "To us, to us belongeth shame and confusion of face." We have a perfect leader, a perfect example, a perfect book of instructions, a certain promise of victory, if there be only obedience and discipline.

It does not fall within the scope of this paper, neither is it the desire of the writer to attempt to draw up any code of rules for assemblies of God's people, or to suggest the various cases of difficulty which may arise, with a prescribed remedy for each. To do so would be to fall into one of the evils which have been deprecated.

It would be to substitute formula for the living men whom the Lord provides to minister His word and doctrine to His church. It is but vain jangling to debate about certain courses to be adopted in certain hypothetical emergencies: Questions of practical difficulty do indeed often arise among those who, rejecting various forms of error, and, impressed with varied perceptions of truth, are seeking to know and to follow the Lord's commands concerning the Church. But local characteristics and special circumstances cannot be anticipated by stereotyped codes of directions, while they form exactly the subjects for the care and ministry of that pastorship which is a gift of the Lord to his people.

These difficulties are often the lessons by which He trains and tests His people, and it is wonderful to find how they yield when met in dependence on God, or acceptance of His rule, "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly".

Assemblies acting in this spirit will not be found walking independently of God, or of one another. Neither will there be any claim to supremacy of rule because of priority of corporate existence. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

Close adherence to His instructions, earnest endeavour to follow His example, will produce unity of action among assemblies, a unity which binds to Him first, and, therefore, to one another.

To endeavour to secure this by a confederacy acting on mutual compact, is to bring base metal into the Sanctuary, as Rehoboam supposed that he could replace with brass the golden shields of Solomon.

As the sun stands unchanged in the heavens, so does God's model of His Church remain in His word untouched by human imitations.

As the sun is reflected in clear, calm waters, so should God's thoughts concerning His Church be mirrored in the assemblies that gather on earth in the name of the Lord Jesus. Only when they are walking in faith, love, and obedience, will they reflect any image of His glorious design. The currents of earthly motives, the rough breath of human impulses and passions, ripple the surface, and break the reflection into fragments, or darken it altogether. Nothing but the presence of the Lord can then restore. Let Him speak, and let His voice be heard in the hearts, and again there will be a great calm, and while they worship Him the light will shine upon them, and shine forth from them, according to the measure and extent of their loyalty to Him.

The propositions, then, which we have been endeavouring to work out are these—Catholicism, *i.e.*, complete and visible unity is not essential to the existence of God's Church on earth, but it is essential to its corporate testimony (John xvii. 21).

This corporate testimony having failed, there is no intimation in scripture, neither is it consistent with the character of this dispensation, that He should put forth His hand extra-dispensationally, or as men would say, miraculously, to restore this unity, before He comes in person to restore all things.

That, though nothing short of His direct interference can restore complete corporate testimony, yet there is no limit, on the side of His grace, to the blessings which follow the efforts of His people, who faithfully and humbly endeavour to return to His order of organization as revealed in His word.

That those who thus return find, not (as human ignorance may tell them) a field for the indulgence of their own fancy, for the rejection of all authority, and the assertion of every individual privilege. On the contrary, they assume responsibilities, towards God and towards man, higher, deeper, broader, tenderer than human traditions can teach them. They enter a sphere in which Gift and Pastorship are to be exercised and obeyed under the superintendence of the Chief Shepherd Himself (Ephes. iv., 1 Peter v.), in which His care reaches every member, and provides a ministry of importance and inter-relationship for the very youngest and weakest (1 Cor. xii.); in which there is no place for isolation, but earnest consideration is taught, not only for the welfare of those who reciprocate it, but for the whole circle of God's family on earth (Phil. ii. 4).

R. J. M.

THE EPISTLE TO TITUS.

(A lesson for the last days.)

THE peculiar and distinctive character of Paul's later Epistles has often been the subject of remark. That character is very manifest to all who have learned "rightly to divide the word of truth". We find him in 2nd Timothy writing on the eve of his departure to be for ever with the Lord, in a spirit of the deepest sorrow, with a heart well nigh broken, as he saw the successful advances of those who had perverted the gospel, and had introduced all those invidious elements of corruption, which have since, in age after age, produced disorder and decay. All in Asia had forsaken him, and there was rising to his view the shadow of those dark clouds of the last and perilous days, which were finally to shroud the Church in the deepest gloom and dishonour. The epistle to Titus, though evidently written at an earlier date, yet exhibits the same mournful spirit, striving to preserve his beloved child in the simplicity of the faith, and to guard him, and through him, to guard others, from the vortex of evil and error. He had already made known to the Church all that had been revealed to him of the unsearchable riches of Christ, and had animated the Churches everywhere by his own most wonderful example of devotedness and love. But the leaven of false doctrine was working. It was eating like a canker; and knowing how all morals are undermined when heresy has poisoned the soul, he wrote as Paul the aged, to warn against departures in doctrine or practice, from the standard of divine truth and righteousness. It was needful to speak plainly amidst the abounding profession of the day, and to insist on the first fundamental principles of the gospel. Perhaps some may not have observed this in the Epistle to Titus, and may find it profitable now to consider its course of instruction.

The opening verse is very significant; "Paul, a servant of God, and an Apostle of Jesus Christ according to the faith of God's elect, and the acknowledging of *the truth which is after godliness*". Now, this word "godliness," and other related words, occur in a remarkable manner in Paul's later Epistles, in 2nd Peter and in Jude. "Godliness" occurs 9 times in the Epistle to Timothy, and 5 times in 2nd Peter, and "godly" occurs in two very striking expressions in 2nd Tim. iii. 12, and 2nd Peter ii. 9; and in Jude we have Enoch's memorable prophecy, in which the word "ungodly" occurs 4 times in a few lines; and the same word is found in 1st Timothy

and 1st and 2nd Peter. "The truth, which is *after godliness*," may be taken as the key-note of the Epistle to Titus, and it certainly is the one great needful topic for the days in which we live. "The grace of God," says Paul, "has appeared," that grace which bringeth salvation, and it (not the law) has taught us to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. (Titus ii. 12.) Then as to this soberness. The bishop is to be sober, the aged men are to be sober, the young women are to be sober, the young men are to be sober-minded. So too the young women are to be obedient to their own husband, and servants to their masters, not purloining, not answering again, but showing all good fidelity, so as to adorn the doctrine in all things. Titus himself was to be a pattern of good works; all the Lord's purchased children were to be a people zealous of good works, ready to every good work; receiving as a faithful saying their obligation to maintain good works; and in the 14th verse of the 3rd chapter, the same duty is expressed in other terms, and as our translators, in the margin put it, the exhortation is to "profess honest trades for necessary uses". Further, the bishop "must be blameless, not self-willed, or soon angry, or given to much wine, or to filthy lucre". He is to be a lover of good men, and the aged women teachers of good things. And so with various commandments, embracing hospitality, justice, holiness, temperance, discretion, patience, chastity, the love of home, goodness, uncorruptness, purity, sincerity.

But what of doctrine? The "bishop" is to hold fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, in orderly sound doctrine, to exhort and convince. Titus is to speak the things which become sound doctrine. The heretic after the first and second admonition is to be rejected. The aged men are to be sound in the faith, and Titus is to use sound speech which cannot be condemned. There is a warning against Jewish paths and commandments of men which turn from the truth, and against foolish questions and genealogies, and contentions, and striving about words.

Thus the most simple and elementary instruction abounds in the Epistle. But is it practical instruction without motive or power? Let us see. We have first, in the most remarkable manner, the high and glorious dignity of the Lord on whose behalf Paul speaks. Paul is an apostle and preacher by the commandment of "God our Saviour," and his salutation to Titus is "Grace, Mercy and Peace from the Lord Jesus Christ our

Saviour". When the servant is expected to adorn his doctrine, it is the "doctrine of God our Saviour". And the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, is said to be "shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour!"

But more than this. Paul is an Apostle holding the truth, which is after godliness, "in hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;" and the believer is reminded that we are "made heirs according to the hope of eternal life". How easy then is our service in this little while, if we have "respect to the recompense of the reward". (Heb. xi. 26.)

But further, if there is this exhortation to holiness in word and deed—"showing all meekness unto all men," what is the consideration which this wise teacher urges on us? "For we ourselves were sometime foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another;" and surely then having no ground on which we can despise any! That we differ now and how? Only because "the kindness and love of God toward man has appeared, and not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He hath saved us".

And lastly, we have one grand supreme encouragement. We are taught to be "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ". The trial now may be severe, there may be much hard and thankless labour, false doctrine may abound, temptations to leave the simplicity which is in Christ may multiply; but the Apostle places before the heart an object, a satisfying object: he presents something which will make amends for all suffering, loss, and unrequited service. There is a bright, glorious, sustaining hope, the coming of Him who gave Himself for us, that He might "redeem us from all iniquity," and that is not all—but also "purify unto Himself a peculiar people zealous of good works".

Such is one of the Epistles for the last days. Amidst the spreading evils of the world in its ensnaring and corrupting power, we all need to be reminded of the vocation wherewith we are called, and of our obligation to walk worthy of it, "even as He walked". Godliness and zeal, soundness in the faith, and the meekness and gentleness of Christ, unblameableness, and care for the purity of the Church; a real and honest fulfilment of all present relative duties, with an ardent

longing and desire to depart and to be with Christ, or a glowing hope of His appearing—these things are all consistent; there is no contradiction or discord in a Christian character moulded on the Word. We must remember whose honour is concerned in our ways. We are the only Epistle of Christ that many men read, and they judge of Him by us. It is possible to walk so as to please God, and possible to walk so that His name shall be glorified in us. Taught by His grace, looking for His appearing, constrained by His love, may we indeed be a peculiar people, zealous of good works: having the loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness, and the feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace, taking the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, and so we shall be able to stand in the evil day, and having done all to stand.

M. W.

Lagasca, 22 4o, dra

Barrio de Salamanca, Madrid.

December 20th, 1876.

DEAR BROTHER IN THE LORD,—You asked me to write you a little of what I have seen of the Lord's work since I came here. As it might be interesting to friends at home, and enable those who remember us in prayer, to do so more intelligently, I shall just mention some incidents which have come under my own immediate notice, or what I have seen when visiting with other sisters here.

In connection with the Orphan Home, there are now seven children (girls), ages varying from 6 to 12 or 13. Bright happy children they are, and it is a joy to see them so, as one thinks of the sad life from which they have been rescued. The great desire of our hearts is, that these dear children may be led to know and trust in the Lord Jesus. Some months ago the dear Misses Wreford here were led to believe that the eldest girl, Nicholasa, was really anxious about her soul, and there was much prayer that God would continue to work in her heart, until she was led to Himself. At our sisters' prayer meeting, about three weeks ago, Mrs Fenn suggested that we should each remember Nicholasa in special prayer every day, and seek opportunities of speaking to her about her soul. I think it was the following day after conversation with Mrs. F. that she professed to believe on the Lord Jesus, and know her sins forgiven. About a week afterwards the second girl, Enriqueta, told Miss W. that she had trusted in the Lord Jesus and was saved. When asked more par-

ticularly about it, she said it was during the reading a few evenings before, and gave a clear and decided testimony. Our hearts have been much cheered by this, and also by seeing these dear girls continuing so happy, and seeking in every little thing to do what is right. We believe they are truly converted to God, and hope that they will yet be bright witnesses for Him in this dark land.

One evening after singing some hymns with the children, I asked which one they liked best? Some said one and some another. Nicholasa came up beside me, and said, "Senorita, I like 'Aun hay lugar,' ('Yet There is Room') because now I know there is room for me in that bright home above." Enriqueta added, "And me too, Senorita." But I said "you are a sinner, are you not? And a sinner cannot dwell in God's home above." N. replied "yes, but our sins are washed away in the blood of Jesus, and we are now *daughters of God*." I thought it such a beautiful reply, and given with readiness; their beaming faces testifying to the joy they had through the knowledge of this glorious truth. That morning, about half-past six, I heard several voices join in singing a hymn. As it was earlier than they generally sing, I wondered what it meant, and listening for a moment afterwards, I heard several of the children read verse about in a chapter, and then one of them engage in prayer. These "lambs of the fold" continue to hold their little prayer meeting still every morning, rising at six, so as to have time for it before the younger children get up. I must mention a little incident which occurred two Sunday mornings ago, when we were going to the meeting at Chamberi. The children were a little in advance of us. A priest passed, and presently we noticed him speaking to the children. Then their terrified little faces looking round at us, then starting off at a run, then stopping, looking round again evidently sore puzzled as to what to do, and, finally hurrying on, while the priest continued to talk in a loud and displeased voice, and we caught the words, "Protestant's unhappy children," &c. We learned afterwards that in passing he had overheard them talking about their books. One child said that she liked her Bible, because "it was all in it". Another said, "she liked her Testament, because she could carry it in her pocket". This attracted the priest's attention, and he inquired what books they were carrying. Then charged them with being Protestants—to which the children replied that they were. And then, to use

their words—"He began to say bad things, and we ran away not to hear him". Pray for these dear girls; that the two who have professed the Lord's name may be kept walking with God, and the others may soon be brought to know and trust in the Lord Jesus as their Saviour.

Then in regard to the work of visiting. We have access to a good number of houses. Near us there are some very wretched cottages, where Miss W. visits every week, and I sometimes accompany her. Several of the women seem really interested, and gladly listen to the Word read and spoken, and have even asked, when they did not see a Testament, "if we had not brought the little book to read to them?" One young woman bought a Testament, and another is giving some "cuartos" every week that she may have one of these books to read for herself. But while they listen and assent to all you say, and appear interested, they are totally ignorant of their true state as lost sinners before God. One longs to hear the cry, "What must I do to be saved?" coming from hearts broken down under a sense of sin and guilt. Only the spirit of God can convince of sin, and we feel our own utter helplessness, and how entirely we are cast upon God in this matter. One afternoon, some weeks since, the Misses W. and I spent in visiting a village (Prosperidad) some distance out of town. We gave away a goodly number of Gospels and tracts (although it was against the law to do so), and did not meet with a single refusal, and in many cases were able to add a few words, or repeat some texts of Scripture. Many looked very much surprised when asked to take a Gospel, and one man asked me how much it cost. Others hesitated, expecting to have to pay something.

A woman we met told us she had a Bible in her house which a lady had given her some three years ago. She afterwards showed me the Bible, and the mark in the place where her husband was reading. But, poor woman, she was quite ignorant of the blessed truths contained in it, as also of the fact that she was a sinner, unprepared to meet God. Another intelligent looking woman said she would not take the book unless it spoke of the Virgin Mary. Miss W. read a verse or two in the 1st of Luke. Then she told us she would take it. A long time we stood with her as, with beaming face and Spanish eloquence, she praised the Virgin Mary. Very much she said I could not understand, but there was no doubt as to her sincerity

in the matter. We could only seek to point her to "Him who bore our sins in His own body on the tree," and can only look to Him to bless the seed scattered, and the word so feebly spoken that day. We have again visited this village, gaining access to one or two more houses, but did not meet with any we had seen on our former visit. We have been several times to the hospital to see the sick ones, and speak or read a little to them. It does one good to see these poor people so grateful for the comfort and quiet they have there. Just one case more I would like to mention. A young woman came to the house twice to know if we would teach her to read, but she could not come to Miss W.'s class on Sunday afternoon, as she was employed at that time.

I thought it was a little service I might undertake, and so have an opportunity of speaking to her of the Lord. Besides, it was an opening to another house, so we went to see her and let her arrange about the time she could come. She lives with her mother, four sisters, and a brother, in a miserable hovel of mud and thatch, through which the rain had been coming very freely. We found the five women in, and, I am sure, spent more than an hour that afternoon reading to them, and pressing upon them their *need* of salvation through the precious blood of Jesus. It was a most happy time, they seemed so deeply interested; but it would take too long to enter into the particulars. Juana and a younger sister promised to come here twice a-week for reading lessons. The first day they did not come, and we felt half afraid we were going to lose them; but the next day Juana arrived, and Miss W. kindly undertook to teach her that day, as I was not able. After a reading lesson in the Bible, explaining what she read, and putting before her that she was a lost sinner, and needed a Saviour, Miss W. asked if they would not speak to God about it. When they knelt down to pray, Juana burst into tears and sobbed like a child, and continued on her knees some time after prayer, her lips moving as if speaking to the Lord herself. She said she had never been on her knees in prayer before, and had never even confessed to a priest. We hope it may be the beginning of a work in her heart. Then she went down and relieved her sister, who had charge of their basket of vegetables, when she, too, came up for her lesson.

I do ask your prayers for the Lord's work here. We need special wisdom in visiting, that we may have the

right word to give to the people; and that we may be stirred up to be more and more in earnest, for precious souls are perishing around us; that we may be "instant in season and out of season," embracing every opportunity of speaking a word for the Master, and so walking in close fellowship and communion with Him, that when we speak, the word may be with power. Pray also for us who are studying the language, that the Lord would help us in acquiring it, that soon our tongues may be loosed, and we may be able to speak freely of His love to the poor perishing Spaniards.

Yours in the Lord Jesus,

ELIZA J. H. BROLLY.

BELIEVERS' MEETINGS.

IF any should enquire what provision Scripture contains in regard to the assembling of the members of the Church for fellowship and edification, he will naturally turn to the xivth chapter of 1st Corinthians for the information he seeks.

There he will find a meeting described, in which the whole Church is gathered, where ministry of several kinds is in exercise, where praise and prayer are not omitted, and he will rightly conclude that this must be the model upon which throughout all its history the Church is intended to associate its members for mutual edification and communion.

If he seek the principle that underlies, and explains what must strike him as a strange proceeding, he must turn back a page or two in his Bible, to chapter xii., and there he will discover it. We are members of a body, and Christ is its head. Every child of God is in it, and the Holy Spirit animates the whole. The members are not independent. The health of all depends upon the ministry of all—one member, however "honourable and comely," cannot edify the body, for it needs the contributions even of the humblest and least esteemed. But no ministry can originate save by the Holy Ghost, "who divideth to every man severally as He wills".

This explains the liberty of chap. xiv., where order is maintained by the unaided influence of the Holy Ghost acting upon a number of persons all submissive to that inward control.

That is, it should have been so. Through magnifying of the tongue-gifts, errors had been made, and the Apostle has to recall them by the word of God, to

which all *that* are spiritual will ever bend. But beyond giving general directions for their guidance, he speaks not. Leaving the conduct of the meetings as hitherto to the Spirit of God, who acts through the saints in proportion as they yield themselves to His power.

But, sad to say, great numbers of those who are the members of this body know nothing of this great leading principle of divine truth, and if brought together nominally upon the model of 1st Cor. xiv., would manifest neither comprehension nor sympathy with such a mode of proceeding

A form of action might, for a time, be maintained among a few, corresponding, externally, with what is in this chapter described, but while the majority are mere curious spectators, unsympathetic or even contemptuous, such an attempt must at once become little better than a form of godliness without the power thereof.

Furthermore, the student will not overlook the significance of the insertion of that beautiful treatise on the supreme excellence of love, between the chapter which unfolds church principles, and that which treats of church practice. He will perceive that unless all that exquisite machinery of chap. xii. be, so to speak, lubricated with the sweet oil of a generous, large-hearted, and mutual charity, which is free from suspicion, censoriousness, and distrust, the harmony of chapter xiv. will soon be disturbed, or will have to be maintained by a dry routine of mere human regulations

THE PRESENT APOSTACY.

But it will certainly be said, if this enlightened recognition of divine principles be necessary for such gatherings being duly carried into effect, how are the masses of true believers to be brought together, taught to love each other as members of this body, and to study God's word for themselves?

It is clearly our duty to recognise all saints as members of the body of Christ, and to make every effort to bring them into fellowship with each other as such, while endeavouring to lead them forward under the ministry of the word of God.

You cannot collect them together on the principles of 1st Cor. xii. which they have not yet learned, nor expect them to enter into the practice shown in chap. xiv., which to them is obsolete and impossible, nor yet to manifest the love of chap. xiii., which they do not feel. Must we give up the attempt in despair, treat the greater number of our brethren with neglect, and shut our-

selves up in corners, with the few whose views may correspond with the truth?

OUR PRESENT RESOURCE.

To this question we can answer decidedly, that such a course is not necessary. It is true that the gathering described in 1st Cor. pre-supposes a church in permanent association and the teachings of the Epistle deal with the necessary details as to who are to be admitted to communion, as to the exercise of discipline in cases of sin, as to the nature of true ministry, and many other essential particulars. And it is true that in all such occasional gatherings of believers from different parts of the world, as of late years have become general, the greater number being in ignorance, if not resistance, of the truth on all these subjects, it would be wholly impossible, or, if attempted, an utter break-down, to constitute such gatherings on the model of 1st Cor. xiv.

Our resource is not far to seek. The Epistles to Timothy and Titus, the address of Paul to the elders of Ephesus, the nature of Christian ministry as taught in all the New Testament, show us that, where collective responsibility and practice fail from any cause, our resource is in the word of God which never fails, and in the ministry of that word on the individual responsibility of those who have received the gift.* That Christians are in sects, and human church systems does not diminish, abrogate, or annul the responsibility of every minister of Christ towards them. It increases that burden of responsibility by so much as their charge is in weakness and ignorance. Nor yet does this apply to the teachers, pastors, and elders of God's church alone, the principle holds good for every child of God, and lays upon us all a solemn duty, by all and every available means, to seek to weaken the separating influence of these human barriers; to establish that communion of saints which always results from the acknowledgment of the great unities of Ep. iv. 4-6; and, however much they may habitually withdraw from one another, to bring all believers whom we can by any means influence, to unite, even for a time, in the sanctifying fellowship of prayer and praise, the meanwhile supplying them with the pure milk of divine truth, every particle of which as it is received strengthens the

* On this subject, I refer the reader to the following passages for his careful study: Acts xx. 28-32.; 1 Tim. iv. 1, 6, 11-16; vi. 13-14; 2nd Tim. iii. 1, 13-17; Titus 1-9; 2nd Peter iii. 1-2; Jude, 17-20.

appetite for more, *i.e.*, for fuller instruction. Thus, then, failing a gathering whose component parts submit to and are "en rapport" with the higher teachings of 1st Cor. xii., xiii., and xiv., we fall back on the more simple and fundamental ordinance of God, applying alike to evangelists and church ministries, *viz.*, individual ministerial responsibility. A few of God's servants desire to minister to the scattered flock of Christ—they call a gathering. They teach, they exhort, they pray, they praise, they lead the saints to know, to love each other, to feel for each other's wants, and rejoice together in each other's joys.

They order the gatherings as they like, and as the Lord has given them wisdom. Just as two evangelists conduct their meetings on their own pre-arranged system, so here do the pastors of the Church. Prayer, the common privilege of all, is, if they judge it wise to do so, thrown open. If any abuse of this liberty occur, the convener of the meeting will withdraw the privilege on the same authority as they gave it—their own responsibility to God.

As, where all are one in heart and knowledge, the gathering is thrown on the leading of the Spirit; so here, where that unity is wanting, the rule remains in the hands of God's servants. Rule, then, must be in everything calling itself divine—the rule of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, in such companies as acknowledge and submit to it. The rule of those to whom the Spirit has given the office in every other gathering. Nothing needs more spirituality, intelligence, and, if I may use the word, sensitiveness, than to truly discern and submissively obey the Spirit's leading in the Church. I may add, without departing from the question, that melancholy experience shows with how much advantage the Christian ruler might take action in many gatherings professedly under the Spirit's control, and where really every man does that which is right in his own eyes. As another has said, "We must beware of substituting the principles of the Commune in our desire to find something better than the presidency of a man." Let it be freely admitted that, as in the State, the household, the family, so in the Church there is a human order that is at the same time divine—and this above all in the Church. If, then, in such gatherings as we are considering, God holds us responsible for the maintenance of His order, is it spirituality or the reverse to decline that duty on the plea of "casting it on the Lord?"

SHOULD THERE BE A PRESIDENT?

In what has already been said, the answer to this and many similar questions is already given. Such a meeting as one in which anybody may speak who likes may be a very good human institution in worldly and political affairs, but it is not scriptural. Even Church meetings gathered wholly in accordance with the truth of 1. Cor. xiv., know no such license. Ministry is limited by gift. And even there the ministry is made subject to the "judgment" of the assembly (v. 29). If, then, such be the divine order even within the Church, who shall deny the need and duty of control in gatherings where, though scripturally constituted, strict church order is not and cannot be observed. And, if it be supposed that the selection of the speaker, or the time at which he should speak, will involve unprepared and unmatured addresses, it is sufficient to say that, before coming up as ministers of God's word to such gatherings, the teaching or exhortation to be given will always be the subject of anxious waiting upon God, and full consideration of the need of His people, on the part of all who desire to have fellowship in the work.

And thus, while every latitude as to details of time and occasion ought to be afforded, the minister "who waits upon His ministry" will never be taken unawares, but be ready to every good word and work.

SHOULD THE TEACHING BE LIMITED?

But while admitting the need and duty of a gracious and wise control in such occasional gatherings, and the necessity for the firm restraint of all utterances of a vain or unprofitable nature, there may be some who will urge that the ministry of all that is admittedly divine truth, should be entirely unfettered. They will say that if persons have entered the meeting who are in association with some humanly constituted denomination, the opportunity is a happy one for setting them right by exposing their error and expounding church truth; applying the like argument to other errors commonly held as truth by Christian people. There need be no question raised of the sincerity of zeal for God of those who argue thus. It is conceded. None who have learned the truth can, in loyalty to God, be satisfied without every wise effort to lead others into the same light and privilege.

The whole question is one of time and place, and suitable occasion. If public teachings on such subjects, at these and similar meetings, are most likely to lead to

the enlightenment of the minds of the saints, then by all means let error be ruthlessly assailed, and truth of the highest reach be expounded. But if it be held that in dealing with errors, conscientiously and firmly believed in as truth, it is necessary to proceed more tenderly and forbearingly than if we dealt with immorality or crime; if it be granted that truth is to be administered according to the strength of the spiritual life, milk to babes, strong meat to them that are of full age; if to win the souls of the saints from evil ways, and not merely to make a barren testimony be our desire; and, if we have not forgotten by what slow degrees, and with what forbearance the gracious Lord led on ourselves to see the error of our cherished views, then we shall all agree that large public gatherings, even though chiefly composed of Christians, are not the best occasions for the introduction of controverted teaching, unless where full notice is given when calling the meeting, that such subjects will be dealt with.

And this course I would very earnestly recommend to my brethren in the Lord, who, with me, feel the need of a very clear testimony to the much resisted truths that specially define the Christian's course in the present evil day.

Let meetings be specially called for the opening up of Scripture, by servants of God held in repute for matured knowledge, upon all such questions as I have intimated—viz., the doctrine and economy of the Church, the ministry of the Word, the Pastoral and Presbyterial offices, the Ordinances of Baptism, and the Supper of the Lord, and all similar important revelations of the Divine will as are nevertheless subjects of very divergent views amongst those who sincerely seek to be obedient to that will.

Let there be no concealment of the special purpose in view. None will then be able to complain that they have been taken by surprise, while all whose conscience is awakened, and whose desire is to go forward in the narrow paths of holiness and truth, will be drawn by the magnetic attraction round the uplifted standard.

And let none of us shirk, in our personal intercourse with the children of God, the duty ever becoming more imperative as the darkness of error thickens towards the final anti-Christian climax, of declaring the whole counsel of God in the whole range of His revelation, as each seems able to bear it.

BELIEVERS' MEETINGS NECESSARY.

But while this is deeply felt, and a greater activity in the ministry of such truths as I have referred to is to be desired, none can fail taking a comprehensive survey of the state of the Christians in Christendom, to see how much need there is for bringing together the scattered fragments of the spiritual house whenever we can, for the simpler foundation work of instruction in the great field of revelation, which includes, with many others, such truths as the following—our life in Christ, our standing in acceptance before God, our heavenly calling, the maintenance of undisturbed personal communion with God, separation from the vanities of the world, and generally the walk on earth of those who are the Lord's, not omitting the calls to individual service, which summon all alike to active labours in the cause of the Lord.

For such ministry as this no better sphere can be found than such occasional gatherings as are sometimes called "Believers' meetings". And it is to be much desired that while those already existing are steadily maintained till the Lord comes, similar efforts should be made in many other towns and districts, so that the beneficial influence may be widely extended.

None can dispute the blessing already given. Let praise unceasing be offered up, while further labours in the same direction attest our grateful purpose to lay hold of still richer and fuller benefits from the God of all grace.

G. F. TRENCH.

ARDFERT, January, 1877.

TO THE EDITOR OF "NORTHERN WITNESS".

IN reference to the letter of R. H. in the December No. of the *Northern Witness*; while agreeing with much that he says, I think it is important, for the truth's sake, to point out that although Instrumental Music has been much abused, it need not on that account be entirely discarded. There may be, and I believe are, circumstances in which it is not merely lawful, but expedient to use it; and the responsibility of the children of God is to use and not abuse such things.

Yours, &c..

J.

NOTE specially that we have ceased business altogether at 2 South Clerk Street, Edinburgh, and that henceforth all business communications are to be addressed to JOHN BAIN, City Bible-House, 40 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. In remitting please send P.O. Order, not stamps. All communications for the Editor to be sent there also, or to be addressed J. R. CALDWELL, 256 Renfrew Street, Glasgow. Letters requiring to be forwarded to Mr. D. Ross, please address 1 Summerhall Square, Edinburgh.

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SHADOWS OF CHRIST. PART VIII.

JOSEPH.

"From thence is the Shepherd of Israel" (Gen. xlix. 24).

IT is impossible to read with opened eyes the story of the life of Joseph without perceiving that "the sufferings of Christ and the glory that should follow" (1 Pet. i. 12) are therein foreshadowed and illustrated with great fulness, and in much variety of detail.

Loved by Israel more than all his children, and clothed in a garment that betokened this love, Joseph, for this very reason, became the object of his brethren's envy and hatred to such an extent that they could not speak peaceably to him.

Moreover, he had dreams of future exaltation and dominion, which he told them—"and they hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words".

Finally, the hour came when, being sent to his brethren by his father, they saw him afar off, and, "even before he came unto them," they conspired against him to kill him.

And does not all this tell of the beloved Son of God, sent in love by the Father to seek the lost sheep of the House of Israel?

"Having yet, therefore, one son—his well beloved—he sent him also last unto them, saying, "They will reverence my son" (Mark xi. 6).

He came adorned in many a lovely grace, clothed with humility and covered with the robe of righteousness, fairer than the sons of men, the very brightness of the glory of God and the express image of His person. Colours are but the component parts of light

displayed as in the rainbow, for the delight of the eye of man.

"God is light," and, as in His glorious inaccessibility, no man hath seen Him or can see Him" (1 Tim. vi. 16), so it hath pleased Him to display His glorious character in the milder glories of the incarnate Son, that man might be attracted and reconciled. But the very beauties that ought to have won the hearts of men were the occasion of their hatred.

Pilate knew, when Jesus was delivered to him, that for envy the nation had done it. Cain-like, they hated Him because their deeds were evil and His were righteous. Like Jacob's sons, they hated Him for His words, and for His prophetic utterances of judgment and of grace. For His love they were His enemies, yet He resisted them not. Though He wept over the guilty city of Jerusalem, yet He comforted Himself with hope of that day of His glory when even the brethren that sold Him shall say, "Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord".

"And it came to pass when Joseph was come unto his brethren that they stripped Joseph out of his coat—his coat of many colours that was on him—and they took him and cast him into a pit; and the pit was empty, there was no water in it, and they sat down to eat bread" (Gen. xxxvii. 23-25). The brethren feasting—and Joseph in the pit! Israel keeping the passover, and Jesus on the cross and in the tomb!

Sold into the hands of the Gentiles—Joseph is next seen in Egypt, and, if his brethren deemed him worthy of the pit, the Gentile soon finds for him a prison.

"His feet they hurt with fetters, he was laid in iron." (Psalm cv. 18). For indeed the Gentile, as well

as the Jew, must needs make away with the Holy One of God. Like Pilate, they wash their hands, yet condemn Him to death. Like the soldiers, they yield Him feigned worship, and bow the knee in mockery. They own Him a king, and spurn His authority. So it has been, so it will be, until the time of His glory arrives.

In one sense, the sufferings of Christ are past for ever. As to His person, He is on the throne of God, crowned with glory and honour. Nevertheless, as to the members of His body mystical, His sufferings continue, and so the Apostle Paul rejoices in the sufferings he endured as "filling up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ" (Col. i. 24). The life and spirit of Christ as manifested in His members on earth are still hated by the world, the more so as its guilty advances are rejected, and its alluring temptations overcome.

But even though allowed to suffer the Gentiles' prison and fetters of iron, Joseph is not forgotten of God. "The Lord was with Joseph, and shewed him mercy, and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison, and that which he did the Lord made it to prosper" (Gen. xxxix. 21-23). And even thus, unseen and unknown by the world at large, are those who possess and exhibit the meek and suffering spirit of Christ given to know that the Lord is with them. They are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed. And thus, whilst bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, the life also of Jesus is made manifest (2 Cor. iv. 8-11).

At the same time, "the secret of the Lord is with those that fear Him"; and Joseph has opportunity of shewing this, inasmuch as he speaks of mercy and of judgment, both concerning individuals and the nation—the former to the chief butler and baker, the latter to Pharaoh himself.

Happy are they who receive their instruction as to the future from the Word and Spirit of Christ. Who knows how to interpret the dreams of men? For some are saying peace and safety, whilst the hearts of others are failing them for fear. Some are satisfied that the world is sailing on to a reign of plenty; while others are filled with forebodings, vague and indefinite indeed, yet enough to mar their joys and disturb their rest. Only he who, through the "more sure word of prophecy," is enlightened as to the course and end of this

world, can rightly understand the mysteries around. To such, all is plain. The revolving years are but the unfolding of a mighty plan, known and spoken of before by Him who is Head over all.

When the Word of the Lord comes, the translation from the prison to the throne is quickly done, and it is not by any freak of human will but because of the personal fitness of Joseph, that he is so exalted and seated in the place of highest authority.

"And Pharaoh said unto his servants, 'Can we find such a man as this is, a man in whom the spirit of God is?'" And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "Forasmuch as God hath shewed thee all this, there is none so discreet and wise as thou art; thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou".

And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, "See I have set thee over all the land of Egypt". And Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it upon Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in vestures of fine linen, and put a gold chain about his neck, and he made him to ride in the second chariot which he had, and they cried before him, "Bow the knee".

In all this the shadow but thinly veils the substance, for how exactly it tells of the exaltation of the Man of Sorrows to the "right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens".

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and hath given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow . . . and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. ii. 10-11). The glory to which God has raised his Son speaks to us of His excellencies in a variety of characters. In the passage just quoted (Phil. ii.), the glory given is the direct reward of His humiliation and voluntary obedience unto death. It is the fulfilment, in its highest form, of that oft-repeated principle of God's dealings—"He that humbleth himself shall be exalted". But in addition to this He is exalted as the *righteous one*. According to the cleanness of His hands and the purity of His heart He is recompensed, therefore is He "the King of Glory," and, as such, the gates of the grave that held Him must be lifted up that He may go free, and the everlasting doors of the house of God—the holy place—must also be lifted up to admit Him

back to the glory which He had before the world was. See Psalm xxiv., and Psalm xviii. 16-24, both of which, as well as many other Scriptures, show that the exaltation of Christ was the evidence of God's delight in Him as the righteous one, and not only as the lowly suffering one. Again, in Acts ii. 32-36, the exaltation of the Lord Jesus is seen as God's reversal of man's sentence—the first act in the great vindication of His Son as the Holy One, which shall issue finally in His enemies being made His footstool. And similarly is He seen in Rev. v., as “the Lamb that was slain”—in the midst of the throne. The one whom man judged to be fit only for a malefactor's death—is heir of all, receives the book, as title-deeds to the inheritance, and is worshipped as worthy to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. For each of these—though worthy of all—He had surrendered while on earth, therefore God, His vindicator, invests Him with all in heaven, and this is owned with one consent by the heavenly host.

Again, in Eph. i., He is glorified as the Head of the Church, and, as Head over all things, to the Church, which is His body; so that His glory is the pledge of her glory, who stands to Him in the double relationship—as shewn in Eph. v.—of body and wife. And herein is another mystery foreshadowed in Joseph's history. For no sooner is He exalted to the place of power and glory, than there is given to Him a wife—not of his own people, but nevertheless of princely descent, by whom, although himself a younger son, he obtains the double or birthright portion among the sons of Israel. Little is said of Asenath: Enough that she was his—all things were hers in him. So all things are ours, for we are Christ's, and Christ is God's. What is there that He shares not with us? “The glory which Thou gavest me I have given them.” His life—His peace—His joy—His spirit—His home—all are ours, and His inheritance—whatever it be, whatever its glories—all are ours, for we are *joint heirs* with Christ.

But yet again is this blessed one seen in Heb. ii., “crowned with glory and honour”. Here it is as the last Adam—the *elect man*—chosen of God from before creation to have dominion over the works of His hands.

Very abundantly does Scripture testify of His glory. May the hearts of the elect be led to ponder more His blessed person and character and work, that they may enter more fully into God's thoughts and estimate of the one whom He has so delighted to honour.

J. R. C.

ISAAC'S DWELLING-PLACES.

THE character and the faith of Isaac never rose so high as his father Abraham's. He was the “friend of God,” and “the father of us all”. Yet was there in Isaac a very lovely exhibition of faith through a long and trying life. From the moment when in youth he yielded himself to his father's will to die on Mount Moriah, to the very end, he lived by faith. A stranger in a strange land, with no protection but the unseen hand of his God, he made no compromise to win the favour of the wild and warlike people around him. It is impossible for us now to estimate such an experience, but we can see in Jacob's life a contrast which brings out in clearness the true character of Isaac's. When Jacob left Laban, he had a plain course before him, and he professed to take it (Gen. xxxi. 3-18), but we find him stopping short near a city of Shechem, building a house, erecting booths, buying land (xxxiii. 17-19) and soon suffering bitterly through his family entanglements with Shechem's tribe. But nothing of the kind is recorded of Isaac. His faith once failed (xxvi. 7), and in the scene where we read of his longing for his son's savoury dish of venison, there was the ease and self-indulgence which too often mark the closing days of men who have been distinguished in life rather by gentleness than energy. But in Scripture we are always permitted to judge of men's characters in the mass, and to see their leading governing principles as God sees them. And thus in Isaac we find an attractive union of meekness and faith. He was a stranger on the earth, living on the promises in the fear of God (xxxii. 53), and his dwelling-places, as they are recorded for our instruction, seem to speak to us of the even tenor of his life.

In Chapter xxiv., we find him first seeing his expected bride when he went out “to meditate in the field at eventide”. It was then that “he lifted up his eyes and saw, and beheld the camels were coming”. He was dwelling then “by the way of the well Lahai-roi”; and so in the next chapter we read, “It came to pass, after the death of Abraham, that God blessed his son Isaac, and Isaac dwelt by the well Lahai-roi”. In the sixteenth chapter, we have the origin of this name. Hagar had fled away from Sarai, “and the angel of the Lord found her by a fountain of water, in the wilderness, by the fountain in the way to Shur”. She was then a helpless fugitive, but the angel spake to her,

and bade her return to her mistress, and gave her the promise of a son. And then "she called the name of the Lord that spake unto her, Thou God seest me; for she said, Have I also here looked after Him that seeth me? Wherefore the well was called Beer-lahai-roi," that is, "the well of Him that liveth and seeth me". Touching words! Poor Hagar had probably in that wilderness yielded to despair, and by the fountain had lain down to die, but a voice aroused her at once to duty and to hope, and she felt the sin of her unbelief. She had forgotten Him who lived and saw her, and in self-reproach she said, "Have I here looked after Him?"

It is a searching question in every circumstance, but above all in every trial of life! If we are at any moment desolate and hopeless, it is because amidst all our plans and contrivances we have "not looked after Him who seeth us". If we yield to temptation, if we walk contrary to God's ways, if we faint in the day of adversity, there is a ready explanation of the failure—we have forgotten Him! Hagar-like, we may flee from rigour and sorrow, and seek in a change of place deliverance; but every step taken in forgetfulness of Him, leads only to greater trial, and happy are we, when, in the discovery of our folly He speaks to us, to recall our wandering hearts to Himself! Hagar had after all to return to her bondage, grievous as it was, for it was her appointed place. She had the choice of that, or death in the wilderness.

Now it was at this famous well where this lesson was learned so effectually by Hagar, that Isaac received his bride, and dwelt after his father died. We may surely infer that the well with such a name was itself significant of blessing. It is at any rate to us, who are reminded by it of "the fountain of living waters," and of Him who said "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink".

O Christ Thou art the fountain,
The deep sweet well of love!

The old believers had many lessons from water, and those who saw the day of Christ afar off may have had many a blessed comfort and joy imparted to their souls in the parched wilderness from the precious gifts of perpetual springs of water, which told them of hidden fountains of supply for all their need.

But in that place there was also the living memory of a gracious scene, and day by day Isaac was reminded of Him who lived and saw him. And truly the life

of a believer now requires the same power to govern it. There is not an act of our lives, not a single day, even if filled up with common duties, in which we do not need to remember the truth which revived the drooping heart of Hagar. The christian's life may appear an enigma to others, as he lives in the sight of Him who is invisible, and walks in obedience to a voice which speaks to the soul in silence. But it is this constant reference to the Unseen One which gives the true tone and character to all the believers' ways. Looking at things seen and temporal, we vary from hour to hour, under the changing influences of the eddies and currents of human motives and affections. But when we walk in the light, before Him who is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him, the sovereign and unerring Lord of the conscience as well as the true object of the heart's desires and love, then we walk safely because uprightly, and however unwise according to the maxims of worldly prudence our path may be, it is a step in the right direction, which never will have to be retraced. "The ways of the Lord are right, and the just shall walk in them." (Hosea xiv. 9.)

Living thus in the light of God's presence implies more than reverence and godly fear in all we do,—more also than a walk apart from the common track of earthly service. It implies and requires communion with God. Isaac went out at Lahai-roi to meditate at eventide. And when there is the open fellowship of an honest walk of holy endeavour in His sight, there must be the constant unburdening of the heart with its cares and its wants, and the adoring retrospect of past mercies and joys. The Psalm which speaks of Him who dwelt under the shadow of the Almighty, speaks not of Him alone. There is a share for the believer in that secure dwelling-place—a strong tower into which the righteous may run and be safe. But this is learned and known not by receiving theories of consecration and uttering rapturous sentiments of devotion; there must be the silent, solitary meditation, and the believing prayer, and the deep sense of weakness and need, till every thought is brought "into captivity to the obedience of faith".

We live in days of ambition and discontent, and there are few like that blessed Shunamite woman who, when the prophet offered to speak for her to the king, said, "I dwell among mine own people". There is now-a-days such a hurrying to and fro, that the sweet

enjoyment of a life in the presence of our God, with the desire for His smile—His favour which is life—is very little known or understood. But there is no life to be compared to it. It is a life quite consistent with earnest zeal, with fruitful labours, with suffering and loss for Christ's sake; but it is not consistent with a thirst for the notice and the praise of men, or with seeking high things for ourselves on the earth. Paul could say, "Herein do I exercise myself to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men". "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." And why? Because He was crucified to the world, and the world was crucified to Him. All its fascination was destroyed, its spell was entirely broken, because its true character and its ultimate judgment and doom had been discovered, and a better portion had been found in the hope of an everlasting inheritance. And so with Isaac. The hopes he lived on in that land of Canaan, as he looked northward and southward, and eastward and westward, and knew it to be all his own in title, though for a season God might be bearing in long-suffering with those who were then defiling it, were unknown to the people around him. And thus in the valley of Gerar ("a lodging place"), he was content to be driven from well to well by the violence of the herdsmen, and to move on without strife or a murmur, till the Lord made room for him. He did not anticipate by any act of his the time of taking possession of the promised land, but lived on in patience and faith, as a sojourner in it. Jacob was not thus consistent like his father. Once he was "a plain man, dwelling in tents," but as family cares increased, and flocks and herds multiplied, Shechem had attractions which were too strong for him, and so he "pierced himself through with many sorrows".

There is a deep instruction in all this for the present time. How many seem to be separated from the world in the days of their early religious profession, and then falling into the snare of prosperity, yield, for the sake of their family, to habits and compliances of one kind and another, till all simplicity is lost. Well might an aged saint, now in glory, often repeat the words, "I want new grace to *end well*".

It is remarkable how God honoured Isaac's faith. Abimelech and Phicol sought to be at peace with him, because they saw plainly that the Lord was with him. But while he responded to their desire for peace, he

sent them away, and God manifestly owned his integrity by blessing him with another precious well of water. Truly the Isaac-life is the wisest of all, and the secret conscience of the worldling knows that too well! Happy is the believer who in sincerity is saying, "There be many who say, who will shew us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon me." A soul that is satisfied wants little of earthly store, and will not risk the loss of its true riches by descending to compete for earthly power. But let faith fail and love decay, and the poor glitter and baubles of the world, its empty form and honour, its comforts and its indulgence, will attract again the once weaned heart, and then, perhaps, all further unction, joy, and fruitfulness, are lost to be regained no more.

Well may the believer take heed to the atmosphere in which he dwells! He must be in *such* places as Lahai-roi and the valley of Gerar, if he would be safe. "Moses esteemed the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt," because he judged by faith. And we in these days must take our choice, and seek either a portion here or a portion hereafter. "He who will be the friend of the world is the enemy of God." Be not conformed to this world, says the Spirit, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind. The time may be at hand in which the reality of our choice, if we have chosen the Lord, will be tested, and we may have to suffer affliction with the people of God. We shall then, perhaps, understand better than we can do now the beauty of Isaac's steadfast course of separation. But lovely and honourable as that was, let us remember that we are called to something higher than even fellowship with Isaac. We are called to the fellowship of God's Son. (1 Cor. i. 9.) He was rejected and despised of men, and we are called to "walk even as He walked," (1 John ii. 6), who was "holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners". And called as we are, not to this fellowship on earth only, but also to His eternal glory (1 Peter v. 10), and to be sharers and partners of His throne, what mighty motives and inducements have we to follow in His steps, and to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God"! Isaac had encouragements and consolations, no doubt, which met the need of his soul, but far greater is our inspiring experience of joys with which a stranger cannot intermeddle, as we hold on in

the heavenly calling, living a life of faith in the Son of God! Woe to us, if, with such blessings and promises, we fall below the standard of men like Isaac, who were strangers to the high privileges of this favoured dispensation!

M. W.

THE SILVER TRUMPETS.

I DESIRE to offer a few thoughts on Numbers x. 1-10, and would remind the reader of what our blessed God has said of such types, viz., "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning that we, through patience and comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope". May we not, from these things written aforetime, gather much which will enable us to bear an Enoch-like testimony before our translation, that we please God? The Lord spake unto Moses, saying, "Make thee two trumpets of silver. Of a whole piece shalt thou make them, that thou mayest use them for the calling of the Assembly, and for the journeying of the camps. And when they shall blow with them, all the assembly shall assemble themselves unto thee at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation."

Let us consider, firstly, what is expressed in the Lord having chosen silver as the material out of which the trumpets were made.

In Exodus xxx. 12-13, we read, "When thou takest the sum of the Children of Israel after their number, then shall every man give a ransom for his soul unto the Lord. . . . This they shall give . . . every one a half shekel, after the shekel of the Sanctuary." Turning to chap. xxxviii. 25, we read, "And the Silver of them that were numbered," &c. Here we see that silver was used for atonement; and in 1 Peter i. 18, where the redemption wherewith we have been redeemed is spoken of, it is contrasted with the silver redemption in Israel. So we conclude, silver as a type shows forth Redemption. We may here enquire why God commanded "Two trumpets of a whole piece to be made".* In v. 2, the use is connected with their being made of a whole piece. "THAT thou mayest use them," &c. Redemption has a two-fold aspect, viz., Death and Resurrection. This we believe to be the reason why the Lord ordered two trumpets for the calling together of the assembly and the journeying of the camps. Observe, further, that although two,

they were of "one piece". These words are similar to those used in speaking of the Mercy-seat and Cherubim in Exodus xxxvii. 7, which Scripture compare.

Accordingly, we find the order in the using of the trumpets is first—call together, then call to journey. Applying this to the present age, we find in the New Testament that the redemption-sound of the trumpets is the same as then. He who redeemed has likewise sounded in the ears of His chosen drawn-out ones, as He placed the memorials of Himself in their hands—the calling together and journeying blast of the redemption trumpets. Consequently, we see the Disciples, in John xx. 19, assembling themselves together. See also verse 26, and again, Acts xx. 7: "And upon the first day of the week, *when* the Disciples came together to break bread. The Holy Ghost called them together to break bread for a remembrance of Him who redeemed them, thus to show forth the Lord's DEATH till He come; while in 2 Cor. iv. 10, we see such remembrance leading to the journeying sound: "Always bearing about in the body the deadness of Jesus, THAT the LIFE also of Jesus might be manifested in our body".

Recurring to Numbers x. 3, we see the responsibility of assembling devolved upon the whole assembly (the New Testament word is Church), when the trumpets had been blown. So is it now. "Not forsaking the assembling of *ourselves* together, as the manner of some is." We are, moreover, told that Israel were called together unto a person, and he was to be found in the God-appointed place. So now the "silver trumpets" call us to a person, and He is found likewise in the God-chosen place (Matt. xviii. 20). "For where two or three are gathered together into my name, *there* am I IN THE MIDST of them." Refer here to John xx. 19-26; compare Luke xxiv, where, in reading of the Disciples' assembling, we are told that Jesus came and stood in the midst. Wherefore the care to tell us where Jesus came unto when they were assembled, but to show us that, called together by the trumpets, they assembled themselves in His name, and the result of their thus assembling was that He appeared in their midst? Compare this important point with 1 Cor. v. 4, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together. Remembering what has been said of other names in chapter 1, we may well enquire whether we are found assembling ourselves at the time, to the person, and in the place the silver sound calls us unto. For in Rev. iii., we see the "true and faithful

* The number—two—of itself bespeaks witness-bearing.

witness" outside, albeit He would be in the midst, therefore He knocks, that if any man hear His voice, and open the door, He may come in to him and sup with him, and he with Him. Will you, therefore, reader, see to it that you, having come out to Him who suffered without the gate that He might sanctify you to Himself—really have Him as come in to you; and thus be like Him, "faithful and true" in your witness bearing. He abideth faithful, and cannot deny Himself. "God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord."

Verse 4—"And if they blow but with one trumpet, then the princes which are heads of the thousands of Israel shall gather themselves unto Thee." Here we find a peculiar use of the trumpets, and are instructed that the assembling of the heads, as distinct from the thousands, of Israel, is designed by Jehovah. I doubt not but that the Spirit means to teach us that, as it was in Israel's day, so should it be now; and, my dear brethren, who are the "guides" to the flock mark well. The writer has seen folly wrought by this assembling in its distinctiveness being neglected. Novices and sisters, for example, have no place in such assemblings. Now, in many places where God-gathered assemblies are found, no such distinct meetings are ever convened. Consequently a democratic, all-alike spirit is fostered, and, as a sister once answered when asked, "Who are the 'chief men' among the brethren where you come from?" "Oh, we have no chief men; we are all alike!" Now it is true that to God-ward we are all alike; yet, to man-ward, we are all different. Let me say a little more on this important point. It appears to me the "heads" alone should be assembled in matters of "receiving" (Acts ix. 26-28), or of "doctrine" (Acts xv. 1-21), or for special counsel and warning (Acts xx. 17-36).

Of course "heads" should be known, obeyed, remembered, and submitted unto; and, should elders err, they are first to be entreated, not rebuked. Moreover, carefulness is also to be exercised in receiving accusations against such, and, should they sin, they are to be convicted before all. I suppose this is to prevent factions, also to be a cause of fear to others. No partiality is to be practised, neither to elders nor any man. We are called to no haste, and no sloth, in such matters, but to keep ourselves pure. A leader of a certain party once said, in a case of discipline, towards a leading brother in the number—"The testimony of the

Church can go on without dealing with it": That is, we can keep together as one, and not deal with this. I do not mean that "heads" are to over-ride or to lord it over God's heritage. But this I mean: In their assembling themselves, Church matters are to be so prepared that the assembly will just have all they are asked to endorse so evidently of God, that it will please the whole Church, with the "heads," to carry out the business on hand.

It is to be feared that many are put out of their place by failure in this. Further, elders are to take the oversight, not to be voted, driven, or dragged into the good work. But, having the desire for "overseeing work," they should commend themselves to every man's conscience by their manner of life, and prove their own work, which work should command the high esteem of those among whom they labour.

Verses 5 and 6 give yet another special use of the trumpets. "When ye blow an alarm, then the camps that lie on the east parts shall go forward." There are times when "an alarm" needs to be blown unto the "thousands of Israel," and it is good when every one, in his own place, knows to take the "go forward" step. For example: one in an assembly is overtaken in a fault. The spiritual are those who should answer to the alarm, and go forward in the spirit of meekness to restore. The camps on the East, South, West, and North were only to move in answer to "an alarm for *their* journey". This precision of action is worthy of careful investigation, then prayerful and humble practice.

Verse 9—"And if ye go to war in your land against the enemy that oppresseth you, then ye shall blow an alarm with the trumpets; and ye shall be remembered before Jehovah, your God, and ye shall be saved from your enemies." From these words we may learn that there is no enemy in our land (position) who oppresseth us, but, by sounding forth our redemption, we may be remembered and saved from our enemies. O, that we so knew this that we would never war after the flesh, but in the mightiness of the weapons of our warfare to God, and, through God, we would pull down strongholds, cast down imaginations and every high thing (Eph. vi. 12) that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

Verse 10—"Also in the day of your gladness, and in your solemn days, and in the beginning of your months,

ye shall blow with the trumpets over your burnt-offerings ; and over the sacrifice of your peace-offerings, that they may be to you for a memorial before your God. I am Jehovah your God." The order here is searching. "In the day of your gladness blow with the trumpets." Is any merry, let him sing psalms ! that is, praise God. How often it is when Christians are experiencing much of the Lord's goodness, they forget the Lord who thus hath blessed them ; and, though He addeth no sorrow with His blessing, how often we do so ourselves ! There is nothing more painful to the spiritual, or withering to the soul, than a full heart lifted up, and a consequent sounding of evil gossiping, very filthiness, foolish talking and jesting, which are not convenient, forgetting that it is a shame even to speak of things done by some in secret. To conduct one's self aright in these solemn days, it needs that we be acquainted with the use of the trumpets in the day of gladness. For example : what an alteration in many a Christian's ways, speech, songs, and manner of life at home and abroad a solemn day makes. Alas ! what sorrowing as those who have no hope ! What unusual apparent devoutness—so irksome, and yet so visible to the spiritual ? Daniel in the hour of solemnity did as aforetime. Why not we ? Well might the Psalmist exclaim, "Blessed the people *that know* the joyful (trumpet) sound : they shall walk, O Lord, in the light of thy countenance. In **THY NAME** shall they rejoice all the day, and in thy righteousness shall they be exalted" (Psalm lxxxix. 15-16). J. B.

PASTORS.

Acts xx. 28-38.

IN this scripture, we have the last interview of Paul with those who had oversight at Ephesus.

He solemnly charges them to feed or shepherd the flock of God, which He had bought with His own blood, and according to I. Peter v., while the younger are by no means excluded (as I. Timothy iv. 12 indicates), there rests on the elder brethren in all assemblies this deep and solemn responsibility—"to *take* the oversight, not by constraint, but willingly ; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind".

The first requisite for a shepherd is, that he enter into *God's* estimate of those who are His own.

Each is bought with His own blood.

To each elder He says—"Lovest thou *me* ? feed my

lambs, feed my *sheep*, and thereby give practical proof of the love thou hast to *me*.

May the love of Christ more and more constrain us to this work of faith and labour of love.

In this shepherding of the flock, two ideas are involved. "When He putteth forth His sheep, *He goeth before them*." "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, He leadeth me beside the still waters." Thus the pattern shepherd *goes before* to lead the sheep, and He also charges Himself *with finding food and refreshment for them*.

So Paul says in Phil. iii. 17—"Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them who walk so as ye have us for an example," agreeing with I. Peter v., "being examples to the flock".

On the other hand, he charges to mark those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and (not to follow, but to) avoid them, for such are the hireling shepherds who serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly ; and, "by *good words* and fair speeches deceive the simple" (Rom. xvi. 17-18).

Of these in verse 29th of our chapter, Paul warns—that, after his departure, grievous wolves would enter in, not sparing the flock—according to the picture in Ezekiel xxxiv., the result of their presence being to scatter the sheep (verse 5), by drawing them after themselves (Acts xx. 30).

Of these we have many warnings in scripture, as in Colossians ii. 8, where we have a wolf seeking to rob God's saints through philosophy, vain deceit, and the traditions of men. That is, by the food of the natural man, seeking to entice the sheep from Christ their true meat (John vi. 55). See also Colossians ii. 16-18.

Likewise in II. Peter ii. are we warned of false teachers bringing in damnable heresies, and in verse 2 we find many following *them* instead of Christ ; and the result is that the way of truth—that is the path the true shepherd took—is evil spoken of ; their character in verse 3 agreeing with Ezekiel xxxiv. 8, in that, through covetousness (the opposite of Acts xx. 33-34-35), they, with *moulded words* (see Greek), that is the word of God fitted into humanly orthodox moulds, make merchandise of those whom they ought to feed, and thus draw disciples after themselves and *their* doctrines, instead of after Christ and the doctrine which is according to godliness.

We do well to note verse 30, for it was from

amongst themselves (those who in verse 37 "wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him") that these men were to arise, so that no present grace or present position is a guarantee of security, even to one who now has grace to be faithful.

Let us, therefore, heed the warning in verse 31—to *watch*—for it was while men slept (Matt. xiii. 25) that the enemy sowed the tares, and even now he can mar the beauty of the choicest assembly, if the overseers cease to *watch* and pray.

Let us beware of holding men's persons in admiration because of advantage, instead of looking at the sheep in the comeliness of Christ alone, whether it be the amiable gentle sister, or the old complaining one.

For of old, as in Jude 15, these men, holding men's persons in admiration because of the advantage they would get from their patronage, succeeded in introducing the tares into the Church of God. See Jude 2, and Rev. ii. 14 and James iv. 4.

Let us also note Paul's method of dealing with such, and never let us speak of them unless, in the spirit of our minds, we are prepared to warn *every one* with *tears*, and, while hard unfeeling words may displease the Lord, our tears will be kept in his bottle, for they will be the tears of those who sigh and cry at the abomination, in sympathy with the Lord (Rev. ii. 6).

And, lastly, how many loose and vain handlings of God's word would cease could we remember Paul's last words—"I commend you to *God* and the word of His grace." That word is two-edged, and if we have to do with God first, and let it lay bare *in ourselves* all we wish it to lay bare in our *brother*, we shall be labourers more after the pattern of II. Timothy ii. 24-26.

T. C.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST.

JOHN XIV. 3 ; 2 COR. V. 9-10 ; COL. III. 4.

THERE are many more Scriptures, but I just quote these three now, to put the subject in its place—first (John xiv. 3), "received to Him"; second (2 Cor. v. 9), "before the judgment seat of Christ"; third (Col. iii. 4), coming down *with Him*. I shall just remark a moment on the first passage. Observe, that He Himself will do the first thing. "*I will come again and receive you unto Myself.*" The Lord Jesus has pledged Himself to you thus: Two things together, not "I'll come again," and have you before the judgment seat; but He is first Bridegroom and then judge of His people. His primary

object is to marry His Bride, then afterwards to present her "faultless"—not only to Himself, but to His Father *in Him*. (See 2 Cor. iv. 14.) I think it implies a presentation to the Father. "Knowing, that He which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you." In other words, when the Son of God comes, we shall understand the fulness of His grace, in not only saving us from Hell, but bringing us right up to God. He not only bridged the gulf, but, bridged surely as big a gulf, in carrying us up into the very bosom of God, where no angel ever reached. He will *begin* by taking us right up to God, for the judgment will begin where grace ends. The work of Christ lifts up a multitude of sinners, and makes them fit objects for the presence of God—for ever.

Now, don't think if I show, that *works* will come on the carpet, that I am losing sight of the grace of God, or the value of the blood of Christ. A Christian has two positions, a son and a servant. Through Christ, he is a son—then Christ will look at his work of service. Now, as regards our position before God, *no work* can come in, nothing but the precious work of Christ, which cannot be added to by any work *whatever*. Nevertheless, we must all be *manifested* at the judgment seat of Christ. The question is, first—What will the Lord judge? And what is *meant* by things done in the body? Some say, every thing every one has done, will come on the carpet—others say, nothing but what is good, and if you quote, "or bad," then, what means "I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgression"? others again say, only our work since we believed. Now, I think we should look this text fairly in the face, and observe its meaning. I would first notice the words of this pattern servant of God—"follow Me, as I follow Christ". The question is, whether we can walk in integrity and uprightness before Him. (Look at 1 Cor. xi. 31)—"For if we would judge (or scrutinize) ourselves, we should not be judged," *i.e.*, He will have nothing to talk to us about. How are we to do this? Turn to John iii. 19, and following verses—"And this is the judgment, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil, for, every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest (scrutinizing them) "the light should make manifest what they are." And I would ask you to notice that word in Phil., "that ye might be sincere and without offence"—that is, "judged in the sunlight." Then in reference to your walking in God's light, see 1 John—"If we say we have companionship with Him"—if we know where the blood has *put* us—let us walk in the light, scrutinizing our actions, criticizing our habits, scrutinizing our ways, and making confession of sin. We judge ourselves, for either YOU must judge your life, or THE LORD will. If you *do*, you will see plenty of failure, at least I do.

Then there is not merely confessing, but putting away. "He that confesseth and forsaketh" in the *Old Testament*, not in the *New*. You cannot go on confessing, and keeping the sin, or else you will go on with the sin, and give up the confession. No need for the judgment seat if *you* have judged it.

We understand the *New Testament* to be a book of principles rather than detail, and those principles will be a clue to our path in every detail. It may be, you cannot find a text for something very wrong, as you do in the *Old Testament*. But in the *New*, we are put on tiptoe, on the quivive in every particular. See *Isaiah xi. 3, 4*. "The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him," then see what the spirit does—makes Him "of quick scent" (margin). With the spirit of God resting on him, he could see at a glance—at once. When a knock comes to the door, the faithful dog has not to be urged to go when the intruder is there. The Son of God made him of *quick scent*, and he judged things in God's light. "Herein do I exercise myself," if we would scrutinise ourselves—judge ourselves, as in *His light*, the Lord will have the less to talk to us about when He comes. Is it possible believers can walk, so as to please him well? (See *2 Peter iii. 14*.) "Wherefore beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless." It cannot refer to the judgment on the *Cross*, for the word is, "*be diligent that ye be found of Him in peace*." You see that word "*diligent*." As a Son accepted, perfect, made the righteousness of God in Christ, then, keep in God's light, and every time you fail—judge it, confess it, forsake it, and let there be *nothing* on your conscience, as the Apostle says, "I am not conscious of anything." (*1 Cor. iv. 4*.)

Now turn to (*Mat. xvi. 27*) "For the Son of Man shall come in the glory of His Father, and then shall He reward every man according to his *practice*, according to his *drift*," same words in *2 Cor. v*. All shall be manifested that every one may receive things *practised* in the body, but His judgment will be so gentle and delicate. One boasted long ago "though all men forsake Thee yet will not I". And what do we find? Simon, do you love Me? Do you love Me, Simon? three times repeated, very tender and delicate reference to his boasting "though all men forsake Thee yet will not I," but Simon, lovest thou Me *more than these*? there was the judgment seat in anticipation. Christ judged Simon, "Simon, do you love Me," were you right in crowing over the others? No, Lord, I cannot say "*more than these*,"—there was the gentle and beautiful way of making him eat his words. Now, I am trying to make things *very plain*, I am the righteousness of God in Christ, my sins were judged on the *Cross*, but I am to walk in His light, day by day. I heard an aged Saint say years ago, and I never forgot it, "Lord, help me to love Thy judgment

seat," not merely to love our God and His grace, but to seek to *please him well* in all things. Now, there are some who don't scrutinise themselves, and *1 Cor. xi*. shews how the Lord may do it for them; I am only speaking to those who are His; how they are to seek to be washed by the Word every day of their lives.

Now, as we judge ourselves in His light, there will be nothing terrible for us—for what will there be for Him to judge? All our sins He knew before He set His love upon us, and it is when we have confessed it, we have had it out with Him. "Wherefore we labour that whether present or absent, we may please Him well". Oh, think of the praise of God, what a grand thing it will be; but when believers wont judge themselves, it's an awful thing, and there are hundreds of Christians like this. They will read a nice book or the *Psalms*, but they will not read anything that shows them their wrong position. Beloved, let us labour to please Him well—to be of quick scent like the dog, "*that's sin*". Then, there is another word still more solemn, and that is, according as you have failed to judge yourself, and walk as He would have you walk, you will get rebuked. Look at *Eph. vi. 8*, but mind, I am going to give you the other side also. Look at the other side, *Col. iii.*, last two verses, "He that doeth *wrong*"—in *Eph.*, "He that doeth *good*". Wrong, will be *pronounced wrong*. Can he be punished? (See *II John 8*.) I am trying to give you a *deal* of Scripture, and I am not conscious that I am wresting it in the least degree, for I am very near the judgment seat, and I would not be a faithful minister of Christ if I gave you only the one side. We are crowned, but not so bright our position in the kingdom, not such glory. In the *family* nothing can touch, but in the kingdom different, and mind, the rewards are for ever. Like the Royal family, one may be Captain in the Navy, another Field-Marshal, yet all children because born of the Queen. All complete in Christ as to our *standing*, but in the kingdom rewards, differing. I fear I dwell too much on the privileges and too little on the responsibility. Some say three different crowns, others say seven. Beloved, so run, that ye may obtain.

NOTES OF THE ABERDEEN CONFERENCE,

25TH, 26TH, AND 27TH JANUARY, 1877.

THESE conference meetings were held, as intimated in our January number, and since then we have heard that the Christians in Aberdeen and district have been greatly cheered and blessed, and ask fellow-saints to join in praising the Lord for His goodness.

The forenoon meeting on the Thursday was spent in prayer and confession, with thanksgiving and praise. In the afternoon, Mr. J. Scott read the following Scrip-

tures, Ex. xii. 26; Deut. vi. 6-12, xi. 18, which no doubt struck the key-note of the address that followed by Mr. Henry Dyer, on the responsibility of believing parents towards their households, in view of the speedy return of the Lord. No Christian parent could truly desire the coming of the Lord, and remain careless of his household's conversion.

There are three types of salvation in Scripture, all of which shew it to be the will of the Lord that the household be included—Noah and his house saved in the ark; the Israelite and his household sheltered under the blood-sprinkled lintel; and Rahab and her father's house preserved under cover of the scarlet line; Abraham and his household, a bright example of the mind of God, as it is written, "For I know him that he will command his children, and his household after him" (Gen. xviii. 19); Lot and his family, a signal warning to Christian parents.

In the evening, after prayer and praise, Mr. Charles Morton read the following Scriptures, Deut. vi. 6-9, Col. iii. 16, John vii. 37—shewing from these three spheres of usefulness for the Christian, the family, the saints, and the world; and, in connection with each one, our communion with God the first thing, in order to render service effectual. Thus, in Deut. vi., the Word is to be in the heart first, and then taught to the children. In Col. iii., the Word of Christ must first dwell richly in the believer ere he can teach and admonish others; and, in John vii., there is first the drinking of Christ—the living water—and then its outflowing to the world.

So it is written of Abraham, first that he should be blessed himself, and then made a blessing to others. This is God's way: God's work begins at the heart. "My son, give me thine heart." If a man has nothing in his pocket, he has nothing to give away. Self must first be blessed, and then others. Is. lviii. 11 shews the same order: first like a watered garden, and then a spring of water whose waters fail not. So in Col. i. 10, there is *walk*, but, in verse 9, there is first the inward filling. In Eph. there are the details of this walk: "walk worthy of the vocation," "walk in love," walk circumspectly," "walk as children of light," &c., but all must proceed from the inward grace of chapter iii. 17-20. Again, in Col. i. 28, there is the preaching of the warning and other teaching; but whether we look at Paul in Acts xx. 24, or in 2 Tim. iv. 6-7, it is all accomplished, as in Col. i. 29, "according to his work-

ing who worketh in me mightily". The outward results were seen, but the inward working was hid from the eye of man.

The same principle is seen in Rom. xii., a chapter which treats of service—connecting all service with mercies received, and placing before all service our acknowledgment of God's claims upon us.

Mr. Dyer next spoke, taking for his subject Numbers ix., suggested by several of the hymns which had been sung, such as

"Guide us, O thou great Jehovah,
Pilgrims through this barren land."

Thus our songs of praise become not only incense ascending up to God, but instruction to our own souls.

In this chapter, the people of God are seen as a pilgrim people, therefore are they also seen as a guided people; for who so greatly need guidance as those who are journeying? A single wrong turning—a divergence from the right way by a very small point might lead entirely astray. But what is specially noticeable in this chapter is the connection between the finding and the leading of Israel.

The Shepherd that *bled* is the Shepherd that *fed* and the Shepherd that *led*. This chapter opens with the keeping of the Passover in its appointed season, and according to all the ceremonies thereof. And if, owing to the temporary defilement of some, it was to be observed in the second month, it was still to be kept according to all the ordinances thereof. It was none the less holy because only a few were observing it. Not a bone was to be broken. How difficult to eat up a whole lamb and not break a single bone! What careful, reverent handling would it require! Sometimes, in a meeting of 150 or 200, the bread is broken and the cup passed round in a very short space of time—so quickly that one asks, has it been done with due reverence and discernment of the Lord's body? Verse 14 gives welcome to the stranger; but he must keep it according to the same ordinances as Israel. Verse 15 introduces a new subject, viz., the guidance of the cloud. The will being subdued and broken down under the secret feasting on the lamb, and in remembrance of the great deliverance from judgment in Egypt, the people of God are now willing to be led. The saints who come together to worship ought thus to go forth as individuals with subject wills, to seek guidance in everything—in the various walks of individual life, as well as in their united service and testimony—ever remem-

bring that the Shepherd who feeds is the Shepherd who leads.

What a guidance ! The camp could not have been less than 12 square miles, but the cloud formed a canopy of shade by day and of fire by night, so that each individual Israelite could see the moment the pillar moved. Each was guided, for each was fed. They who did not break a bone did not miss their way. God has given two things for our guidance—His Word and His Spirit. (See Acts xx. 32). It is not for us to have a plan or a will apart from God. So, at the Lord's Supper, some say let it be all worship and no ministry ; others desire much ministry—but God has given no plan, but His Spirit will guide, and every jot and tittle of our instruction must be from God's own book. Not what venerable forefathers have said or done, but what is the present leading of the Lord to me.

Israel was the only people who could journey by night as well as by day (See Deut. i. 33.) It was a canopy as well as a pillar (See Ps. cv. 39.) So that of Israel's camp, as well as of the heavenly city, it could be said "there was no night there".

They slept secure under the protection of that light, and served under the shade of that cloud.

"The light of His countenance shineth so bright,
That on earth, as in heaven, there need be no night."

There was no candle in the heavenly city, and there was no candle inside the vail. The presence of God is enough. The Lord God is a sun and shield.

Now turn to chapter x, and see the warning we get. Did Moses so soon forget that the Lord was pledged to guide them, that he must needs ask Hobab to go with them, and to be to them "instead of eyes"? How little he understood the care of God for them in this respect, for, immediately after, we read—"and the ark of the Covenant of the Lord went before them in the three days' journey to search out a resting place for them". Thus many saints are looking to leading brethren for guidance rather than to the Lord. They say, if so-and-so left us, what should we do? But what do we need more than the Ark and the pillar? The base of that pillar was the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat. Thus it is shewn that our guidance of the Spirit is on the basis of redemption. It was not called the Ark of Moses, but the Ark of the Covenant. Surely it was more to Israel than Hobab could have been?

The forenoon meeting, Friday 26th, was first addressed by Mr. Geo. Adam. He read John i. 36 ; Heb. ii. 8 9, xii. 1, xiii. 12. Jesus was a pilgrim here—He kept the

path having the right object ever before His eye. "I have set the Lord always before me." So we need not only the sure word of prophecy, but also to have our eye and heart steadfastly fixed on Christ. Phil. iii. 7 gives us the inward exercise of Paul's soul. Paul had great revelations, and with them a thorn in the flesh—but these were not the secret of his success. Many know much, while their hearts are not right with God. But Paul's whole soul was *Christ-ward*.

If we would go on in his steps, we must drink deep into experimental knowledge of the fellowship of Christ.

In 2 Peter i. 2-3, we see that this personal acquaintance with Christ is the safeguard against the perilous times spoken of in this Epistle. Many talk lightly of "perilous times," not half alive to the reality of the danger. See the warning and the safeguard in 2 Pet. iii. 17-18. "BEWARE." "GROW." "Knowledge puffeth up." Mere doctrinal knowledge will not keep us right. What we need is deeper experimental knowledge of Christ Himself. So, in Col. i. 9-10, we have knowledge twice mentioned. First, knowledge of His will, but also knowledge of Himself.

Mr. J. R. Caldwell next spoke on the collective responsibilities of believers as members of the body of Christ. We have been led forth by God from bondage to human authority and human tradition, to take our stand in subjection to the Lord Jesus Christ, where there is no rule and no appeal but the Word of God. He once had been a member of an Independent Church, professing to own no standard but the Word of God, and no authority but Christ's. He ventured to suggest to "the minister" that others beside himself might have liberty to take part in the meetings, also to speak of infant sprinkling as having no place in Scripture, and other matters to which his mind was opening up as he searched the Scriptures. The answer was "it would never do to alter the Constitution of the Church". No appeal was allowed to the Word of God. God's statute book was ignored. What course was open but to go forth unto Jesus, owning His authority, and committing ourselves to His care.

Gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus, our highest privilege is to worship God. In Rev. i. 5-6, we see John a lonely exile in Patmos, breaking forth in adoring worship, praising the Lord as an *individual*. This is our privilege at all times and in all places. And be it remembered, many true children of God, who see not with us as to the order of God's assembly, and

who are mixed up in sectarian positions, which, as assemblies, God cannot own, for they may be by far the greater part unbelievers, may nevertheless offer to God *as individuals* in the secret of their souls, more real and acceptable praise and worship, than very many who have seen the evil of such associations.

Let us not therefore be puffed up, our position may be right, and our condition far wrong, the greater our light the deeper our responsibility.

But God desires of us something further than this individual worship. He would gather us together into assemblies to worship Him in a collective capacity; each assembly being a little anticipation of the great gathering when the Lord comes, and all His saints are gathered to Him inside the veil.

In the Book of Revelation God is worshipped in three different characters. In Chap. iv. He is worshipped as the God of *Creation*, in chap. v. as the God of *Redemption*, and in chap. xix. as the God of *Judgment*.

As to Creation, whilst we know and own God as Creator, we are not taught by the Spirit of Christ that this is to form the character of our present worship. And as to judgment, it would be quite out of all character in the present dispensation of grace to worship Him in this character, although when the day of His vengeance at last arrives, we shall doubtless glorify Him in this capacity also. The character of worship in this age is specially Redemption worship. Hence John, the exile in Patmos, though he bears the worship of the xth and xixth chaps., does not take up these and make them his own, but at once his whole soul responds to the Redemption worship of chap. v., and he sings, "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us Kings and Priests unto God and His Father, to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

And one very special characteristic of our worship in this age, is its nearness. The law set bounds about the mountain of God's presence—the people worshipped afar off. Even Moses must draw near as a servant with feet unshod.

How different now—like the prodigal son received back from the far country. He had the shoes on his feet, and the ring on his hand—he was at the Father's table as a son—he was at home there in liberty and rest.

Thus God associates with our worship a table and a

feast, and brings us more to Himself, giving us not the spirit of bondage, but the Spirit of Sonship whereby we say, Abba Father.

The order of this collective worship of the assembly of God is given in 1 Cor. xiv., and strange to say this chapter, so much ignored by Christians generally, is one in which the remarkable expression occurs, "If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord". In this chapter four exercises are named—there is prophesying or speaking to the saints to edification, to exhortation, and to comfort. This is not now done through prophets, but through the more ordinary ministry of the word by teachers or exhorters. Then there is prayer, giving of thanks, and singing. Of these four the order of worship is composed. The end of all is the edification of all. In the exercise of these various ministries no rule is given, except that certain wise and reasonable limitations are made. The present indwelling Spirit of God will guide, not by impulse, which might often be at fault, but through a duly exercised spiritual understanding, what is fitting and what is not, always and in all things the Word of God being the only rule, and Christ the acknowledged Lord.

Thus the assembly will be no place for mere carnal license. Let us beware lest in our recoil from the bondage of humanly devised order, we miss the divine order; lest in our rejection of human ministry, we get something else than divine ministry. To speak what is not of God and not to edification, and to say that this is the ministry of the Spirit of God, is little short of blasphemy.

Last night we were looking at the feeding and the leading of Israel in Num. ix., and at the failure of Moses, and the guidance of Jehovah in the end of chap. x. But what intervenes is concerning the *order* of the Camp. God will have all things done decently and in order, not in man's order which in God's sight is confusion, but in God's order, which alas to poor ignorant man, seems often to be confusion.

In chap. x. we see the cloud lingering before leading Israel on their first journey, till the second month and the twentieth day of the month, just until in its appointed season, the Passover and the feast of unleavened bread had been kept by the few defiled ones. God often waits, but He never delays, and thus he

would teach us the lesson to tarry one for another. When we come together on the first day of the week to break bread, we ought indeed all to be up to the worshipping point, we ought to come *full*, but it is not always so, and we must deal with things as they *are*, and not as they ought to be. Some come overcharged with care, and anxiety, and downcast, and for such it may be a great help to have some loving ministry of the Word, leading to a full realization of the love of Christ and the value of His finished work, *before* the observing of the supper. Such may thus be helped to discern the Lord's body, so that they may truly be worshippers. It is therefore wrong to make any rule as to whether the breaking of bread should be at the beginning, or the middle, or towards the close of the meeting. Let it be understood that this is the object for which we assemble to "Do this in remembrance of Him," and let all be led together, the strong tarrying for and helping the weak, into a real and not a merely formal remembrance of the death of the Lord Jesus.

Notes of the Aberdeen Conference will be continued God willing in our next.

THE PORTION

OF

THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

FRUITFUL of blessing to the soul of the believer are those portions of God's Word where Christ in His various perfections is seen under type and figure.

Many are the relationships in which He stands to His saints; therefore many are the types under which He is represented, and those who know Him might, through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, be able to apprehend something of the divine fulness of which in Him they are made partakers.

Of this character is Exod. xl. 17-32, where in a sevenfold picture we see Christ, presented as the tabernacle or dwelling-place in which God meets and communes with a people, separated and anointed for His service.

In ver. 12-16, there is an account of the consecration of the priesthood for this service, commencing with washing, and ending with anointing. The same order as in Rev. i. 5, 6.

Thus perfected for the presence of God, they enter to abide and serve in that glorious typical sanctuary of which the Lord had said, "Let them make me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them".—(Ex. xxv. 8.)

The consecration was entirely accomplished at the "door of the tabernacle," Exod. xxix. 4-11. So the sinner who comes to Jesus as "the door," is by the "one offering" "perfected for ever"—"washed, sanctified, justified"; therefore he has a right to "enter in," and learn the fulness of the provisions of the grace of God in Jesus, the true tabernacle.

None but the priests thus separated to God could behold more than the outer covering of the tabernacle.

This was of badgers' skins, Exod. xxvi. 14.

Of these there is a sevenfold mention in Num. iv., and another solitary allusion in Ezek. xvi. 10; whence it may be gathered that endurance of wear and tear, and not beauty, was the reason of the selection of this material for the outer covering.

Thus with Jesus—Immanuel—God's dwelling-place with us. In the eye of the unbeliever, He has no beauty, neither form nor comeliness, Isa. liii. 2. Viewed from without, He was but a man, the son of Joseph the carpenter, a wilderness stranger, with no resting-place on earth.

Viewed from *within*, how different the appearance of this tent of glory! The boards of Shittim (incorruptible) wood overlaid with gold, their sockets of silver, the pillars of the vail with their golden capitols, the covering of blue and purple and scarlet and fine twined linen, with its curious cherubic device, woven by the wisdom of the Spirit of God; all this met the eye of the priest on his first entrance into that wondrous "worldly sanctuary".

So to those that are "in Christ". (Unique expression known only to faith.) They have entered within the door—within the vail—they see divinity like the overlaid gold stamped upon that incorruptible flesh.

They see the unapproachable purity of that righteousness of the Holy One typified in the fine twined linen, and beauties as of rainbow light shining in every action, from the heavenly grace typified by the blue, to the pure sympathies of human flesh and blood typified by the scarlet.

They behold glories, not of man's device, but conceived by the wisdom of God. Nor does this heavenly fabric rest on this blighted earth—sockets of silver atonement money form the foundation of every board.

So does the whole fabric of the new creation rest on the foundation of atonement by the precious blood of Jesus shed on Calvary.

In view of *that*, He tabernacled here, eating and

drinking, walking and conversing with sinners; and on the ground of the same blood, the Holy Spirit, without tarnishing His perfect holiness, makes our vile bodies His temple.

Mention is made of "pillars and bars". Both always in the Word indicative of strength. The one to bear pressure from above, the other from without.

Does not this attract our hearts to the divine strength of the Son of Man, who endured, when none else could, the rending of that precious vail of spotless flesh upon the cross, from top to bottom, and who also from first to last withstood unmoved all the fierce blasts of temptation, that Satan, with all his power and subtlety, let loose against Him.

Glorious sanctuary—Immanuel—God manifest in the flesh! "Blessed is the man whom Thou chooseth and causest to approach unto Thee"; "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 inquire in His temple".

How many lines of thought are thus opened up to us in few words, concerning Christ, in whose glorious person dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Very blessed are these inquiries in His temple. They who know the sweetness of such food care not for the husks of earth's philosophies. When the power and glory of the Lord are seen in the sanctuary, the soul is satisfied as with marrow and fatness, and praise bursts forth from joyful lips.

Following the divinely perfect order before us, the first object *within* is the ark and the mercy-seat.

1. THE MERCY-SEAT. In Rom. iii. 25, the word "propitiation" is literally mercy-seat, the same as in Heb. ix. 4. Thus we are left in no doubt as to this being another picture of Christ.

As God said to Moses, "there will I meet with thee and commune with thee". Even so now in Christ, God not only meets with us, but *communes* with us.

The mercy-seat was the place of the unbroken law, and of the sprinkled blood. Such is Jesus,—the one in whom God is declared to be righteous; yea, gloriously righteous, even when receiving, pardoning, and cleansing the sinner, and chastening, restoring, and communing with the falling, sinning, ignorant, and unruly child.

(To be continued.)

JESUS.

ALTOGETHER lovely, Jesus, Lord, art Thou,
God beholds Thy beauty, we adoring bow,
Fairer than all beings, only glorious Lord,
Message of the Father! Everlasting Word!

Splendour of His Praises; beaming of His Grace,
All His full perfections meeting in Thy Face!
Image of His Nature! we in Thee have rest,
Through Thy Death atoning, with all blessing blest.

Thou hast bidden us fear not, since our God Thou art,
Uttering the secrets of Jehovah's heart,
No reserves of anger 'gainst our sins we find,
For Thy Cross discovered all His Holy Mind.

Dread we not the thunder of Thy Holy Law,
Everlasting comfort from Thy Cross we draw,
There the dread Handwriting blotted out we see,
God o'er powers of darkness triumphing in Thee.

At Thy Throne we worship, at Thy Cross rejoice,
Teach us there to tarry, listening to Thy Voice,
By the gentle teaching of Thy Holy Dove,
Still Thy wounds beholding, may we know Thy Love.
R. S. W.

ROTHSAY.

Believers meet to "break bread" in the Masonic Hall,
every Lord's day, at 11, A.M.

CANADA.

A brother, writing from Hamilton, speaks of a conference of believers held at the new year time, which God was pleased to bless. Also, that Mr. Donald Ross, and T. D. W. Muir, had gone to Galt, Ontario, and had begun a series of meetings in the Town-Hall. John M. Carnie and James Smith were labouring in Boulton and receiving blessing in their labours.

Mr. D. Ross writes, 29th Jan., from Galt, to a brother in the Lord, "If you want work for the Lord I think you should come across here. There are hundreds of doors open and scarcely any to enter."

UNITED STATES.

A sister at present in this country from Gailsburg, Illinois, has laid before many of the Lord's servants the claims of that district. It is totally destitute of the Gospel, and there is an open door.

She purposes returning thither, and greatly desires that some of the Lord's messengers would go there and labour in the Gospel. Isaiah vi., 8.

Note specially that we have ceased business altogether at 2 South Clerk Street, Edinburgh, and that henceforth all business communications are to be addressed to JOHN BAIN, City Bible-House, 40 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. In remitting please send P.O. Order, not stamps. All communications for the Editor to be sent there also, or to be addressed J. R. CALDWELL, 256 Renfrew Street, Glasgow. Letters requiring to be forwarded to Mr. D. Ross, please address 1 Summerhall Square, Edinburgh.

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NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON, BY W. LINCOLN.

The first Dialogue, ch. i. 1-11.

THE bride's appeal in v. 7 is responded to by the Lord in v. 8, instantly and tenderly and fully. So full indeed is His answer that even we ourselves can easily note hence where He would have us be found, even in the assembly of His saints gathered to His name, which assembly is ascertained by the decisive test as to where sheep and under shepherds all converge around Himself, their one and only centre. Two points here specially call for a word of observation. One is that these shepherds are spoken of in the plural number, the same as is invariably the case likewise in the New Testament. For where self-willed souls are determined to have one mortal to rally round, necessarily he, whoever he be, is thrust into a false position. But let the elders or shepherds be "among" the flock, and, conversely also, the flock be "among" the elders, as Peter, by this double use of the word "among," so emphatically enjoins all, in order thoroughly to group all around the great Shepherd, then will the Lord have His proper place, and then there is seen the assembly of God. Again, the work of a true under shepherd somewhat resembles, in part, that of a collie dog. Let such an one look after the stray sheep, bring them together round his Master, and then rest with the sheep at the Master's feet, content with having served Him. True, the Lord uses such pastors also in the work of ruling and feeding the flock of God, as well as in gathering them round Himself. For those who honour Him, He will honour; and, if we serve Him faithfully, He will use us more and more. But still the main lesson is for

sheep and shepherds all to remember that never has the Lord Himself surrendered to any one or to any dozen. His own place in the midst of His flock. His own thoughtful care and love and supervision can only be exercised by Himself; and all others, save in their little measure, are incompetent to assume such work. A monarchy, except of the Lord Himself, or an oligarchy, or a democracy, are all equally worthless within the sphere of the church of God.

But now, having spoken out plainly in reply to her impassioned appeal—an appeal which finds its counterpart, its echo even in the present day, the bridegroom proceeds to look at the state of heart that had dictated each one of these her three petitions, and sets Himself to remove from her mind all the anxiety that had prompted them. And this way of His in answering the thoughts of the heart rather than the mere words of one questioning Him, has been often called attention to as Christ's wonted manner in the Gospels. Thus is He seen to be the same, yesterday and to-day. Further, in the Old Testament, the term "Searcher of hearts" is found ordinarily in connection with His expressed approbation of integrity and purity of heart, as in 1 Chron. xxvii. 9, Ps. vii. 9, Jerem. xvii. 10, and in the New Testament this same term is applied to God in reference to His observation of the exercises of the Spirit. (Rev. ii. 23, Rom. viii. 27.) So likewise here the Lord has three words for the bride, each one being designed to place her perfectly at ease before Himself.

For first, there is a most gracious word in regard to her service in v. 9. And who but He would speak in such a frank and cordial tone, commending all therein that He could? And this reminds us again of the same

speaker's unreserved style concerning His disciples, in John xvii. 6-8. "They have kept Thy word," said He to His Father about them whose slight acquaintance with His grace, and whose petty jealousies of each other, had oftentimes grieved Him. Notwithstanding these things, however, He had seen the genuineness of their belief in Him, and their attachment unto Him, and therefore with this strong language could He and did He commend them unto His Father. And this is He, still and for ever the same, before whose judgment-seat we are to stand. Surely this thought may well lead us, who are accepted in Him, to labour to please Him well now, and so to long for that moment even when we shall stand there! In so far as we do please Him, and in so far as before our translation we have this testimony that we please Him, in that degree shall we come to love even His judgment-seat.

In this light, we see the force of v. 9. Erst His people had been prodigals, eager as others in the pursuit of pleasure and in the service of sin. But now so changed are they, and so swayed by the least whisper of His Spirit, and so moved by His least touch—the least expression of His will, that He compares them to a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots. Now Egypt was famous for its breed of horses, and doubtless in Pharaoh's own chariots would be found the very best of the best. And thus are we being trained for service even in glory, Rev. xxii. 3. At present, angels are His cherubic messengers; but ultimately the Church of God will have this honour. And mark what is recorded of the instant obedience of the cherubim even now. Ezek. i. 14, Psalm xviii. 10, also compare Psalm lxviii. 10, with Song iii. 9-10.

The second word of the bridegroom is as to His bride's present comeliness in His sight, and as adorned with jewels, the gifts of His own loving heart, and of His Father and God. And do we believe His word that we are "clean every whit," and "perfect for ever," by His one offering? Aye and more, do we believe that we are "competentized," through the possession of divine life, to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light? (Col. i. 12.) And still further, has the Holy Ghost, acting as did Eliezer to Rebecca of old, endowed us with grace and produced in us fruit, and by fixing our eyes intently on the glory of the Lord, already begun to transform us into the same wondrous likeness to Him? Here in this passage, indeed, His commendation of her beauty only respects her cheeks and neck; but in ch. iv. He refers to *seven* particulars in His descrip-

tion of what she is in His sight. Then later still, in ch. vii., He bursts out into a most glowing strain of her perfect beauty in all respects. To these other accounts we shall advert of course in due time, please God; but even now He looks on unto the end.

Hence His third word, in v. 11. The work of His grace He will complete; yea God Himself will do this. For the language here, "We will make," recalls to our mind that same plural word in Gen. i. 26, "Let us make". Gold is a symbol of divine righteousness, and silver of redemption. What He has already done for her—for us—may well lead us to expect that He will not rest till He shall rest in His love and joy over us with singing. But this He will not do until He has got all His own way, by making us quite like Himself, our Lord.

And in this beautiful and loving manner of the Lord, having adverted as to how her desires after Him and His smile pleased Him (v. 9), and as to how comely she is, through His comeliness already put upon her (v. 10), and as to how He will finish the work in the most glorious and divine manner, He removes, as is His wont, every flutter from the heart, saying "Peace be unto you". And as the drift of her three petitions kiss me, tell me, draw me, had been in sum—oh, ever to gaze upon Thee, to see Thee: so the entire point of His reply as to her present and future is—Let not service or failure get in between your heart and Myself. Already you have the pledge of My affection, and where I love, I love unto the end.

THE GOD OF JACOB AT PADANARAM.

GEN. xxix., xxx., and xxxi.

THE ways of God in Padanaram during the time of Jacob's sojourn there are (as all God's ways revealed in His word) deeply monitory and highly instructive.

At Bethel the Lord God of Abraham had met Jacob, and, according to the riches of His grace, had cheered and encouraged him as none but God could do; had given him promises and assurances sufficient to meet his need and fill his heart. And "the gifts and calling of God are without repentance". Consequently the faithful "I WILL" of Jehovah never once failed throughout his entire pilgrimage, even "to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills" (Gen. xlix. 26). Nevertheless, down in Padanaram, as elsewhere, the solemn truth comes out that "Evil pursueth the wrong-doer" (Prov.

xiii. 21); and that the Lord says—"Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee. Know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God" (Jer. ii. 19). Oh! beloved brother and sister, be assured, sin is not such a trifle that to-day it may be committed, and to-morrow forgotten for ever. The Lord, by His prophet Nathan, could say to David—"The Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die"; nevertheless, in the same interview, he could tell him—"The sword shall never depart from thy house. . . . I will raise up evil against thee out of thine own house, and I will take thy wives before thine eyes and give them to thy neighbour, and he shall lie with thy wives in the sight of this sun" (2 Sam. xii.). Again, look at Moses, the man of God, "who was very meek, above all the men that were upon the face of the earth". "With him" (says Jehovah) "will I speak mouth to mouth, even apparently, and not in dark speeches, and the similitude of the Lord shall he behold" (Num. xii.); but Moses sinned at the waters of Meribah, and so Moses shall not lead Israel into the land. Moses had sinned, and so Moses shall die in the wilderness. Hear himself—"And I besought the Lord at that time, saying, O Lord God, thou hast begun to shew Thy servant Thy greatness, and Thy mighty hand, for what God is there in heaven or in earth that can do according to Thy works, and according to Thy might. I pray thee, let me go over and see the good land that is beyond Jordan; that goodly mountain and Lebanon. But the Lord was wroth with me for your sakes, and would not hear me; and the Lord said unto me, Let it suffice thee, speak no more to me of this matter" (Deut. iii. 23-26). "Now, these are our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted" (1 Cor. x. 6). Jacob can take advantage of his hungry, starving brother; he can by skill and falsehood cheat his old dim-eyed father; he can, too, by contrivance and skilful artifice, abstract the best of the flocks of Laban for himself. Like the forgetter of God in the fiftieth Psalm—"Thou gavest thy mouth to evil and thy tongue frameth deceit; thou sittest and speakest against thy brother; thou slanderest thine own mother's son. These things hast thou done, and I have kept silence; thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thyself: But I will reprove thee and set them in order before thine eyes. Now,

consider this, ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver." So we find Jacob, in the gloom of the evening, miserably cheated (as we all know) in the matter of Leah, with no redress but the heartless reply—"It must not be so done in our country". We find him, too, amid his long protracted service, having to bear the loss of what wild beasts tore, or thieves had stolen; the drought by day, and the frost by night, consuming him; while his sleep is broken by incessant care, and his wages changed ten times. All this takes place in the history of him who really is the elect of God, and who is, as such, under special divine care.

How often still do we see Christians who, departing from, or forgetting the Lord, have fallen into sin? And although in measure they may have been restored, and not have a doubt of the Father's forgiveness, knowing that they are accepted in the Beloved, and that they shall be for ever with the Lord, still, a dark cloud seems to envelope them from that time and forward; their testimony and usefulness much spoiled, if not totally destroyed; while sometimes there flows from their hearts, if not from their lips also, in tones subdued, chastened, and broken—"What shall I say; He hath both spoken to me, and Himself hath done it. I shall go softly all my years in the bitterness of my soul." (Isa. xxxviii. 15.) Thus he goes on, the victim (to a certain extent) of his own sin, so long as he is seen down here; while 2 Cor. v. 10 seems to indicate that the same line of things continues throughout the kingdom, and possibly for ever. "This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk. . . . But that ye put on the new man, which in the likeness of God is created in righteousness and true holiness". (Eph. iv. 17 and 24.)

There is, however, another line of truth most blessedly and graciously brought to our hearts and minds by the ways of God in Padanaram, while Jacob sojourned there. A wife may not be slighted, a sister may not be sighing in grief, a servant may not be overreached by an exacting master, nor even a wanderer sighing for home; but God—the mighty God of Jacob—sees all, remembers all, and has been watching all with unwearied care. Although "five sparrows are sold for two farthings, yet not one of them is forgotten before God". Therefore, "Fear not ye, for ye are of more value than many sparrows". "And when the

LORD SAW that Leah was hated, He opened her womb." Leah, although tender-eyed, and disliked of her husband, is nevertheless by grace taken into the line of God's elect, and so Leah may not be despised and neglected; but He who binds up the broken hearts is ready to arise for her help. Then the barren woman becomes a mother of sons, full of joy, and is gladly speaking of the goodness of God, and chanting in hearty gratitude, "God hath endured me with a good dowry".

While the Lord is thus helping, vindicating, and cheering the tender-eyed, hated wife, He is at the same time, and by the same means, carrying out His own divine plans and purposes, revealed many centuries after on the plains of Jordan, viz., "When the Most High divided to the nations their inheritance, when he separated the sons of Adam, he set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel." (Deut. xxxii. 8.) And just as the Lord is thus helping, cheering, and vindicating Leah, Rachel, the handsome, the elegant, and the beautiful, is humbled, subdued, and conquered. She is taught a lesson—often hard to learn—that neither human patronage (for Rachel certainly was her husband's favourite), elegance, natural charms, nor favourable circumstances, are of much use in bringing forth fruit unto God. But Rachel, being subdued and chastened, and in some measure learning the helplessness of all human help, and being, as it were, forced to lean on God alone, He hastens to her help, for it is written, "God remembered Rachel, and God hearkened to her and opened her womb". The beautiful ways of the God of Jacob are the magnitude and mighty triumph of His free grace where nothing but GRACE could come.

In looking at Jacob during his twenty years' sojourn in Padanaram, we cannot help noticing how miserably he forgot the God of Bethel who had spoken to him, and to whom he had vowed a vow, and yet, nevertheless, how the God of Bethel—the God of Jacob—had never forgotten him. And, although by Jacob all unobserved and unheeded, the God of Bethel had all along been looking after all his interests and every matter concerning him. Then, in dealing with his conscience, in order to bring Jacob back to himself, He says—"I am the God of Bethel, where *thou* anointedst the pillar, and where *thou* vowedst a vow unto me". Then, as now, this is the way of Him by whom came grace and truth, thus to touch the con-

science and convict the soul as none but HE can do. Just so did He on the sea-side that early morning, when at once convicting and restoring poor dear Peter, He said—"Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou Me *more than these?*" (John xxi. 15.) It was after they had dined that the blessed Jesus had this touching yet gracious dealing with Peter; so it was after Jacob had been enriched, according to the goodness and grace of the God of Bethel, that God said to him, "I am the God of Bethel". Then is Jacob willing and glad to confess, even to and before the man of the world, Laban, "Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham and the fear of Isaac, had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen my affliction and the labour of my hands." Thus it was then, thus it is now. The Lord is ever ready to take sides with the oppressed and those who have none to help. "This shall be written for the generation to come. . . . He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary . . . to hear the groaning of the prisoners, to loose those that are appointed to death" (Psalm cii. 18-20). So those knowing Him can sing in the midst of darkest trial and deepest affliction—"The Lord of Hosts is with us, and the God of Jacob is our refuge." (Psalm xlvii. 7.) So to those who know HIM there is nothing that can very much annoy, for with "the Lord of Hosts" there is plenty of power, and with the "God of Jacob" there is plenty of grace, and "This God is our God for ever and ever" (Psalm xlviii. 14).

J. S.

THE TRUE STANDARD OF VALUE.

"According to the years after the jubilee thou shalt buy of thy neighbour, and according unto the number of years of the fruits he shall sell unto thee" (Lev. xxv. 15).

EVERY fifty years there was a jubilee in Israel. "The captive exile hastened that he might be loosed," the very moment he heard the joyful sound of the trumpet in that year of deliverance. The property sold by an impoverished debtor returned to his possession, as it is written, "ye shall hallow the fiftieth year, and proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; and ye shall return every man unto his possession and every man unto his family" (Lev. xxv. 10). In the view of that year all property, therefore, was to be bought and sold. If twenty-five years were already passed since the last

jubilee, the owner of the land could obtain for it nothing more than its value for twenty-five years ; and if forty-five years had passed, he could not, in his utmost strait, sell it for more than four years' purchase. And so with the buyer, he, in the view of the lessening number of years before the next jubilee, would pay no more than the value for the short remaining term. And when the jubilee came, the trumpet's sound destroyed his right, and restored the right of the old possessor ; and in the whole land there was a time of release from debt, and of deliverance from bondage. The slave went free, and the old family dwelling once more returned to the inheritance of the tribe to which at first it belonged.

Laws such as these (were there none others of the same character) should suffice to convince all cavillers of the divine origin of the Jewish code. In these early days, the science which we call jurisprudence was in its infancy, and the chief law was the will of the strongest. The mitigation of slavery which we find in the Pentateuch ; the tender regard for the female sex ; the principles of restitution and justice ; the check on the measure of punishment, with many other things, indicate a mind infinitely above the thoughts of the wild and barbarous nations all around ; so that Moses could say, "What nation is there that hath statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law which I set before you ?" (Deut. iv. 8). The glimpse we have of life in Egypt, when Pharaoh hung one of his servants without a trial, and the confession of Adonibegek ("three score and ten kings having their thumbs and their great toes cut off, gathered their meat under my table") are enough to show us the character of that age. The merciful provision of a year of jubilee was not only far beyond any law of any other land at that period, but it also remains to this day, unexampled in the system of any country, even now, in this boasted nineteenth century.

There is, however, a most interesting and valuable lesson for us in our present circumstances, in the standard of value which this year of jubilee necessarily established. We are living in the prospect and expectation of a year of deliverance, which will terminate, at the trumpet's sound, all earthly relations, and all distinctions of poor and rich, and master and servant. Our proper posture is that of servants who are waiting for their Lord's coming, that when He shall come they may be ready to open to Him immediately, and every earthly

transaction should be conducted in the light of "that day". We may imagine a poor Jew compelled by distress to part with the home of his childhood, or to part with some of his family into servitude, but he had the consolation of knowing that the year was hastening on which would restore him all that he had lost. Or a wealthy one might enter into possession of a property which met every desire of his heart in its loveliness, and there he might dwell, in an abode which had for generations been an object of care to another family ; but he was compelled to bear in mind that the hour for its surrender was approaching, and that with the sound of the trumpet on the day of atonement, all his rights in it ceased. If we rightly read the lesson which our Lord would teach us in His word, we too should learn to estimate every earthly possession and every earthly trial by rules to which the world is a stranger. The way of the world is to try (how vainly !) to secure the permanence of every inheritance. "Their inward thought is that their houses shall continue for ever and their dwelling-places to all generations : they call their lands after their own names" (Ps. xlix. 11). Man's ambition is to "found a family," to have an estate "for him and his heirs for ever". Nevertheless, says the Psalmist, "man being in honour abideth not, he is like the beasts that perish. This their way is their folly, yet their posterity approve their sayings". In the pride of life, what years are spent to establish something on the earth in order to tell the future ages the name of some foolish dreamer of what is called "posthumous fame !" But the believer sees himself to be in a passing scene, he is a stranger here ; and he views all the fruits of human toil and skill in the light of eternity. The earth and the things that are therein are to be burned up, and he does not seek a portion in that which is perishing ; but he looks beyond to that place where he has a better and an everlasting substance, and so, like Moses, he can despise all the treasures of Egypt and set a value on the reproach of Christ. It was thus that Paul "reckoned" that the sufferings of this present time were nothing to be compared with that glory which shall be revealed in us (Rom. viii. 18), and as to his own losses regarded them as dross and dung in the light of the excellency of the knowledge which awaited those sacrifices. He weighed trial in the balance of faith, and counted it "light" ; and he measured its duration only "for a moment" ;—for he had in the other scale a "weight of glory," and his measuring line for the duration of that, was Eternity.

But most of all, the Great Forerunner, "for the joy that was set before him, endured the Cross despising the shame".

When the Christian really lives by faith, he too can "thus judge". It is a light thing to him to see the most splendid edifices in the richest parks; he can let the gaudy carriages of the wealthy pass by him without a desire even for the best of them; and when he hears of lives spent in the foolish race for wealth or honour, he sighs for sorrow. This is not his home. If he has anything here in possession, he is ready to part with it in joy when the longed-for trumpet sounds, and calls him away from this earthly scene altogether. And if he has had to suffer loss, he can tell exactly the limit beyond which he cannot suffer any longer. His motto is "a little while"; and if the interval at present seems to be long and the way weary, still the object set before him gives a colour and character to his life, and in the light of this object, he can discern the true value of all that now looks so bright and precious.

Nothing is more melancholy than the sight of Christians who profess to have the blessed hope of the glorious appearing, and to know that till then clouds and darkness must gather thicker and thicker over this evil world, setting their hearts on things upon the earth and acting as if they weighed and judged of them by the earth's own standard. It is not so much a matter of surprise if such Christians are personally still mixed up with some worldly religious system, which is necessarily supported more or less by the patronage of the world, and is suited to satisfy masses of unconverted adherents, who claim to be recognised as worshippers. In all such cases true and real separation is almost impossible, and the result is an unconscious adoption of earthly maxims, and a divided heart. But when we profess to know our heavenly calling, and separation to the Lord, then it is strange if we become entangled again with the affairs of this life, and begin again to live as if we were competing with the world for a share of the baubles of time. The true-hearted one can live above all these things, in the view of his part in joys and glory to come.

The sinner's portion I resign,
Lord, 'tis enough that *Thou* art mine;
I shall behold Thy face in bliss,
And stand complete in righteousness.

So let us live, carrying faith with *everything*, with in-

creasing simplicity. We see the day approaching, and must lay up all the treasure we love in that place, where the jubilee will for ever confirm our possession of all that we parted with for Christ's sake here below.

M. L.

JESUS FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

MATT. viii.

THE doings of the Lord Jesus had this twofold property—they presented God in full graciousness to man, and man in perfect acceptableness to God. In His ways, therefore, we see the expressions of divine glory, and of human perfectness, as in His person He was both God and man—"God manifest in the flesh". "Though in the form of a servant, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God." And thus God was glorified both *in* Him and *by* Him: In Him, as His divine representative; by Him, as His perfect servant. These reflections have struck me in connection with Jesus feeding the multitude—for there we have God presented in full graciousness to man, and man in perfect beauty to God. Israel of old had been fed by Jehovah in a wilderness. Where all was drought and barrenness, the Lord proved that He had bread for them without their tillage, and water for them without rain or rivers. Now Jesus took this place and service upon Him in His day. He fed a hungry multitude in a wilderness. He would do the works of God without thinking it, or confessing it, to be robbery. And thus was He the divine representative. The grace and the resources of God were displayed again, and God was glorified *in* Jesus. But there is another feature in the action. Jesus looked up to heaven, and blest and gave thanks, ere He broke the bread, and gave to the multitude. This was the way of a perfect and an acceptable man. This was the great contradiction of Adam. Adam, the disobedient man, took the feast which God spread for him, but forgot to be thankful—refused to own that the earth was the Lord's, and the fulness thereof—for he sought to be as God Himself. But Jesus, the obedient man, in taking the feast, looked up to heaven and gave thanks. He owned the universal lordship of God, and sat Himself at the board in the worshipping, thankful attitude of a creature who knew and kept his place. This was the perfect man. It was but a little sample of His ways, but it was a sample, and savoured of all the ways of Him who was presenting man, in perfect beauty and full acceptableness, to

God. And thus, in this lovely scene, at this choice feast in the wilderness, we get two things—man fed by God again, and God honoured by man as he never was before. Man is, as it were, eating of the fruit of Eden again ; but God's lordship of that garden, which Adam, the first man, denied and insulted, is allowed and is honoured by Jesus, the second man. Here, then, is God, in His grace and resources again ; but here is man also, in his worship and obedience. One in the likeness of man, though thinking it no robbery to be equal with God, is putting all things disturbed by man of old, back into their right place. This is the whole mystery of the Gospel. For there man is blest and God honoured, and all is the doing of Christ. His death had perfected the needed atonement, but all His life and ways had been God's honour in man, and by man again. In that wondrous mystery, as I have observed, man is blest and God is honoured ; and this little action of feeding the multitude with thanksgiving is the sample and illustration of it. God is presented in full graciousness to man, and man in perfect acceptableness to God.

BELIEVERS' MEETINGS.

THE article upon this subject by Mr. Trench, which appeared in our February No., has called forth several communications from valued brethren, who more or less disagree with the principles of the paper referred to. All are agreed that in the stated gathering of the Church around the Lord's table for the breaking of bread, we have no liberty to depart from the form of assembly laid down in the first Epistle to the Corinthians.

Difficult as it may be in these days of abounding worldliness and self-will to walk in this way to the glory of God, deep as may have been the failure of those who have sought to maintain it, yet it is God's way. He has never superseded it by any later revelation as to any other form of assembly. Christendom has with one consent departed from it, and, instead of liberty for each member of the body to fulfil its own function, a human order, committing all ministry to one paid official, has been substituted for the divine. But the way of God's appointment is the "way of truth" ; albeit it may be "evil spoken of," by reason of the weakness and wilfulness of those who have adopted it.

Nevertheless, the numbers of those who are seeking

to return to the original principles of the Word of God, are daily increasing. The movement goes on in spite of all opposition, for it is of God : and as He by His Spirit opens the eyes of the understanding and guides His people into His truth, He leads them one by one to gather where Christ is owned as Lord, where His Word is honoured as the only rule, and where His Spirit is freed from the restraint of human barriers to use in ministry and in worship whom He will.

None will deny that occasional gatherings of the Children of God, for mutual edification through the ministry of the Word, combined with praise and prayer, are most desirable, and have of late years been much owned of God in blessing to His people. Such gatherings differ from the assembly around the table of the Lord, inasmuch as they may be composed of believers from many different sects, and may even contain a considerable proportion of the unconverted.

The question upon which a divergence of judgment arises is—upon what principles should *such gatherings* be conducted ? Should they be left *entirely open*, as at the table of the Lord, when gathered in His name to break bread ; or should a measure of restraint be imposed, such as may be deemed necessary by those who have called the meeting together, and who best know of what materials it is composed ?

One thing is evident—God cannot be honoured by our adopting a semblance of liberty for the spirit and dependence upon His present guidance, while in reality the speakers are selected. Either let it be known that certain qualified brethren will address the assembly, or let the responsibility be thrown in simple faith upon God.

If many gifted brethren be present at such meetings, who would not shrink from the responsibility of deciding who would take part, and who should not ? Surely it would be more for the glory of God that this burden be rolled upon Him, and those who have proved Him in this can witness that He is "faithful amidst unfaithfulness".

As to imposing any limitation upon the speakers with respect to the subjects to be spoken upon, Mr. Trench suggests certain subjects for meetings composed of believers from the various denominations, omitting certain other subjects, the discussion of which would give offence. All will agree that the object in view is not "a barren testimony," but "the enlightenment of the minds of the saints".

The Lord's servants, whilst "harmless as doves," are also to be "wise as serpents"—and wisdom would ever seek to minister the Word, according to the need of the hearers, and according to their ability to receive it. But that this wisdom will limit the teaching to what will not give offence is not for a moment to be supposed. The faithfulness of the Lord Jesus gave offence both to the hypocritical religionist and even to His own disciples. The faithfulness of the Apostle Paul gave offence in Antioch, in Corinth, and in Asia—all turned away from him. The time may have come when it is needful to speak out "the whole counsel of God," and to "keep nothing back that is profitable," "whether they will hear or whether they will forbear".

It may be that too long smooth things have been spoken, and the truths of God compromised and kept back, in order to secure the countenance of those who are not prepared to see or to follow the truth that separates from the world and gathers unto Christ.

Numerous audiences, purchased at the cost of restraining a God-sent message, or withholding a line of truth that God would have his people taught, would be dearly bought.

Moreover, the subjects which usually give greatest offence are not those which in God's esteem are strong meat, and, therefore, to be withheld from babes or carnal Christians. Surely the truth of death and resurrection, as figured in baptism, is elementary enough for "the new-born babe". Surely the truth of the separation of the believer from the world unto God, by the Cross of Christ, is not advanced teaching, but one of the fundamentals of Christian walk in the present age.

Surely obedience to the Lord's command, "Do this in remembrance of me," ought to be inculcated upon all who love the Lord Jesus.

Surely the hope of His coming is inseparable from the faith of His death and His resurrection.

The Apostle wrote to the Corinthians as to "babes" and "carnal," yet he shrank not from declaring all these as the very fundamentals and essentials of Christian life and fellowship.

Yet under the pretext of withholding "strong meat" from "babes," have these been kept back for years, and the teaching upon such subjects reserved for select gatherings where truth would be listened to, because it was of God. The time has come when men will not

endure "sound doctrine". "Sound doctrine" here means "*whole*" doctrine. Men will endure parts of the truth—the privilege aspect of truth—but the lines of truth that involve reproach and cross-bearing—that run counter to time-honoured traditions and long cherished prejudices—these they will not endure.

Nevertheless, the servant of God must walk in integrity of heart and uprightness *before Him*—"not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth our hearts" (1 Thess. ii. 4). "If I yet pleased men," said the Apostle, "I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. i. 10). We must needs, therefore, be on our guard, lest our supposed "wisdom" prove to be folly—lest in keeping back the truth upon admittedly practical subjects of the utmost importance, we frustrate rather than aid the testimony of Christ.

NOTES OF THE ABERDEEN CONFERENCE.

25TH, 26TH, AND 27TH JANUARY, 1877.

Continued from March No., page 46.

MR. J. A. BOSWELL followed. He observed that there is a danger to which we are always prone—of meeting difficulties that arise in the assemblies of the saints, by human arrangements.

Thus, where ministry has not been to edification, some have said let there be no ministry of the Word; we meet to *worship*, and ministry is not a necessity. The result has been long pauses and dead silence. Not the silence of adoration, but the silence of poverty—the silence of death—the silence of a graveyard!

It is always easier for the flesh to do things in a human than a divine way. This is seen in 1 Chron. xiii., when, in the bringing up of the Ark of God from Kirjath-jearim to the city of David, they set it upon a "new cart". The idea was borrowed from the Philistines; it was their device, adopted in their ignorance, as the most suitable way of sending it back to the land of Israel. (See 1 Sam. vi.) When the Philistines sent it thus, the kine took the straight road—they turned not aside—they stumbled not, all went well. But when David, who had the mind of God upon the subject, and ought to have known it—and not only he but the captains and leaders of Israel—adopt the Philistine method, the oxen stumble. Uzzah puts forth his hand to steady the ark, and is smitten down dead for his trespass.

They were doing it in much sincerity—they were

full of joy and praise, but it was not being done in a divine way, and hence judgment instead of acceptance. David is then afraid, and for three months the ark was left in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. Meantime word comes to David that "the Lord hath blessed the house of Obed-Edom, and all that pertaineth unto him, because of the Ark of God" (2 Sam. vi. 12).

Thus David learns the lesson God meant him to learn. "Then David said—None ought to carry the ark of God but the Levites: for them hath the Lord chosen to carry the ark of God, and to minister unto Him for ever. . . . For because ye did it not at the first the Lord our God made a breach upon us, *for that we sought Him not after the due order*" (1 Chron. xv. 2-13). This was a plain confession that they had not done God's work in God's way. His word by Moses was plain enough. God had revealed His mind concerning it once, and had never revoked it. They were responsible, therefore, to know it and to act upon it; but instead of following the word of God, *they copied the Philistines*.

But sometimes it is *hard* to do things in God's way. The ark was heavy to carry, but when God's way is taken His power comes in to meet the difficulties. So it is written that when they had gone "six paces," they found that God was helping them; so they paused to worship and own the power and grace of God, and offered seven bullocks and seven rams. (Compare 2 Sam. vi. 13, and 1 Chron. xv. 26.)

And this is always the result where the power of God comes in to help the infirmity of man, instead of human device. There are sacrifice and acceptance, not smiting done in judgment, there are joy and praise, and God gets the glory. We may insist upon certain order, we may affect to have what we have not, there may be silence—and we may think that is worship. But let there be separation in heart to God and His work done in His way—then His presence and His power will be with us, He will help, and He will get praise.

In the evening Mr. Dyer spoke on John x.—the shepherd and the sheep. He remarked that an eastern sheepfold was a high-walled enclosure with a door, into which the sheep were brought at night and locked up, and out of which they were led by day for liberty and pasture. The shepherd, when he led them out, went before them—the sheep followed.

There is a point in each of the gospels where the Lord breaks off from the nation and calls out His own.

In each of the other gospels this precedes the transfiguration. This tenth chapter of John is closely connected with the ninth chapter. There the Lord Himself is seen outside, and one of His sheep is driven to Him. The pride of the theologians only drives His sheep the closer to Himself. So is it still. Jesus is first thrust out, and then His sheep go forth unto Him. Ver. 8—"All that ever came before me." "Before me" here means "in front of me"; so any who come between the sheep and Christ are not true shepherds—they are robbers. Such may draw away disciples after themselves. The sheep are not to hear such—a true shepherd will direct the sheep to Christ. In ver. 16—"There shall be one fold and one shepherd," ought to be there shall be one *flock* and one shepherd. The fold was the high wall of commandments and ordinances in which Israel were shut up under the law. Now He makes in Himself out of the twain "one new man" (Eph. ii.). Out of Jew and Gentile His sheep are taken and united in one flock, but never again shut up in a high-walled fold. The flock has perfect liberty, and finds abundant pasture. Jesus entered in by the door into the fold. He kept the law perfectly. By His cross He broke down the wall, and Himself became the door of the sheep—not the door back again into a fold, but the door into life eternal, liberty, and pasture. No fold is needed. The living shepherd in the midst leads and feeds His flock. A Dorsetshire shepherd was once asked how his sheep were kept together and not missed or mingled among others, when no enclosures kept them. He answered—"I draw them by their teeth. I give them good food." So Jesus, when forgiving the sinner, said "Go thy way". The sinner has liberty—not like Israel shut up in the Jewish fold with unsaved ones such as Ahab, Absalom, and others; but all in the flock of Christ are saved ones, led and fed by the living shepherd who gave His life for the sheep.

Captain Molesworth, from Montrose, followed—speaking of the threefold joy of the shepherd and his sheep. First at conversion, as illustrated in Luke xv.; then His present joy over His gathered flock, as expressed in Zeph. iii. 17, and Eph. i. 6; and finally the "exceeding joy" when He presents them faultless in the presence of His glory.

Our Father desires that we should have hearts like His own, that truly rejoices in seeking and finding lost ones.

We are generally more occupied with what *we* get in

our salvation than with what *God* gets—hence we understand but little of the meaning of such verses as Zeph. iii. 17. But God's joy in saving His people is abundantly shown, and especially in the parables in Luke xv.

On the forenoon of SATURDAY, 27th, a larger number were gathered than on the previous days, many having come in from various towns and country districts in Aberdeenshire, &c. After the usual hour of prayer, the meeting was addressed by Mr. John Scott. He remarked that, whilst an angel was sent to tell Cornelius to send for Peter, the honour of declaring the Gospel was reserved for Peter and for other redeemed sinners. So the ministry of shepherding is not confined to angels, but to men who have themselves been lost sheep, and have tasted the grace of the Good Shepherd.

Read John xxi. 15, 16, 17. Here it is shown that one great qualification for a true shepherd is a heart full of love for the Lord Himself. Then Peter passes on the instruction to others in 1 Peter v. 1-4, with the promise to those who so serve the flock, of a crown of glory at the appearing of the Chief Shepherd. For it must ever be most grateful to Him to see His servants caring for the flock that He loves so dearly. Paul was a builder: He is so seen in Acts xx. As such, He is careful to declare "the whole counsel of God," that he might be "clear from the blood of all men." He kept back nothing that would be profitable: "All Scripture is profitable."

Mr. J. R. Caldwell followed, taking up still further the subject of pastoral care and rule in the Church.

The need of this is being widely felt, and thus would God lead His children to look to Himself to supply the lack, whatever it might be.

But God's way of supplying this ministry is by His Word. The Word of God is a creative Word. By it He created the world—He spake and it was done. And so with regeneration, by His Word He created anew; and so also, in the development of the life communicated at conversion, it is by his Word. And thus by the ministry of His Word as to such needed service as that of pastoralship and rule, would God develop in the souls of His children the very gift that is required. Let us look for fruit from the ministry of the Word of God at such meetings as these. The first qualification of a Pastor or Overseer is the "*desire*" for the work. (See 1 Tim. iii. 1.) It is God who alone can implant this desire. (See 2 Cor. viii. 16.) Man may attempt to

manufacture overseers and rulers and teachers, but it can only result in a spurious imitation. The work must have its beginning in the heart's desire implanted by the Spirit of the living God. The motive, as already shown in John xxi. 15-17, must be love to Christ. Without this, any attempt at pastoralship, or rule, will prove a failure, and result in false rule—or "lordship".

Pastoral work is a lowly, self-denying service, like that of the shepherds on the plains of Bethlehem keeping watch over their flocks by night. It is oftentimes a thankless ministry so far as the saints are concerned, but a bright reward is promised when the chief Shepherd shall appear.

So in Peter's commission from the Lord, in John xxi., the only prospect held out to him on earth is a cross like his Master, and Peter understood this well; but he had respect unto the Crown of Glory, the recompense of the reward to be given in resurrection. Was it not the Lord's word to Peter in Luke xii. 41-44, that so sustained him and led him to pass on the promise to others, that they might be encouraged to follow on in the same self-denying service?

The true spirit of the shepherd is seen in Paul, in 2 Cor. xii. 15—"and I will very gladly spend and be spent for you, though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved". Also in Moses, who prayed for the sheep, "blot me out of thy book" (Ex. xxxii. 32): and again in David (2 Sam. xxiv. 17), "These sheep, what have they done? Let thine hand, I pray thee, be against me." But David had proved his shepherd heart in conflict with the lion and the bear to succour a lamb of his flock; therefore God "took him from the sheepfolds, and brought him to feed Jacob his people and Israel his inheritance" (Ps. lxxviii. 71-72).

The true shepherd serves "not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind". The verse is often quoted in defence of a stated salary—"the labourer is worthy of his hire"—but it has been well said, "Who hires him pays him". If man hire him he will look to man to pay him; but, if he be the Lord's servant alone, his eye will be on God. The Lord will have hired him, and he will look to the Lord to supply his need, whether through the saints voluntarily ministering to him, or through the labours of his own hands. Paul was not ashamed to do either way according as he had need. In this, as in all else, the Lord Jesus is the pattern shepherd. He laid down His life for the sheep. Such was Paul, a follower in the steps of His Master. He could say, "Yea, and

if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all" (Phil. ii. 17). So the true shepherd goes before the sheep. He is an example as to how they should walk. Thus Paul could say, "Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe" (1 Thes. ii. 10, &c.). Again, the Good Shepherd is said to "gather the lambs in his arms, and carry them in His bosom"—the arm of His power, the bosom of His love. So a true shepherd, in the spirit of the Lord, will "bear the infirmities of the weak". He will "not be soon angry". Some think they are strong, but when it comes to the trial of their temper, they can bear very little—they are off in a huff. A man's strength is tested by how much he can bear. One who is "soon angry" is a weak one, whatever his position, or age, or knowledge, or gifts.

The true shepherd leads, and feeds, and rules. He has a rod and a staff—for rule and support. The Lord Jesus is the Shepherd King. He is "the lamb in the midst of the throne". He will lead, and feed, and rule His flock in the age to come. The object of the rule is to conserve the liberty of the Spirit. Such is the object of rule in this city. It is to repress the evil-doer. Were there no police in our great cities, very soon it would not be safe to go out at night. Thus rule is not for the curtailing, but for the preserving of our liberty. And so with rule in the Church; it is for the restraint of the flesh, that the Spirit's ministries may have free scope.

Heb. xiii. 7, 17, 24, Rom. xii. 6-8, Heb. xii. 15, and other scriptures show the ruler's work and the saint's responsibility. The ruler must have the hearts of the saints with him in what he does. As a rule, the spiritual will own all true rule. He must not act independently of the saints, but seek to lead them with him. God can bind the hearts of His people towards those by whom He would rule among them—as in the days of David the people's hearts were turned towards him, when his time came to rule, "as the trees of the forest are moved by the wind". The ruler is not to make laws, but to rule for God—administering the laws that are already laid down in the statute book of Almighty God.

SATURDAY, 7 P.M.—Mr. H. Dyer spoke on the Book of Zechariah, who prophesied to the returned remnant from Babylon, who came up to Jerusalem to build the temple and restore the worship of God in His appointed

way. The prophecy, as also the Book of Haggai, ought to be read between the 4th and 5th chapters of the Book of Ezra. He dwelt chiefly on the two parts of the Book, both connected with the coming of the Lord under the title of "The Branch". Chap. iii., on godly worship, represented in Joshua, the High Priest; and chap. vi. 9-13, on godly giving of money, represented by the three godly ones in verse 10. Specially instructive to those who have returned as a remnant to God's ancient order of worship and rule in the Church of God, and both linked together in Heb. xiii. 13-16, as the sacrifice of those who have gone without the camp to Him.

ON LORD'S-DAY morning, over 300 remembered the Lord's death, and in the afternoon Mr. J. A. Boswell and Mr. H. Dyer gave addresses to Christians—the former from John xi., the sorrow, hope, and joy of Bethany; and the latter from John xi., xii., xiii., Jesus with His own—in sorrow, joy, and service—leaving us an example.

In the evening, two Gospel meetings were held. Mr. H. Dyer and Mr. J. A. Boswell preached in Gospel Hall, St. Paul Street; and Messrs. Charles Morton, John Ritchie, and J. McGaw in Public Hall, Woodside.

The meetings closed by a Gospel tea-meeting, on Monday evening, over 400 present. After tea, Messrs. J. A. Boswell, C. Morton, and J. Ritchie preached the Gospel. Many remained anxious, and several who had long been halting were brought to decision for Christ.

The Christians in Aberdeen and district have been greatly cheered and blessed through these meetings, and ask fellow-saints to join in praising the Lord for His goodness.

THE POWER OF A LITTLE TRUTH.

"I DESIRE to know the *power* of a little truth, rather, far rather, than to increase the *stock* of truths."

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

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

O my soul! dost thou really know in the *grace* and power of the Holy Ghost the truths which thou *hast* learned?

THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

ONE great thing in Christianity is, that *it brings us to God*. Not only have we mercies *from God*, providential and the like, but we are brought *to God*.

Towards the Jew, God had a veil before His face, and He said, "*I dwell in the thick darkness.*" Once a year, on the great day of atonement, the blood was sprinkled on the mercy-seat; but now, once and for ever, sin is put away by the sacrifice of Christ, and we are brought *into the very presence of God*.

Good and evil being known, the question of good and evil had to be settled before God. The redemption of the Cross not only settles it, but also brings us out of the evil, *to God Himself*. God's Son suffered, "the just for the unjust," *to bring us to God*.

We are brought *to God* by the blood of Christ, and by the Spirit have access to the Father; and the consequence of this is, that the whole life of the Christian is *to go on with God*—every day becoming better acquainted with God, everything going on in the presence of God. All our ways in life are thereby elevated. Every thought, feeling, word, deed, goes on as in God's presence and under God's eye.

And this places us in a glorious elevation above all circumstances. If a Christian be a servant, he not only serves his master, but he serves *Christ*; and therefore, if he have a froward master, he can serve him just the same and with equal cheerfulness and painstaking conscientiousness, because it is Christ he serves. All the life of a Christian is perfect liberty, because he is in the presence of God; liberty from sin, from fear, from wrath; and the commonest things in life are elevated in their character through service to Christ.

What a difference there is between a man walking *before God* and one walking before men! What trouble to keep things straight for a man walking before men; while one who is living in the presence of God, and walking with the single eye before God, though in the presence of men, can leave things quietly to God.

Dear friend, has redemption brought you into God's presence, and do you live in His sight, and endeavour to act in all things so as to keep right with God? If uneasy about what people will think or say of you, you are not living and acting as in God's presence. All is calm and peaceful there. "Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace."

THE PORTION
OF
THE ROYAL PRIESTHOOD.

(Continued from page 47.)

And this was the *holiest of all*, "after the second veil," Heb. ix. 3-5. A place of nearness and blessedness, the way to which was not made manifest while the first tabernacle was standing. But now the veil is rent, even *in the midst*, the way is open *straight in* to the mercy-seat, and the purchased people are invited near, yea, with boldness to draw near, where grace sits enthroned and mercy rejoices against judgment.

Consciousness of failure is no plea for staying away, for failure needs mercy, and here in Jesus the mercy is bestowed abundantly, according to the value of His sprinkled blood; and who shall limit *that*?

Consciousness of insufficiency for trial or service to come, may not hinder, for here in this sweet retreat from wilderness sorrows the weary soul finds not only mercy, but "grace to help". "Be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus." "They who wait on the Lord renew their strength."

Costly privilege, that we may thus draw near. It cost the rending of that veil—the shedding of that blood!

Do we value it so? do we avail ourselves of it as we might, as God would have us? do we at all apprehend our wondrous privilege as a royal priesthood?

2. THE TABLE. The next picture presented by the Spirit is the table and the bread.

In the story of David's kindness to Mephibosheth, four times it is repeated as the crowning honour, that he did eat bread continually at the king's table. The sons of Barzilli were to be honoured by eating bread at Solomon's table. The meat of his table and the sitting of his servants were two of the wonders that overpowered the Queen of Sheba. The final honour of the prodigal's welcome was his place at the father's table; and to see the God of Israel, and eat and drink, was the high and glorious privilege to which the priesthood and elders of Israel were admitted after being sprinkled with blood.

Such is our place—such the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

The word translated, "shew-bread," is literally "presence-bread"; the table it was put upon was a pure table, as became the presence of God.

The believer having learned the mercy and grace that

are for him in Christ, through the mercy-seat, is called to an experience yet more blessed. A table is spread for him—Jesus the true bread, the only bread that is known in the presence of God, is set before him as his to feed upon, by a statute for ever. Lev. xxiv. 9.

“Fine flour” is the type; yea, is not this the finest of the wheat wherewith the Lord filleth His saints to whom He has given peace? Ps. cxlvii. 14.

Twelve loaves—the number. Is not this significant of fulness for all the Israel of God? A loaf for every name on the high priest’s breast.

Another picture of Jesus as the food of the priesthood is seen in Lev. x. 14, 15, where the *breast* and *shoulder* of the sacrifice are also theirs by a statute for ever. The breast, ever typical of the affections; so “that disciple whom Jesus loved” knew his portion in the heart of Jesus, and leaned on His breast, John xxi. 20. The shoulder typifying strength; there the shepherd laid the lost sheep when he found it, and carried it home in his strength. Luke xv. 5.

These are ever ours in Jesus—here our hearts are called to feast for ever. All power in heaven and in earth is given to Him; and having loved His own, He loves them to the end. His strength to uphold would not be enough for us without His love to cherish and comfort, neither His love without His strength; but blessed be His name, both are ours unchangeably, as it were, by a perpetual statute. Alas! that sons of God so privileged, blessed with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus, should care to feed on ought else but Jesus.

In Him the bread of heaven, dwells all that can nourish the new nature, the inner man, the spiritual life; for in Him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge; yea, in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. Col. ii. 3-9.

The table spread for us by our Melchizedek bears simple but costly fare—“bread and wine,” (Gen. xiv. 18.) It is food that strengthens and drink that cheers.

“Every Sabbath” (Lev. xxiv. 8) was this shewbread renewed upon the pure table before the Lord.

Often would He have His chosen ones partake at His table and in His presence. Once a week the table was ordered anew. Surely not less frequently ought the priestly family now to gather at the holy table, since the shadows have passed away.

But some are contented to be seldom there; and some would bring in the uncircumcised, and the

Moabite, and the Ammonite, to defile it; and some would mingle with human wisdom and traditions the simple fare; for sad to tell, man has failed as thoroughly under grace as under law; and Babylon of the Gentiles must find its end in judgment, even as Jerusalem of the Jews.

3. THE CANDLESTICK. Over against the table of the presence-bread, and next in order of mention, comes the candlestick, and the light thereof; and truly here is another step in this wondrous climax of grace and glory.

Oil is the well-known type of the Holy Spirit. The word “anointing,” so often used in connection with the Spirit (Acts x. 38; 1 John ii. 27), is sufficient proof of this.

Pure olive oil beaten was expressly commanded to be the light for this candlestick.

Beautiful picture of that Spirit which comes to us as the result of the labour and sufferings of Jesus, to shed abroad His love in our hearts, reveal to us His glories, and tell us His mind.

The sun that lights the first creation shed no ray upon the inner beauties of the sanctuary. But for this candlestick it had been perfect darkness. The priest might indeed enter and grope his way, but no idea could he have of the glories of the divine new creation around him; no liberty no joy, except in the light of that pure oil.

Some, indeed, do yet attempt to learn the mind of God, and the glories of Jesus, by what they call the light of reason.

Groping work it is; and after all, 'tis but the outside walk of our precious Jesus that is seen. Such learn not the heart of God, though they may admire the faultlessness of the man Christ Jesus. Others there are who, unwittingly it may be, yet not the less really, are leaning on man’s traditions and theologies, instead of the Spirit’s teaching. Such see but dimly their standing and portion in Jesus, know but little of His love and glory, and consequently lack both liberty and joy.

The Holy Spirit has been sent for the express purpose of being our teacher, guide and comforter. (See John xiv. 26, xvi. 13, 14).

Oh for a steadier walk according to His blessed leading—an open ear for the still small voice of His teaching. In His light we should see light clearly, and the joy of our Lord shall be our strength. There

are glories in that wondrous person, yet to be brought to light by that Spirit who loves to testify of Him. "He that hath an ear let him hear what the Spirit saith," Rev. ii. 7.

Thus the "presence-bread" would be eaten by the priests in the light of the candlesticks. It was no feast in the dark. They discerned what they ate, and rejoiced in the glories into which they had entered.

Even so we now, by grace, are permitted to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man.

Remembering His sufferings, it is our privilege also to look up and see Him in the glory, and things that eye hath not seen are revealed to waiting hearts by the Spirit.

Faith thus feasted rests in His love. Hope abounding through the power of the Holy Ghost waits and longs for His return; and meantime, love can break its alabaster box of precious ointment over His feet, whose head is crowned with glory.

4. THE GOLDEN ALTAR.—Next in order, ver. 26, 27, we are shown the golden altar and the incense. There is a close connection between this and the Lamp.

The incense was to be burned when the lamps were dressed in the morning, and when they were lighted in the evening, Exod xxx. 7, 8.

Thus it was to be a "perpetual incense," "sweet incense" (chap. xxxv. 8), and there was to be none made like unto it, for it was "most holy" (Chap. xxx. 34-38).

And is there not something answering to this in the experience of souls who, wakening morning by morning to hear the Spirit's breathings, and to behold new beauties in Jesus, know what it is to overflow with adoring worship?

Nor marvel that such feeble thanks and praise should so be "sought for" (John iv. 23), and valued by the Father.

Such worship ascends not in its own right, but by our great High Priest. Presented in all the passing fragrance of His own most precious name (Rev. viii. 3, 4), in all the golden glory of His own divine person, it ascends as incense* (Ps. cxlii. 2), perpetual (Heb. xiii. 15), sweet (Phil. iv. 18), and holy (Rom. xii. 1).

What could we do without Jesus as our golden altar that sanctifies our gift (Mat. xxiii. 19), and secures continual acceptance for our offering of praise and thanksgiving, the fruit of lips purged by the living coal?

Rich, unsearchably rich, are the provisions of our

* Also Rev. v. 8, where "odours" ought to be "incense," as in chap. viii. 3, 4.

gracious God in Christ. He would not take us from the mire without putting a song in our mouth; nor would He put a song in our mouth without making provision for His own communion in our joy. He would not reveal to us the glories of His own dwelling-place, nor feast us in His presence, nor cause us to approach to His mercy-seat, without securing an abundant entrance, for the incense that grace so displayed must ever cause to burn.

For incense must ascend. Praise and prayer, the twin offspring of grace, find their home in none but God—God in the highest.

They witness to the power and perfectness of grace, as the smoke of the torment of the lost shall witness for ever and ever to the power and perfectness of judgment (Rev. xiv. 11).

5. THE ALTAR OF BURNT-OFFERING. Beyond the golden altar mentioned, next in order stood the altar of burnt-offering. Here it was not incense, but the bodies of the animals offered that were consumed, or else the bruised corn of the meat offering ver. 29.

Thus was Jesus wholly given "for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour" (Eph. v. 2), and given, like the bruised corn, to be the food of man (John vi. 51).

And so, constrained by the mercies of God, we are called to "present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God" (Rom. xii. 1). To "yield ourselves unto God" (Rom. vi. 13).

This Isaac did: he was offered as a burnt-offering (Gen. xxii. 2). He yielded himself unto God. His will was bowed to God's will, even unto death; and so he proved that the will of God is "good, and acceptable, and perfect" (Rom. xii. 1, 2).

We read of no burnt-offering until Noah, having passed through judgment, stood in the new world, a risen man.

The mercies of God constrained him then to offer a sacrifice that wholly ascended to God's praise. And this, to God, was a "savour of rest" (Gen. viii. 21, margin). It spoke of the rest God would yet have in the finished work of His Son.

Such is the service of those who know that in Christ they have passed from death unto life. Every act to which His love constrains, done in His name, savours to God of Him; for His name is as ointment poured forth, and presented by Him, is not only acceptable, but glorifying to God (Col. iii. 17; 1 Cor. x. 31).

This is a step further than worship; but worship comes *first*. The heart that has learned to worship finds it blessed like David to come and sit before the Lord, sometimes with joy too deep for utterance, and say, "What can David speak more to Thee?" (1 Chron. xvii. 16-18.) But David cannot sit for ever there. Grace calls for more than worship, and so follows the smiting of Moabites and Philistines, and bringing spoils to Jerusalem for the honour of the Lord; but worship is first.

Thus, in Heb. xiii., we have the incense in ver. 15, and following that in the divine order, "To do good and to communicate forget not, for with such sacrifices God is well-pleased".

The same order is everywhere. Rom. xi. and Eph. iii. end in incense; Rom. xii. and Eph. iv. begin the burnt-offering. 1 Cor. xv. 57 is incense; ver. 58, burnt-offering.

Be it ours to learn the priestly responsibilities that wait upon our priestly privilege that walking in the light as He is in the light we may have fellowship one with another, and know the value of that blood that cleanse us from all sin.

6. THE LAVER.—Following the altar of burnt-offering, we have lastly in this perfect catalogue of glories—the laver.

For surely as the priest would go forth to serve, his feet would have need to be washed.

For the priest had a twofold service—that toward God *within* and that toward the leper (Lev. xiv. 3) *without*.

These we have in relation to ourselves in 1 Peter ii.—ver. 5 showing more specially our service within the vail; and ver. 9, &c., going on to show our service in a world of sin, as strangers and pilgrims brought from darkness to light.

But who can walk here without defilement? Though "clean every whit" because "washed from our sins in His own blood," yet we need to have our soiled feet continually washed; and in this, as in all else, our need is met in Jesus.

For is not He our laver, and His Word, ministered by the Holy Spirit, the water by which he would daily cleanse our feet?

Who knows what service is, without knowing the defilement evermore therein contracted? the failure, the haste, the mixed motive, the worldly conformity, the lack of wisdom, of grace, of love, all needing to be judged in the conscience, and cleansed from the heart, ere the golden altar again be reached, or the blessed communion of the holiest enjoyed.

Yes, there is a difference between being outside the camp and inside the vail, though in spirit we might be ever both, as He was who, though a stranger on earth, was even then "in heaven" (John iii. 13). Outside there is conflict, temptation, and defilement. Inside there is rest and holy communion; and to this we are ever made welcome, for the laver is at the door, between the tent of the congregation and the altar, ready of access to the weary longing heart.

The Father would not be an hour without His worshipper. Only own the defilement, confess the sin, and He is faithful and just to forgive, and cleanse from all unrighteousness.

Another glance of faith at these pierced hands and that wounded side, another plunge in that ever-faithful living Word, and then "draw near," (Heb. x. 22.)

J. R. C.

CRAIGELLACHIE, *March, 1877.*

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—Kindly ask the readers of the *Witness* to remember in prayer the work of the Lord in these parts. Charles Morton and John Ritchie have been labouring in Rothes, Aberlour, Elgin, Dufftown, and Keith during last few weeks. The meetings still continue, and the Lord has already given blessing, for which we praise Him.—Yours in Christ,

D. M. B.

GLASGOW

HALF-YEARLY MEETINGS OF CHRISTIANS,

APRIL, 1877.

WEDNESDAY, 4TH,

IN BUCHANAN COURT GOSPEL HALL, (83½ EGLINTON STREET,)

From 7 o'clock, p.m., till 9:30.—Special Meeting for Prayer.

THURSDAY, 5TH ("FAST DAY"),

IN QUEEN'S ROOMS, CLIFTON STREET, (WEST-END PARK,)

10 till 10:45.—Prayer.

11 till 2.—For the Ministry of the Word of God.

2:30 till 3:30.—Dinner and Tea for those from the Country and Suburbs.

4 till 5.—Meeting for Prayer and Praise.

5:30.—For the Ministry of the Word, as in the Forenoon.

FRIDAY, 6TH,

IN GOSPEL HALL, 34 NELSON STREET, (OFF TRONGATE,)

At 7 o'clock.—Open Meeting for Reports and Conference as to the Lord's Work at Home and Abroad.

SATURDAY, 7TH,

At PAISLEY, in the ABERCORN ROOMS, at 4 o'clock, p.m.—
For the Ministry of the Word of God.

At MOTHERWELL, in the ROMAN ROAD HALL, at 4:30, p.m.
—For the Ministry of the Word of God.

The Lord's People will please make the above Meetings a subject of special Prayer, both privately and in their Assemblies.

And let all who purpose being present specially endeavour to be in their seats at the intimated hours of Meeting.

438 Note specially that we have ceased business altogether at 2 South Clerk Street, Edinburgh, and that henceforth all business communications are to be addressed to GEORGE TURNER, City Bible-House, 40 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow. In remitting sums exceeding 2s. 6d., please send P.O. Order, not Stamps. All communications for the Editor to be sent there also, or to be addressed J. R. CALDWELL, 256 Renfrew Street, Glasgow.

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WITNESS.

"For by the Works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."—GAL. II. 16.

"For by Grace are ye saved through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."—EPH. II. 3.

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SHADOWS OF CHRIST, PART IX.

JOSEPH—(Continued).

THE stone which the builders refused having become the head stone of the corner (compare Gen. xlix. 24, with Ps. cxviii. 22), Joseph being exalted to the place of power and authority, and his treasured sustenance sought after by all nations (see Gen. xli. 57), chapter xlii. begins to show him to us in relation to his brethren who had rejected him. With them he has a special dealing in order that their consciences may be laid bare toward God and their souls restored, before he makes himself known to them. Throughout the whole of this series of transactions he is seen as the type of the Lord Jesus in His future dealing with Israel, until the vail is taken away and they look on Him whom they pierced.

At the present time "blindness hath happened" to them, the vail of unbelief is upon their hearts; and that for a definite period—"until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in" (Rom. xi. 25), or as in 2 Cor. iii. 15-16), until they shall turn to the Lord. The nation of Israel having rejected and sold and killed their Messiah, are as ignorant of his exaltation, and of the blessing that through their fall has come to the Gentiles (Rom. xi. 12), as were the sons of Jacob concerning the prosperity of Joseph, and the blessings that through him had come, not only to Egypt, but to all nations. To them He is one Jesus who is dead, whom Paul affirms to be alive. As the sons of Jacob said to the unrecognised Joseph, "The youngest is this day with our father, and *one is not*." (Gen. xlii. 13.) Thus, with blinded minds and hardened hearts, they

wander over the face of the earth, regardless of Him who, notwithstanding their rejection of Him, is nevertheless the Hope of Israel.

Joseph was no heartless brother. He had received all possible provocation: enmity could scarce have done more to alienate a brother's heart, yet in vain do we seek in all Joseph's dealings with his brethren for a shadow of vindictiveness or revenge. The tenderness of his affections never seems to have been checked.

Such love is more than human; it is divine. It is a reflection of the love of Christ—love that warned and wept over guilty Jerusalem, and when rejected and exalted to God's right hand, sent first the gospel to Jerusalem, and poured out there first the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Such are the ways of grace. Like the streams that descend into the valleys, that there they may quicken and fructify, so grace descends to the very lowest. It seeks the guiltiest that it may justify, the most defiled that it may cleanse, the enemies that it may reconcile, the dead that it may quicken, the poor that it may enrich, the lost that it may save. "If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life."

It is by a famine that Joseph's brethren are first driven to seek him. So was it that the younger son of Luke xv. was driven back to the father's house. It is when the debtor has nothing to pay that he sues for grace. It was when the woman, in Luke viii., had spent all her living upon physicians, and grew nothing better, but rather worse, that she resorted to Christ.

Thus it is that God in His providence deals with the souls of men. He makes them to feel their need.

Surely such a God deserves to be sought from better motives, but such is His grace that, even if only come to as a last resource, He in no wise casts out.

And such will yet be the way of the Lord with a remnant of Israel. At the present time, as a nation, they have condemned and killed the Just, and He doth not resist them; and are heaping up treasure for the last days. (James v.) But "neither their silver nor their gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the Lord's wrath." (Zeph. i. 18.) Nevertheless according to many promises which cannot be broken—in a day of distress and calamity, the vail shall be taken away from their hearts, as it is written "I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him as one that is in bitterness for his first-born." (Zech. xii. 10.)

Easier far would it have been for a heart like Joseph's to have made itself known at once. But his actings were after the pattern of divine grace, that cannot impart its peace and joy until conviction has been wrought and sin acknowledged. Too often in these days is the wounded one slightly healed—a conscience hardly awakened is dealt with as if it were a broken and a contrite heart. The consolations of a peace-giving gospel are administered to an unbroken spirit, and the result is spurious conversions in abundance, which deceive for a time, but issue in the dishonour of the name of the Lord and great grief to His people.

Firmly did Joseph adhere to his purpose, though it cost him bitter self-restraint and many an unseen tear. The wound must not be slightly healed. It must be shown, nay, proved, that conviction had done its work—that repentance toward God was fully wrought; and then, and not till then, does the faithful, loving one reveal Himself to them and banish all their fears.

Then do the long restrained affections of Joseph find vent in tears and gifts and happy intercourse. Then does he use his mighty influence on behalf of his kindred, and provide for them a resting place in "the best of the land," and nourishes them with bread, so that they want no more. Even such will be the future blessing of restored Israel. Their land will be the choicest of the earth—fruitful beyond all lands. In that day it shall be said to Jerusalem, Fear thou not; and to Zion, Let not thine hands be slack; the Lord

thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love; He will joy over thee with singing. (Zeph. iii. 16-17.)

"Behold I will gather them . . . and I will bring them again unto this place, and I will cause them to dwell safely, and they shall be My people and I will be their God; and I will give them one heart and one way that they may fear me for ever for the good of them, and of their children after them. . . . Yea, I will rejoice over them to do them good, and I will plant them in this land assuredly with my whole heart and with my whole soul." (Jer. xxxii. 37-41.)

Thus as it was the unfeigned delight of Joseph's heart to bless those who had rejected him, to have them near him, and dependent upon him, after that repentance had been wrought in their souls; so will it be the great joy of the Lord Jesus to bless His own people in the latter day.

Jesus Christ though raised from the dead, is still the seed of Abraham, (Gal. iii. 29) and the seed of David, (2 Tim. ii. 8) and in witness of this when He spake from heaven it was in the Hebrew tongue. (Acts xxvi. 14). Though standing in so near and infinitely blessed a relationship, as He does to the Church, now being gathered according to the election of grace out from both Jew and Gentile, yet does He stand in peculiar covenant relationship to Israel. Jesus is the Jehovah of the Old Testament, therefore in the New He is seen as the Lion of the tribe of Judah, and the Root of David. (Rev. v. 5.) His special relationship to the Church has not superseded or annulled his relationship to Israel, or divided His affections towards His ancient people, any more than Joseph's relationship to Asenath diminished his affection towards his brethren. Repentance shall yet be given to Israel, and remission of sins, and every promise that Jehovah has made, shall be fulfilled.

The ways of Joseph in order to work repentance in the souls of his brethren, were varied and perhaps not altogether unquestionable, but the desired object was fully attained.

And various also are the ways of the Lord in His dealings with the children of men for the same end. Sometimes Joseph spake roughly and made sore accusations, sometimes he spake gently and showed great kindness. Whilst the process was being carried on, many and sore must have been their misgivings and

perplexities. But when the end was reached, and before them stood revealed their long rejected brother, weeping over them his tears of love; when he said, "Come near to me I pray you . . . be not grieved nor angry with yourselves that ye sold me hither, for God did send me before you to preserve life"; when their momentary trouble at such a presence as Joseph's had passed off, then how evident would be to them the meaning and the wisdom of it all.

Thus in the light of His presence, whether it be sinners gathered now, or Israel in the latter day, how fully shall the redeemed of the Lord understand the meaning of the bitter trials, and disappointments, and alarms by which their conscience was aroused to a sense of sin. How thoroughly even here does the believer acknowledge and approve the grace that brought him down in his own esteem, till it may be in agony of despair He cried out, Lost! lost! lost!

Now it is seen that it was the goodness of God which led him to repentance. His blood has made and spoken peace, His spirit has comforted and enlightened, the past is no more to be remembered.

Joseph desired not any further remembrance of the past, he occupies their hearts with the counsels of the God of all grace. So our God has said, "Their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more".

Nor does it appear that any one in Egypt ever learned the secret of his having been sold by his brethren. Compare Gen. xl. 15 and xlv. 1.

For many years did Joseph's brethren prove the faithfulness of his love. He had given them no occasion to question it. Yet after all, strange as it may appear, as soon as Jacob died, they said, "Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil we did unto him".

Base indeed was the thought, and Joseph wept when they spake unto him. How it must have grieved a heart like his, to have his loving kindness thus suspected: to be after all so little trusted.

But do those who for years have known the grace of God, not often grieve His Holy Spirit by even such suspicions, dark and dishonouring, the offspring of unbelieving hearts.

Miserable must Joseph's brethren have indeed been so long as this suspicion was cherished. But they went with it to himself, they heard his voice—again and again he said unto them "Fear not". "I will

nourish you and your little ones, and he comforted them and spake kindly unto them."

Thus would our Lord Jesus dispel the fears of His people. How many there are who not only thus trouble themselves with unbelieving fears, but think it right and humble to entertain them. Oh that such might see from this illustration how very much the reverse is the case! How to suspect such love as that of our Lord Jesus, even in the remembrance of our own unworthiness, is only to wound Him anew. Take all such fears to Himself, and hear again and again, not the suggestions of a deceitful heart, but the assurances of the faithful Word of Him who having loved His own, loves them to the end. J. R. C.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER FROM J. G. B.

10th Nov., 1838.

... **T**HOUGH such joy as this is not always known, and some of His chosen plants will at times droop and appear to fade, yet this is, and nothing less than this, the well-ascertained right of the poor sinner, that has turned himself round to lean on the arm, and in the bosom of the Lord. It is God we have to know now, dear sister, not ourselves. This is full of blessing—we have been found *utterly* lost; not one bit of sound, wholesome flesh in the whole moral man, and this is enough to tell us that we are cast solely and entirely on God; and if this be so, it is to find either the sentence of eternal excision at his *hand*, or forth from His heart to receive the full flow of the fountains of love that spring there.

And the Gospel leaves us in no doubt which of these two we are cast upon—"Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy." Blessed victory of God over Satan! Our *utter* ruin proves our *sure* mercy. It was the *fountain* of the poor woman's blood that was healed. It was not a stopping of the stream merely, but a drying up of the springs; and so with the salvation of God. Sin was found *in the flesh*—at the root—in the very spring-head (Rom. vii.), and it was for this very sin in the flesh that Jesus atoned. He was made in the likeness of it when He hung on the cross. It was as representing *that*, and nothing less, that He was doing, when His soul was made an offering. (Rom. viii. 3.) So, let the accuser prove us never so foul, tainted at the very source, our God knew it all when He gave Jesus, and provided for it, and He

is glorified, and we are comforted for ever; and the Father *Himself* loves us. That is precious; and He sets us in Jesus, not in order to hide us from Himself, but that He may look on us in the place where He can see us *to best advantage*.

I find it sweet, dear Sister, to write to you, and would fain in a little measure be the helper of your joy, as you have been of mine.

A few special points in the teaching that we get in Hebrews iv. were impressed on my mind the other day.

"We which have believed do enter into rest." By "believing" I judge the Apostle means, keeping in the faith all through the day of the wilderness. He seems to treat our passage through the world such a day (iii. 7), and by believing he means, holding our steadfastness from the morning till the evening of that day. Then there is rest—"my rest". The rest into which this walk of faith through the day of the wilderness leads us is none less than *God's rest*. That is a great truth. God will have His servants in His own rest, as the Father will have the children in His own house. (John xiv. 2). Nothing less than this fellowship with Him in the delights and securities of His own things, will satisfy the love of our God and Father. God entered into rest after the six days' work; while the work was going on He got occasional refreshings, as we read, every now and then, "God saw that it was good". He took a passing joy in the midst of the work, but He did not rest till He had ended the work. He was not fully refreshed till He ceased from labour. (Ex. xxxi. 17.)

And so with His servants. In passing on to the rest, they get occasional refreshings; but they must wait for the seventh day, as God waited, till the full rest comes.

"If Joshua had given them rest." Joshua gave them Canaan, it is true, but not *God's rest*. For they defiled the land; they did not drive out the corruptors of it, and they themselves set up their own idols, and this Canaan as *enjoyed* was not as Canaan *promised*.

Canaan in Israel's hand did prove itself not to be God's rest, and this is a holy warning to us. We may get a Canaan, but it may so prove itself in our hand. We may get "knowledge," but it may not be "light in the Lord". We may do work, but it may not be

"service in the Spirit". We may have "peace" in various shapes, but not "power".

"The Word of God." Christ in this character is our companion through the day on to this rest. He is the apostle of our profession. The Son of God also has spoken to us, and He makes no terms with the least sin. He searches every creature out, laying them all *naked* before Him. His word, the sword of the Spirit, proves itself to be very sharp; under it we may well cry out "O wretched man that I am"; but it is true as well as sharp, and knows the sorrows within as well as the corruptions.

"A great High Priest." Christ in this character is our other companion through this day. The sin that He detects as the "Word of God," He can in grace provide for as the "great High Priest," and bring us mercy. And if His eyes, discerning between the thoughts and intents of the heart, find out there the sorrows of the spirit, the griefs of the new nature over the sense of remaining corruptions, or of the flesh that is still in us, He can be touched with holy sympathy, and thus bring us grace to help in time of need.

This seems to be very much our calling. We are called to God's rest through the day of the wilderness, with Jesus thus as the Word of God, and the Priest of God—as our companion by the way. We must labour here—*i.e.*, refuse to take our rest here, knowing that *God's rest* is a rest "that remaineth". But it is only *rest* that we should see before us, and not *judgment*; for judgment is going on during the day, because Jesus is the Word of God, whose sword is doing the work in us *now*.

And thus, dear sister, all that we want is *integrity* and *simple confidence*. Integrity which says to Him as the Word of God, "Search me, O God, and know my heart;" simple confidence which takes from Him as the High Priest both mercy and grace, which He has lodged in the throne for our use.

I am now delighting myself with Mark. It blessedly shows us the Lord in service, and unfolds the human tones of the Lord's mind with a peculiar touch of sweetness. I sometimes dread my joy in Scripture.

May you in weakness know still that He is strong, and trust Him for that love that never wearies.

Your affectionate Brother,

J. G. BELLETT.

**NOTES of an ADDRESS by Mr. HENRY GROVES,
AT GREENOCK CONFERENCE, MARCH 22, 1877.**

Mark ix. 30—50.

WE may read the Epistles and be puffed up; but it is hardly possible to read the Gospels without being humbled. As a rule, the Epistles receive far more attention among us than the Gospels. Dear brethren, read the Gospels, read them for real humbling of soul, pray over them and meditate upon them; and, as God's Beloved Son thus lives before us, let our hearts bow in worship. Yes, brethren, there is something in the Gospels peculiarly fitted to draw forth worship, for we learn in them *how little God has made us*, and how great and how glorious is His Son.

We need a face to face, hand to hand, mouth to mouth, step by step fellowship with Christ in the Gospels, then shall we read the Epistles with *trembling hearts*. No one can read the Gospels and be proud. God has given us four Gospels to unfold to us here a little and there a little of the ways of the Master we are called to follow.

In reading the Gospels, do not read them by Chapters. Often the division of the Chapters is most unfortunate. For the Gospels are written in sections, and it is very helpful to mark where the sections begin and end. This (Mark ix. 30—50) is one of these sections, forming a complete part in itself.

Ver. 30. "He would not that any man should know it." Why? Because (ver. 31) "He was teaching them," not "He taught them" merely, but a continuous action—"He was teaching them." What? The Cross—the mystery of His own Cross—His rejection, and death, and resurrection.

Yes, he would have His disciples alone with Himself that He might teach them the meaning of the Cross. And still does He lead His disciples by many a long solitary journey, that He may teach them the deep practical meaning of the Cross.

Ver. 32. "But they understood it not, and were afraid to ask Him." There is no teaching we are slower to understand, or more afraid to be led into, than that of the Cross of Christ.

Ver. 33. He asked them "What was it that ye were disputing among yourselves by the way?" Not, "that ye disputed," but "were disputing"—a continuous course of disputing, whilst Jesus was engaged in a continuous course of instruction.

They had been with Jesus in the Mount, and

it had been too much for them. Jesus was down, low down, descending to the Cross; but they were up, high up, puffed up. Perhaps John was saying to Bartholomew, "You wer'nt in the mount; I've seen more than you've seen; I've been where you hav'nt been; I'll be greater than you." Perhaps Peter and James were speaking to others in similar strains, boasting of their revelations! Revelations are hard to bear. Revelations have to be eclipsed, lest we should be like Lucifer. With every revelation Christ gives a thorn—a messenger of Satan—to buffet. Can He not give revelations without this? No; He can't and He won't. Compare Mark ix. with 2 Cor. xii., and you will see the meaning of both more fully. God knew that Paul's flesh was no better than any other person's flesh—hence the thorn.

We want to have a great grasp of truth; we want to possess great and high knowledge, while it costs us nothing to hold it, and Satan may help us in this till we are very high and very chilly—very proud and very lofty—caught up in the devil's balloon, till we look down upon everybody else and see them below us as nothing. But by-and-by exceeding grace brings in the thorn, and Satan has to do God's work in our souls.

Satan is God's sifter to take away the chaff—to sift from us all that is not of God. Yes, it is exceeding grace that so often links together the bitterness of sorrow with the brightness of joy. Let me warn you, brethren, against seeking what is very high, unless we are prepared to go down very low. "They held their peace." They were ashamed. What made them ashamed? Was it not that the *life* of Christ bore witness against them. They had been looking at brethren, and comparing themselves with one another, instead of looking at and listening to Him.

"And He sat down and called the twelve." Thus Jesus calls us around Himself this morning that we may see His life and hear His voice—that we may be humble and learn something of the value of the Cross.

The ear, and hand, and foot of the cleansed leper were anointed with oil; but the oil was *upon the blood*. The blood told of the Cross, and the oil of the Holy Ghost's power. The disciples had failed to cast out Satan—they lacked the Holy Ghost's power; they were wanting the oil without the blood. Brethren, we cannot know the power of the Holy Ghost if we will not know the humbling of the Cross.

I would guard brethren against teaching deeper than their lives.

I know of nothing more calculated to dishonour God than teaching that is very high, and living that is very low.

Any fool can climb up, but it takes spiritual wisdom and fellowship with Christ to go down. Bunyan speaks of the descent of Christian into the valley of humiliation. It was an awful break-neck descent, but once down it is like a bed of roses. Some one has said, "It is easier to humble a sinner than a saint". Are not humble saints the exception? It seems as if one could count the truly humble ones upon their fingers! Jesus took the child in His arms. We are too big to be in His arms. We must be little before we can be there. It will cost us something to get small enough to be in the arms of Jesus. Is it worth the sacrifice? Faith answers, "Worth it? yes, infinitely worth it!" And yet we don't come down low enough—little enough to get there. Often have I seen pictures of the little ones in Jesus' arms; we look at it and admire it, but oh to know it!

Verse 37 is one upon *Receiving*. This verse requires to be thundered out among brethren everywhere. Jesus makes Himself the fellow of the least one who believes in Him. To receive a believing one, just because he believes in Jesus, is to receive Him. And what is it to reject such? It is just to reject Christ. The principle of the Cross is the principle of regenerating grace. Its essence is littleness. Regeneration extinguishes the flesh and make *nobodies* of us.

Verse 38. What is the connection here? John's conscience sees the connection. He remembers something that happened the other day. How those who themselves had failed to cast out a devil, saw some one else casting out one, and "we forbade him because he followeth not US". John felt there was something in this great big us that was cut to the root by the lowly words of the Lord Jesus about the little child. But Christ answers, "Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name that can lightly speak evil of ME". Christ meets John's great big "us" and eclipses it with ME—not *us*, but ME. Oh! may God knock the *Us* out of us, out of our fellowship, out of our service, out of our churches, and replace it with HIMSELF. It is as if Christ had said to His disciples—The great question is not what does the man think about you, but what does he

think about Me. We want Christ to eclipse us, and if this is not the case, the us will eclipse Christ. Oh! may Christ's love be so very near to us that even self may be eclipsed. Brother Dyer one day lately was speaking of the gates of Jerusalem, and he said, "There is also the dung-gate to carry self out by".

Verse 40. Now that Christ has put Himself before the "us" of John, mark how graciously He brings the "us" again into union with Himself—"He that is not against *us* is on our part". He delights to link us with Himself; but He must be first, and we must be last. This is the order He wishes us to observe.

Brethren, study the gospels on your knees, and you will come out from your gospel study and gospel worship (for you can't help worshipping as you see Him) both humbled and blessed.

Verse 41. Here the Lord owns the smallest service done to Him, but (verse 42) take care that you put not a stumbling-block in the way of the weakest brother by your pride.

Rather than cause a brother to stumble, make any sacrifice—the right hand, the right foot, the right eye, is to be cut off.

Finally there are two fires—Hell fire and Altar fire. The sacrifice was subjected to altar fire. It was not fire that savoured of brimstone, but covenant fire savouring of covenant salt and sacrifice, a fire of conserving covenant grace and mercy. May God keep us from the manna that has lost its sweetness, and from the salt that has lost its savour.

HE that negotiates between God and man,
As God's ambassador, the grand concerns
Of judgment and of mercy, should beware
Of lightness in his speech. 'Tis pitiful
To court a grin, when you should woo a soul;
To break a jest, when pity would inspire
Pathetic exhortation; and to address
The skittish fancy with facetious tales,
When sent with God's commission to the heart!
So did not Paul. Direct me to a quip
Or merry turn in all he ever wrote,
And I consent you take it for your text,
Your only one, till sides and benches fail.
No: he was serious in a serious cause,
And understood too well the weighty terms,
That he had taken in charge. He would not stoop
To conquer those by jocular exploits,
Whom truth and soberness assail'd in vain.

COWPER.

"THE REFINER OF SILVER."

A FEW Christian ladies, having met to study the Scriptures, were reading the 3rd chap. of Malachi, when one remarked that there was something very striking in the 3rd verse, "He shall sit as a refiner of silver". They concluded that no doubt such was the case. For their mutual satisfaction, however, one of the ladies promised to call on a silversmith, for information on the subject. She went accordingly, and without stating the motives which prompted her to make the enquiry, begged he would explain to her the process of silver refining, with which request he at once complied. "But," she said, "do you sit while the work of refining is going on?" "Yes," he replied, "I must sit with my eye steadily fixed on the furnace; for, if the time necessary for refining be exceeded in the slightest degree, the silver will be destroyed." He further added "I only know when the process of purifying is complete, by *seeing my own image reflected in the silver!*"

The simplicity and cheering nature of the emblem at once struck her mind.

Beautiful figure! when Christ shall behold His own image reflected in His people, His work of purifying will then be accomplished. The Almighty sees it needful to cast His children into the furnace of affliction; but He is seated at its side steadily observing the process of refining: and His wisdom, power, and love are alike engaged, that they shall issue from it like gold seven times purified.

The Christian's trials do not befall him by *chance*, as the infidel would have us believe; but are all directed by that Omnipotent Arm which "Wings an angel—guides a sparrow," and Who says in His Word, which is immutable as Himself, "The very hairs of your head are all numbered".

"ASSOCIATED WITH CHRIST."

WHAT wondrous terms does the Holy Ghost apply to the believer in Scripture! To the believer since the day of Pentecost:—

1. Co-plant in His death and life. (Rom. vi. 6.)
2. Co-heir with Him of suffering and glory. (Rom. viii. 17.)
3. Conformed to Him in humiliation. (Phil. iii. 10.)

4. Conformed to Him in glory. (Rom. viii. 17; Phil. iii. 20.)
5. Crucified together with Him. (Rom. vi. 6.)
6. Dead together with Him. (2. Tim. ii. 11.)
7. Buried together with Him. (Rom. vi. 4; Col. ii. 12.)
8. Quickened together with Him. (Eph. ii. 3; Col. ii. 13.)
9. Made alive together with Him. (Rom. vi. 8; 2 Tim. ii. 11.)
10. Raised up together with Him. (Eph. ii. 6; Col. ii. 12, iii. 1.)
11. Seated together with Him. (Eph. ii. 6.)
12. Co-workers with Him. (1 Cor. iii. 9; 2 Cor. vi. 1.)
13. Fellow citizens with Him. (Eph. ii. 19; Phil. iii. 20.)
14. One body with Him. (Eph. i. 22-23, and iii. 6.)
15. Partakers of the promises with Him. (Eph. iii. 6.)
16. All of them compacted or built together. (Eph. iv. 6; Col. ii. 2-19.)
17. Fitly framed together (Eph. ii. 21, and iv. 16) in the body of which He is Head.

BAPTISM.

WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

THE spirit and strength of the Reformation lay in the blow which it struck at tradition and the commandments of men, on behalf of the exclusive authority of the Holy Scriptures. And who shall estimate the value of the light and liberty which that principle brought with it? But has it been fully carried out: is the unholy and mischievous influence of human authority altogether gone? Surely not. This spirit of Popery still lurks in what are called the "Reformed Churches". How great is the open deference paid still, rather to the "Creed" and "Articles of the Church," or to its "use and wont," or to "the opinions of the Fathers," than to the holy Word of God: and how much greater the secret and unavowed bondage to the "voice of the Church".

These things ought not so to be. There is nothing better and safer, as there is nothing purer and more love-like, than to be content with the authority of Christ. We will not ask whether Christ's word has the approval of the wisdom of this world. Nay, rather

we will become fools, that we may be wise, and bow with unquestioning faith and implicit obedience to His word. The wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. How utterly, in the case of the Roman Church, has it crushed all life and meaning out of the ordinances of Christ: rendering the commandment of God of none effect by its tradition.

The ordinances given by Christ to His Church are not mere forms, which may be altered without loss. They are visible embodiments of truth, any modification in which tends to distort or destroy the truth they teach. By seeing clearly the ordinance of Baptism, for example, much Gospel truth is opened up to us; as I trust we shall see in our present inquiry. Let us receive the word with all readiness; and may the Holy Ghost teach us all things, and guide us into all truth!

I. THE FORM OF BAPTISM.

(1.) At the very outset of our inquiry as to what the Scriptures teach concerning the form of this ordinance, we are met by the fact that the translators of the New Testament have merely given an English dress to the Greek word used to express it. We must therefore translate that word for ourselves, and inquire whether its meaning gives us the help we should naturally expect from it.

We find the word "Baptizo" thus rendered by Liddell and Scott:—"To dip repeatedly; (of ships) to sink them; to bathe; soaked (in wine); over head and ears (in debt); drowned (with questions); to draw water; to baptise."* It is the frequentative form of "Bapto"—to dip; dip under; dip in dye; to dye; to fill by dipping; to draw; (of ships) dipped, sunk". Now the tendency of frequentative verbs is, by lapse of time, to lose their frequentative sense, and acquire the meaning of the original verb. Thus, "Baptizo" would naturally come to be synonymous with "Bapto"; i.e., to mean "to dip," or "dip under water".

We shall find this view confirmed by the meaning of the Hebrew word "Tabal," which was applied by the Jews to the baptism practised by John and others, and which is therefore rendered by "baptizō" in Matt. iii. 6. That word is invariably rendered by "dip" in

* Our Lord, in Luke xii. 50, uses the word "Baptism" in a figurative sense, similar to some of those given by these Lexicographers: applying it to His Passion, in which the wrath of God "lay hard upon" our Substitute, and "all His billows and His waves passed over him".—*Cf.* Psalm xxxviii. 7-16; Jonah ii. 3.

all the passages quoted by Barnes* from the Old Testament, except that it is translated "plunge" in Job ix. 31, and "dye" (i.e., dipped in dye) in Ezekiel xxiii. 15. This fact is conclusive against the otherwise barely possible assumption that the New Testament writers had given a peculiar sense to this word.† So clearly is this sense of "dipping" or "immersion" the meaning of the word "baptizō" that it is almost universally admitted. This sense has formed the basis, with writers in all ages, of the exegesis, not only of passages referring to the ordinance of baptism itself (e.g., Rom. vi. 1-4); but also of those where the word is used metaphorically (e.g. Luke xii. 50). Calvin, even in the act of sanctioning sprinkling, acknowledges this to be the correct rendering of the word, laying down that "Churches should be at liberty to adopt either (immersion or sprinkling), according to the diversity of climates;‡ although it is evident that the term baptise means to immerse, and that was the form used by the primitive Church".

(2.) The last clause of the statement follows, as a matter of course, from that which immediately precedes it. For the natural construction of the "going down into," and "coming up out of," the water, which always took place in baptism, is that the convert went into the water for immersion, not for sprinkling; and if we were in doubt as to which was the real meaning of the word "baptise," we should be strongly inclined, from these descriptions of the manner of it,§ to decide that it was "immerse". Much more, when we find that the rendering is "immerse," are we shut up to the conclusion that the manner was "immersion".

* See Barnes' Notes on Matt. iii. 6. He quotes Lev. iv. 6, xiv. 6, 51; Numb. xix. 18; Ruth ii. 14; Exod. xii. 22; Deut. xxxiii. 24; Ezek. xxiii. 15; Job ix. 31; Lev. ix. 9; 1 Sam. xiv. 27; 2 Kings v. 14, viii. 15; Gen. xxxvii. 31; Josh. iii. 15.

† The word "Baptizō" occurs eighty times in the New Testament, and, on all but two occasions, it is merely reproduced in its Anglified form, "baptize". In the two exceptional cases (Mark vii. 4; Luke xi. 38) it is translated by the word "wash". It is unnecessary to show how this sense of "washing" would spring naturally from that of "immersion" or "dipping" (*cf.* 2 Kings v. 13, 14, where a command to "wash" is performed by "dipping").

‡ Where is the climate in which baptism could not be administered as Christ intended it to be?

§ Calvin, on Acts viii. 38, says "We see, from this instance, what was the baptismal rite among the ancients; for they plunged the whole body in water". Thomson, in his "Land and the Book," shows that the "water" here alluded to is the Murubbah—a deep river even in summer.

Additional evidence to this effect is given by the references made to this ordinance by the Apostles in enforcing truth, and by the significance which they attach to it. For these are only intelligible on the supposition that the true form is immersion. On these, however, it is not my purpose now to dwell ; as I think they will be more profitably considered by themselves a little later.

As to the difficulty sometimes raised in connection with the possibility of the baptism in a city of all the converts in these days of great blessing (*e.g.*, the case of the three thousand), it vanishes at once on seeing an Eastern city, and finding the number and size of its "tanks" and "pools," and learning how bathing is an everyday act with the Eastern.

If the primitive Church, then, immersed ; whence is the form of sprinkling ? Let history answer. We find that in the early ages after the Apostles, the only form known was immersion (Mosheim—First Century) ; that perfusion or aspersion (*i.e.*, pouring water on the whole body) was introduced for the benefit of the sick (Grotius) ; but that immersion continued to be adhered to, both in the baptism of believers and infants, as far as possible, for thirteen centuries (Stackhouse and Bossuet). The Greek Church too has never acknowledged sprinkling, which is entirely of Roman origin (*Encylo. Brit.*—Art. Baptism).

We see, then, both from the meaning of the word and from the practice of the early Church, that baptism is duly administered only by immersion. We cannot, then, avoid the conclusion that the Churches of England and Scotland have thus far followed Rome in setting at nought the clear teaching of Scripture—a course which cannot be pursued, as we shall see, without loss to the truth.

II. THE SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM.

(1.) We come now to inquire who are the proper subjects of baptism ; and we shall find that the teaching of Scripture is not uncertain here either. We turn first to the commission given by Jesus to the Apostles. We find that, according to Matthew (xxviii. 19, 20) it is, "Go ye and make disciples* of all nations, baptizing them," &c. The making of disciples is to be before baptism ; though that ordinance is to be succeeded by more advanced teaching. And when we consider what

* It is thus in the Greek. The Greek words translated "teach," in the 19th and 20th verses respectively, differ so as to bring out the interpretation given above.

is implied in being a disciple—the cross-bearing and fruitfulness*—we shall not consider Matthew less explicit than Mark (xvi. 16) in regard to the prerequisite of baptism ; although the latter more distinctly mentions it.

The exhortations of the Apostles and preachers in the Acts,† and the accounts given of the administration of baptism,‡ show how the practice of the early Church conformed to the command implied in Christ's commission, that faith should precede baptism. To this uniform testimony, objection has been, however, taken, on the ground that there is mention of the baptism of three households :§ viz., those of Lydia and the jailor at Philippi, and that of Stephanas at Corinth. Now, it is said, it is pure assumption to say that there were no infants in these households.

It will be clear to the logical mind that the burden of proving these exceptions, as impeaching the obvious deduction from the Lord's commission, and varying the otherwise uniform practice of the early Church, lies on those who assert them ;|| and to establish the exception, it is necessary to prove that there were infants incapable of, and therefore without, faith¶ in these houses, and that these infants were baptized. The objection, then, loses great weight, when we consider that the former fact cannot be proved. It is, at best, an assumption, that there were such infants. Still further is the objection weakened when we consider the form of expression. If I were to say, "Mr. Smith and his family are very decided for Christ," or the like ; would the reader conclude that I spoke of the infants of the house ? No, surely ; for the expression is a general one, excepting such as are, from incapacity,** inconsistent with its terms. Hence the objection is doubly weak, both because there may have been no such infants,

* *Cf.*, Luke xiv. 26 ; John viii. 31, xv. 8.

† *E.g.*, Acts ii. 38, viii. 37.

‡ *E.g.*, Acts ii. 41 ; viii. 12-37 ; x. 47 ; xxii. 16.

§ See Acts xvi. 15-33 ; and 1 Cor. i. 16.

|| "Affirmanti non neganti incumbit probatio."

¶ It is, of course, necessary to speak of "infants without faith," for children with faith are disciples indeed.

** Note, however, that, unless children were excepted from baptism owing to incapacity to exercise faith, the silence in respect to them is very singular ; for we are expressly told that the Samaritans were baptized, "both men and women". (Acts viii. 12.) If young children were baptized, why this utter silence concerning their baptism ? That this is not natural is seen by reference to such passages as Matt. xiv. 21 ; Acts xxi. 5.

and also because, even if there were, the expression does not necessarily include them.

Let us now candidly consider the three cases above referred to. We find that the jailor's house shared not his baptism only, but also his "believing";* and similarly, that the "house of Stephanas" are spoken of as having "addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints".† And, although the baptism of the house of Lydia is mentioned without particular mention of their faith, so, on the other hand, the faith of the house of Crispus‡ is recorded without notice of their baptism. Put these four cases together, and the objection under consideration vanishes at once: they collectively prove that the practice of the Church was universally what we have pointed out; so much so, that when baptism was mentioned, it was understood as implying pre-existent faith; and faith was invariably followed by baptism. The question is then settled for us. As in the early Church faith was the only ground of baptism, even so with us believers only are to be baptized.

(2.) Let us now glance for a moment at what history tells us as to the origin of infant baptism. Neander§ tells us that when "the notion of a magical influence or charm connected with the Sacraments" gained ground, infant baptism was necessarily introduced. It owed its origin to the African Church, which at the same time introduced infant communion, giving wine to children incapable of taking bread (Circa. A.D. 300). Thus we see that infant baptism came of dark superstition. Infant communion fell into disuse, and was quite lost to the Roman Church by the end of the fourteenth century. But infant baptism, the twin child of the same superstition, has been retained.¶ The charm associated with it in the Roman Church is clearly the making "holy" by destroying original sin. Penance follows, to purge actual sin; and Purgatory, to remove sin unpurged by penance before death.

* Acts xvi. 34.

† 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

‡ Acts xviii. 8. The Baptism of Crispus himself, however, is mentioned incidentally in 1 Cor. i. 14.

§ Church Hist., Vol. I. See also Kitto's Cyclo. of Bib. Liter.—Art. Baptism; and Encyclo Brit.—Art. Baptism—where we are told that the superstition extended to baptizing bells, &c., "to make them capable of driving away tempests and devils".

¶ The Presbyterian Churches, though retaining infant baptism, have abolished Confirmation, what was invented to supply that public confession, which had formerly been made in believer's baptism, and the want of which was much felt.

How dark does all this seem to us! But is the darkness all gone even from the "Reformed Churches"? Is the notion of "Sacramental Justification and Regeneration", and of the benefit to be derived by the unconverted from ordinances, quite exploded? I venture to assert that this has been, and is still, in modified forms, one of the most successful delusions of Satan.

(3.) Unless, however, infant baptism is to be a mere form, and one of Christ's ordinances to be deliberately degraded, it must be founded on one or other of the two suppositions, viz., that baptism has a sanctifying effect; or that the children of believers are not, as other children are, "by nature children of wrath". The former we have seen to be the dark and dangerous superstition to which infant baptism owed its origin. The latter, however, is the ground on which it is now mainly defended.

By analogy with the case of Jewish children, the children of believing parents are supposed to be "federally holy—holy in virtue of their Covenant relation to God—and belonging to the holy nation" (McCrie); or, as Scott says, "seminally holy; for the root being holy, so are the branches also". They are, therefore (Henry), "of the church, a holy, not a common or unclean seed". This is supposed to be the sense of the Apostle's word: "Your children are holy".* Now let us attentively consider the matter, and we shall find: (a) that this is not what the apostle means; and (b) that the interpretation is contrary to the direct teaching of other scriptures.

(a) This is not what the Apostle means. It is a supreme canon of criticism and interpretation† that a clause or sentence is to be read in the light of its surroundings: that garbled extracts are not to be received without reference to the context. Let the reader then turn up the passage referred to.‡ We find (v. 1) that the Apostle is dealing with certain questions referred to him by the Corinthian Church. Among these is one (v. 10) in relation to the putting away an unbelieving husband or wife by the believer. These early Christians knew how strong the law had been as to the separation of the Jews from the heathen;§ and they remembered the example of Ezra

* 1 Cor. vii. 14.

† Cf., the legal maxim, "Noscitur a sociis".

‡ 1 Cor. vii. 10-16.

§ Exodus xxxiv. 16, and Ezra ix. 12.

x. 3, how the Jews had humbled themselves before God, and put away their heathen wives and children. Hence they were in doubt as to whether they were bound to act in a similar manner. And what is the answer which our brethren who hold the interpretation under discussion suppose Paul to have given? Something on this wise: "Nay, do not put away an unbelieving wife or husband, as the Jews did; because the children of believers are holy, as were those of the Jews". Is not this argument a manifest absurdity? Paul's answer is in effect this: "Do not put away an unbelieving partner. For the unbelieving husband is made or regarded as holy in the wife; * and the unbelieving wife is regarded as holy in the husband. Else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. Ceremonial holiness or uncleanness is now unknown. The principle of our dispensation is that 'unto the pure all things are pure'.† You need therefore have no scruple in remaining with your unbelieving partner, or children; for to you they are pure. Nay, more (v. 16), you ought to seek to do so, in the hope of winning them to the Lord". With the object of teaching precisely the same truth—that ceremonial holiness has no place in our dispensation—the same Apostle says, in 1 Tim. iv. 4., that "every creature of God is good, if it be received with thanksgiving; for it is sanctified‡ by the word of God and prayer." Thus we see that the Apostle, far from presupposing any hereditary holiness in the children, points to them as equally "unclean" in themselves with the unbelieving partner, but as equally "made holy" also to the believer.

(b) Again, the interpretation under discussion is contrary to the direct teaching of other scriptures. "Seminally and federally holy!" That which is born of the flesh is flesh. John the Baptist came on purpose to break down this very notion of hereditary holiness, § which some seek again to establish. And the Apostle Paul tells us that "they which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God."|| Do I consider my flesh holy? Nay, rather, "the body is

dead"; and from my dead flesh I can reap nothing but corruption.* Here lies an error, which, creeping into every point of modern Christianity, has defiled it: the exalting of the dead flesh. There is utter confusion of the Jewish and Christian dispensations; whereas, while to the Jews the flesh was all important, it "profiteth nothing"† now. "Wherefore henceforth", says Paul,‡ "know we no man after the flesh." Could language be more emphatically opposed to anything like a fleshy or hereditary holiness?

We have seen, then, from consideration of our Lord's words in instituting the ordinance, and from the evidence of the Apostolic practice of it, that faith is a pre-requisite of baptism. We have further seen how "infant baptism" arose in superstition, and is maintained on the ground of an idea of hereditary holiness inconsistent with the Christian dispensation. We conclude, therefore, that only believers are to be baptized.

I should here note, to prevent misconstruction, that this has nothing whatever to do with the question of whether children dying in infancy are saved. It is falsely represented that we must hold that they are not. It is not for us to pry into the eternal counsels further than God has seen fit to reveal them. But if our dear Lord of love will save infants without the exercise of faith, surely much more will He save them without baptism, which is its proper profession.

A similar fallacy is contained in the very common argument founded on our Lord's words in Matt. xix. 14. It is assumed that "infant baptism" is necessary to the dedication of infants to Jesus. Need I point out how earnestly the true Christian parent will entreat the Lord to bless his child and take him for His own, yearning for this with the spirit of Paul (in Rom. ix. 1-3). Such as thus bring their little ones to Jesus, the Lord will not forbid. But can He be pleased with a practice, which, from however good a motive, makes vain His own ordinance?

* Rom. viii. 10; Gal. vi. 8.

† John vi. 63.

‡ 2 Cor. v. 16.

(To be concluded in our next.)

THERE is nothing so blinding as systematic theology. I believe that a systematic religion is the sepulchre of practical christianity, and systematic divinity the sepulchre of divine truth.

* Thus the passage reads in the Greek.

† Titus i. 15, where the Greek word translated "pure" is the converse of that rendered "unclean" in 1 Cor. vii. 14.

‡ Here the same word is used as of the unbelieving partner.

§ Matt. iii. 9.

|| Romans. ix. 8.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS by Mr. HENRY DYER.

AT THE GLASGOW FAST-DAY MEETINGS,

APRIL 5, 1877.

JOHN xiii. 31, TO xiv. 3.

IN this passage there are three things about which I wish to speak to you, viz., the Glory, the Little While, and the New Commandment.

It was immediately upon the going out of Judas that this utterance about the glory burst forth from the lips of the Lord. Five times in two verses do we find this word "glory". It is when outside the world and beneath its reproach that glory fills the heart, and the coming glory shines in at the eyes. Judas represents this world's religion linked with this world's gains. The most slimy serpent-like thing that coils itself about the path of saints is dead religion and love of money. Judas, in spite of all he knew of that blessed face of the Nazarene, and all the precious doctrine he had heard from His lips, and all the grace he had seen in His life, gave himself to the devil. The bond slave of the love of money, he went out to the place of man's religion. The last creeping servile thing of earth had taken itself off, for Judas was not *sent* away—he voluntarily went out. The feet that had just been washed at the bended knees of Jesus, bent their way to sell the Lord who washed them.

Now they are a little band alone, separate from the world and under its reproach, and glory fills the heart and shines in at the eyes of Jesus. So be it with the saints of God. Gathered apart from man's religion, and from the love and the seeking for money, may the glory rise and shine into our hearts. "If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye, for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you." But take care that reproach *is* for the name of Christ—if so, happy are ye.

There are two glories—a present moral glory in rejection and reproach for Christ, and a future glory connected with this. How short the step between outside the camp and inside the vail. One step from the camp to the cross—one step from the cross to the throne.

The expression "a little while" here used, sometimes refers to the short period between the death and the resurrection of Christ, and sometimes to the time during which we are upon earth bearing the reproach and waiting for His coming. It is ours in this little

while to be gathered to Him, to learn the Father's love and the new commandment. Oh! to use it well, as those standing with Him betwixt the cross and the glory. He teaches every moment of the little while. The Jews to whom He had been speaking before could not follow Him, for they were of their father the devil, and whither Jesus went they could not come. But even so He says to His own—"You can't ascend and come yourselves, I must come for you". Children of the bosom, of the love and the begetting, to the bosom you shall go when the time comes to waft you thither in the arms of power and love. He bought us helpless in our guilt, so He will come for us in the helplessness of our mortality, and waft us from our grave or from our chair to Himself in a moment. The wing brought the dove to the ark, but the hand of Noah brought it in. The wing may be wearied here with many a flight, but the hand of omnipotence shall be outstretched to receive us to everlasting rest.

The new commandment is, "That ye love one another".

We are called to be hasting unto the coming of the Lord. It is a haste of affection, not the hurry of impatience. Hence there is patient waiting during the "little while" and here is occupation. Haste to see a brother's need. Haste to help him when he stumbles. Do work of love below for loved ones, while Christ is doing work above. Spread through the assembly and among Saints during the little while this new Commandment, love one another. We are to see Christ in every fellow Saint. We love an absent Jesus, but we cannot bestow works of love on Him—hence His instruction, "love the members of My body on earth; shew love practically to them". This love is not a mere sentiment. It is a command to love in deed and in truth. Lips, fingers, feet, all we are and have to be consecrated to this service of love. No picking and choosing—loving the nice ones, but love *one to another*. He didn't love us because He liked us. He didn't love us because we loved Him. You love what your mother gave you, because *she* gave it to you. What shall be said of the gift between the Father and the Son? That is what we are. "Thine they were and Thou gavest them me." "They are but men, carnal men, erring men, but they are Thy gift." So God has given to me my fellow Saints, I am to take care of every one. Because they are members of Christ, they are my fellow-members. I can't go without my limbs,

they are parts of myself. Love goes on to the end. It bears through trials and difficulties and misunderstandings. We are witnesses in a guilty world. By *this* shall all men know that ye are my disciples." By what? By the glory? No, by the cross. They trod it under foot, no one knows where Calvary is. The Palestine exploration fund never availed to discover Calvary. Let it be found in us. There, nightly sweat and broken flesh told of love to every member. Alas for Saints if there be no parallel between the Jesus we wait for and the Saints who wait for Him. Paul said, "Let no man trouble me for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." "What are these wounds in thy hands?" A question put to the prophet—"Oh, these are the wounds I got when I was trying to help my friends." "I am no prophet, I am not an ordained man, I am just a husbandman, but I tried to help my friends, and I got these wounds." "No man hath seen God at any time, If we love one another, God dwelleth in us." Cheering "if!" Searching "if!" If the new commandment be seen in our lives fulfilled, then God whom no man hath seen, is seen in us.

"WALK IN THE LIGHT."

1 JOHN i. 5-7; EPH. v. 8.

WE need to have again and again before our minds, repeated and pressed upon our attention, that there is a kingdom of darkness, and also a kingdom of light; that the world in which we live is under the prince of the power of darkness at the present time, and that there is, in the midst of this darkness which covers the whole surface of our globe, a light shining, and children of light walking amongst children of darkness, and that these two are absolutely distinct. The Lord has in His Word made this fact very plain, and each of us as believers should be able to say, in the words of the Holy Ghost, He "hath called me out of darkness into His marvellous light".

That this difference between the position of the child of light and the child of darkness exists I need not prove to you; each believing soul knows this truth, "Whereas I was blind, now I see". But we want to have written more and more on our hearts, as bearing upon our walk—I am no longer in the world's darkness and imaginary light, I am in the light of the children of God, therefore I am to walk as a child of light. Now this light is like what we have described in Exodus,

when in Egypt it was all thick darkness, but Israel had light in all their dwellings; it seems strange how there could be darkness in all the land, and a people dwelling in it with light in all their dwellings; but so it was, yes, and so it is, though the world does not understand it.

I believe there is often harm done under the supposition that the world can understand what the enjoyments of the children of God are, and thus attempts are made to lead them into a partaking of what they do not enjoy, thus increasing their distaste, or else leading them to self-deception.

We have the sun before our eyes every day, the sun is to us on earth the source of light; Jesus is the sun of the Christian's life; all light comes from the one centre in nature, and all light comes from the one centre in grace. And as the child of God is under the beams of that light, as his soul is illuminated by that light, not only does he shine as a reflector, but his own soul drinks in that presence, and he walks in that light.

I may stand in a beautiful garden, with all flowers at my feet, or I may stand with sea and mountain stretching out before me, but if it is dark night I see nothing; it might as well be a desert as the most beautiful scene. And so the earthly man. You may tell him of bright glories, you may tell him of leaning the weary head on Jesus, and he does not see it. But, friends, when you and I first saw the dawning of the morning—when the first Sun-light streamed over our horizon, ah! what beauties lay there, all of which had been shadowed in night before.

God has said to each saved one, "Let there be light, and there was light," and as the new-born eyes began to look, we first beheld the face of Him whose grace and wondrous sacrifice had purchased life for our souls; and when the eye had feasted there a little, we began to look about us in the new scene, and to take in thoughts of the surrounding objects. Some have fixed the eye on the mountains that surround us in the covenant promises; and others have looked more into the deep and wondrous ocean of God's love, and as their eyes pierced that deep, or gazed on its ever-moving surface, they have seen what has entranced and filled the eye. Others have looked round on the surrounding crowds of immortal souls perishing for lack of knowledge, and have seen the harvest white, and gone out to labour.

But, friends, there is more on the scene than you or I have dreamed of. Those who have looked farthest

tell us there are wondrous things for the eyes which have seen the light. As the astronomer uses the light to go away into the fields of space, and reads the mind of the Creator, and the power of His hand, in nebulae and myriads of spheres moving in wondrous harmony by unerring laws, so there are heights to go up, and fields of wonder to search, and read in a past and a future eternity, of what God has done, is doing, and has covenanted to do, in the regions of grace and the outgoings of His love—that measureless love.

Again—to come down to minute things—how many of us have, as it were, walked over precious truths, as the ordinary observer passes by an insect or a leaf, and sees not the wonders of its form and arrangement, so in the spiritual world, how often the small things are unnoticed; the “if,” and the “so,” the “and,” and the “therefore”; and the form and connection of truths in the Word of God, have precious significance, and are passed by often. Whereas the soul, as it prayerfully searches God’s Word, finds the true light shining in, and opening up truth; “The entrance of Thy Word giveth light”. The Word is the means by which the light is brought into the soul; and the soul that wants to understand the things that this light reveals will say, “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law”.

Now, friends, you and I are in this light. Not only is there beautiful truth to rejoice in, but there is, by the ministry of the Holy Ghost, light to walk in its power; we are not called only to go into the minute criticisms of God’s Word, whether of the smaller or greater truths, but to see therein light from God upon the Christian’s walk, and this, mark you, is a daily, hourly, value of the Word. “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.” One principal use of the natural light of the sun is to enable us to do our work in our daily natural life. We are all, as men and women, using that sun, we walk in its light, it is the very thing that enables us to carry on the business of our lives. I want you to think with me a little about the Sun of righteousness, as the very means of carrying on the avocations of our daily life in the Spirit. I want, myself with you, to understand a great deal more of what it is to be walking in the light of that sun. We are told here, “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another”.

“If we walk in the light;” then it is quite plain there may be Christians not walking in the light—

persons who have seen the light, and yet walk oftentimes in darkness. This is a far commoner case than people suppose. Many think it is only those who under depression have no realization of the presence of the Lord, who are children of light, walking in darkness. I do not think they are those referred to in this passage; they are rather described in the fiftieth chapter of Isaiah, “Who is among you that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of His servant, that walketh in darkness, and hath no light? let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.” There are many in such a position; there may be some here to-day who feel a weight of darkness and desponding. It is not that they are gone into a path of sin, it is not that they are gone back into the world, but there is such a thing as a child of God walking thus in darkness. The Lord, I believe, suffers Satan sometimes to assault the child of God, and to take away the sensible presence of God; that the faith so tried may glorify God. And the soul may be tempted to say, “Perhaps I am not a Christian; I once was”. And the Lord would have the soul to learn, “My grace is sufficient for thee”. He would have you, as He says in that verse, “trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon His God,” upon His character, upon His word pledged to you. “Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vines, . . . yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.” (Hab. iii. 17, 18.) And how? Friend, go to the title deeds on which your security rests. Are you resting on the pledged word of God? If so, your title stands registered in heaven. If you have any doubt whether you ever had any part in it, come afresh to the cross—and read your title in the sufferings of Immanuel—for sinners.

This darkness may also come when the Lord would have His child learn lessons by it, when the Lord would have him learn that dark clouds have blessings in them, whereby the soul is brought down in deep humiliation, is crushed down, in order that his faith may shine out in the world. When the soul is in enjoyment of the presence of the Lord, it is not much then to praise Him as a glorious Saviour, but when it is all darkness, to trust Him in the dark, then this brings glory to Jesus.

But I pass from that aspect of walking in darkness, to that which is in the passage here: “If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness,

we lie, and do not the truth : but if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another." Now I believe there are a number of God's children who have occasionally fellowship with Jesus in the Spirit, numbers who have occasionally rejoiced in the blessedness of light, and who would not give up those blessed seasons for anything ; and yet such seasons are but passing glimpses, they are not the daily, hourly walk. They are a reality, and we know they are a reality ; and yet, perhaps, we are the persons spoken to here. "Walking in darkness," although we have often enjoyed the sunlight. It would be a strange thing for us in our houses to shut the shutters in the day time, and try to carry on our home life by candle light. Well, friends, this is what I believe the majority of Christians are doing. We have seen the sun-light, we know it is a reality, and yet we continually walk without that light. I want you to try and grasp (if I can explain) the thought that I have about this light. Jesus, the light ; and the Holy Ghost ministering that light to the soul. Paul prayed that the Ephesians might have "*their eyes enlightened*" to behold the wondrous truths he wanted to bring before them. The Holy Ghost brings in the beams of light upon the soul, to illuminate the spiritual man, this He does through the truth : the Holy Ghost uses the truth as the instrument for bringing in the light ; not simply the light of knowledge, but "*the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.*" Some speak of light, as if it consisted in acquaintance with truths ; and some even as if it were acquaintance with a particular line of truths, or particular views about them ; but the knowledge called light here, is that knowledge of God which is reflected from and seen in the wondrous, gentle, loving face of Jesus Christ. We only see God's Glory in the face of Christ, and as you and I are in the very presence of that Jesus, we can really see our God's glory, as He is revealed in His Christ by His word, and in some measure understand Him, and get into His mind and His thoughts, and thus the light of the glory of God shines into the soul. We have in the Revelation of St. John, the description of the light around the throne : "The glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof ;" the glory of God shines there, "and the Lamb is the light thereof." "The Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's land." You and I stand in the light down here, as with subdued and humbled

spirits we get into the conscious presence of Jesus, and as our minds and hearts are filled with Jesus, "The brightness of His glory and the express image of His person".

This was brought out in Old Testament times, when Moses asked, "Show me thy glory." What glories Moses saw, you find in Exodus xxxiii. 18-21 : "And He said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord." Do not you see *Jesus* here the manifester of the glory, as Jehovah says to Moses, "There is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock" ; and, again, "I will put thee in a cleft of the rock." This was the only place for Jehovah's servant to behold Jehovah's glory, in Jesus we see light. The glory shines on the soul when it is in close communion with Jesus. Hid in the "cleft of the rock," Moses saw His "back parts" (verse 23) or "after state," as if the Lord would refer to His incarnation, and thus He displays Himself in chap. xxxiv. 6 : "And the Lord passed before him, and proclaimed, the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty".

Now, friends, it is as you and I behold *this* God in Christ, as we look with unveiled face into the face of the longsuffering Jesus, His light will be reflected upon our path of daily walk and upon all around us ; there will be light on our path, and it will be seen as a reality by those who come in contact with us. Do you take the hand of some dear friend who is very holy, walk with him for a day, you will not like to go into company that will vex or grieve him. If you and I want to walk in the light, we must be in the presence of Jesus ; we must be in the conscious presence of that *holy, gentle, longsuffering, patient, meek, loving* One, who is our Sun-light. How is this to be attained ? I believe the sun-light gives us some idea about it. It is the easiest thing in the world to get into a shadow. Get out of the sun-light into the shade, your face looks quite different. So it is as you and I walk in the heavenly Sun-light, all is bright ; but if we allow anything to come between us and Jesus, anything to be undertaken without consulting Him, any earthly light to take the place of His light, His wisdom, His strength, His guidance, then our path is quite different, for we are walking in shadow, and we look quite different to those who see us also.

(To be concluded in our next.)

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EVANGELISTS:

THEIR OCCUPATION AND SUPPORT.

OF the various ministries which God has appointed in the Church, none is more important than that of the Evangelist. His work bears somewhat the relationship to that of the pastor and teacher, which the work of the quarryman bears to that of the mason and builder. It may not be an easy matter to draw definite lines as to where the gift of an Evangelist differs from that desire for, and ability to win souls, which is, or ought to be, common to all believers; nor may it be possible to define where the evangelistic gift merges into that of the teacher, or even of the pastor.

It is neither possible nor expedient to draw such lines. The quarryman may soon become a mason; the mason may soon become a builder. Nevertheless, there are undoubtedly those whose special gift and felt call are to the preaching of the Gospel. It is an old saying that their credentials are "gift, grace and fruit". Where these three evidences of the call of God are present, it is plainly the business of the saints to grant a full and hearty recognition. The manner and extent of such recognition is a subject that requires to be well considered.

Latterly it has become almost a rule, amongst those whose avowed principles would lead to better discrimination, to call those only Evangelists who have relinquished their trade or business to give themselves wholly to the work of the Gospel. Similarly, this manner of life, and this only, has been styled "living by faith". Surely this is at once establishing a "lay clergy". Its effect upon the so-called "Evangelist" is

likely to be most hurtful, leading him, and almost *forcing* him, to assume a position which ignores many a much used and hard working Evangelist, who yet supports himself by the labour of his own hands, and leading others to ignore the faith, unfeigned and sorely tried, of many who battle through the business of this life. But Christians are not exempt from the common frailties of humanity. They are creatures of extremes; they oscillate like the pendulum, unless, being duly exercised in the practical use and application of the Word of God, they are filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.

Some, therefore, in their recoil from the abuses referred to, have gone to an opposite extreme. They have spoken hardly and without discrimination of all those who have given themselves wholly to the work of the Gospel, and have even gone so far as to maintain that none ought to give up their trade for this purpose.

If a man really knows the call of God to this line of service, and has been maintained by the grace of God in it, he will not be hurt by such remarks, from whatever source they may come. Nevertheless, it is greatly to be feared that not a few of these "Evangelists," "living by faith," would be very much better, in body and soul, and abler to glorify God, did they labour with their hands for their support, and for the support of their families, and to have to give to him that needeth. Many men are incapable of profitably occupying their time. They have not the mental training that enables them to spend much time in reading or writing; neither have they the spiritual energy to spend much time in meditation and prayer.

They do not visit much, and they can only occupy

the evenings in preaching the Gospel. The result is that most of the day is spent in idleness, precious hours are wasted, and the soul becomes an easy prey to the wiles of an ever-watchful adversary.

Any one who has had opportunity for a few years of observing these things, will find sad confirmation of what is here stated.

On the other hand, there are a goodly number to whom a very different testimony can be borne—men who are labourers, indeed, for the Lord. They regard their time as part of their stewardship for God, and are as early and as regularly at work as they used to be when daily employed in the business of this life. They look for their sphere of service to the “regions beyond,” initiating work in towns and districts whose attraction consists not in well-to-do gatherings of saints, who provide comfortable quarters and arrange for meetings, but in the destitution and need of Gospel preaching that prevails.

Ard, indeed, it is for such places that this special evangelistic ministry is chiefly required. Many brethren can evangelise a district where they reside, holding meetings several evenings every week within such a radius as they can reach whilst continuing at their daily work. Such may be thankful for the help of an Evangelist, whose whole time is at his disposal for the Gospel work; but it is rather where there are no local Evangelists that the work of such is more specially required.

Still, as of old, it may indeed be said, “The harvest, truly, is plenteous, but the labourers are few”.

Now, as then, God is the resource of His people. “Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the Harvest.” What is wanted is not so much “preachers” as “labourers”. Not such as preach in the evening, and do little or nothing all day long, but the “man of God,” who makes it the business of his life, day by day, from morning till night, both publicly and from house to house, to preach and teach Jesus Christ. (See Acts v. 42 and xx. 20, 21.)

Our object in writing thus is not to discourage or repress any God-sent labourer. On the contrary, let such be encouraged to persevere, they are all required, and may their number be greatly increased; but, rather, to correct abuses that have crept in, and to dissuade from going on in a course that is not to God's glory, and sure to issue in leanness to those who follow it.

The duty of the Lord's people generally, as to those Evangelists who are wholly occupied with the Gospel work, is first to discern whether or not they are approved of God. “For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.” (2 Cor. x. 18.) Being satisfied as to this, let the brethren see that their wants are supplied; let them be brought forward on their journeys in a manner worthy of God, “because that for His name's sake they have gone forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles, we therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth”. (3 John 6, 7, 8.)

Moreover, let the Lord's servants be encouraged to go and spread the Gospel in places where there may be none to receive them or to help them—even as the Philippians communicated with Paul, when he was at Thessalonica, “once and again”. (Phil. iv. 16.)

On the other hand, should one of the Lord's true labourers be stinted for means, and receive little help from those of whom, perhaps, he expected most, let him not be discouraged nor ashamed to follow the example of the Apostle of the Gentiles, who, when so circumstanced, diligently wrought at his trade of tent-making, and so glorified God, instead of going about complaining of the want of liberality among the saints.

Much practical instruction may be had from the life and labours of the Apostle Paul, for, indeed, he was a true Evangelist. His was not the way of the ostrich, “which leaveth her eggs in the earth and warmeth them in the dust, and forgetteth that the foot may crush them, or that the wild beast may break them”. (Job xxxix. 14, 15.) He did not go and hold a few meetings, and see some conversions, and leave the new-born ones immediately, untaught and uncared for. Yet this course is necessitated by the manner of some who, when God has begun to work mightily, have at once to leave for another sphere, because of some “prior engagement”. Would it not be well to leave the making of forward engagements, until it be seen whether the work of God requires a stay of a few days, or as Paul found in Corinth and elsewhere at times, a sojourn of years. (Acts xviii. 11.)

Over and over again has it been seen, to the grief of not a few, that a most hopeful work was left to die out, because the instrument whom God was pleased to use had an engagement to go to another part, where in many cases no such claims could be preferred.

The Apostle also visited again the places he had

been used in, to the conversion of souls. He knew that soon the enemy would be at work to scatter what God had gathered. Therefore, he said to his co-labourers, "Let us go again and visit our brethren in every city where we have preached the Word of the Lord, and see how they do". (Acts xv. 36.)

Such visits would be mighty for blessing to many feeble gatherings, and the one who was chiefly used at the commencement of a work of salvation in any town or district, ever has an influence and a hold upon the hearts of the believers, that none can acquire afterwards.

Finally, the leaders in the ranks are the chief marks for Satan's shafts. As the King of Syria commanded, "Fight ye not with small or great, save only with the King of Israel".

Therefore, let such as go forth to take the prey from the strong, and to stand in the forefront of the battle, be the subjects of special prayer.

The apostle continually besought the prayers of the saints. He was not ashamed to be with them in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling (1 Cor. ii. 3), and his constant desire was that they, helping with him in prayer, might have fellowship in his victories.

J. R. C.

"THE WORD OF THE LORD."

IF a man of God falls into error through another man of God, shall he suffer for it! "Surely not." HE WILL. Listen to the word of the Lord in 1st Kings xiii. A man of God knows his duty by "the word of the Lord". Another man of God—ay, "an old prophet"—tries to mislead and he succeeds. He places *his* word and *thought* against "the word of the Lord," and the man of God is taken in the snare. He falls under the power of the lion, that is, the devil.* Reader, are you allowing any man's word to sway you? Do you allow any man, or any denomination to which you belong, to take from, or add to, "the word of God"?

Listen to the Holy Ghost speaking through Paul in Gal. i. 8-9: "If we, or an angel from heaven . . . if any preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Listen to the

* As regards the final fate of the man of God, observe the penalty is limited to verse 22. Observe also verses 30 and 31; 2 Kings xxiii. 17-18, and Satan as the lion; also in 1 Cor. v. 5—Israel banished to Assyria corresponds with it: yet souls of saints are not lost.

words of the false prophets: "Ye shall not see the sword, neither shall ye have famine, but . . . assured peace in this place." (Jer. xiv. 13.)

Listen to the answer of the Lord: "The prophets prophesy lies in my name: Trust them not: . . . they prophesy unto you . . . a thing of nought, the deceit of *their heart*. . . By sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed." (Jer. xiv. 14-15.)

And what shall befall those who listen to them? "And the people to whom they prophesy shall be cast out." (verse 16). "If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the pit," saith the Lord Jesus. But if wise men, the world's intelligent men, differ from the word of the Lord, what shall we say to them?

Tell them what God the Holy Ghost says about their fate: the wise are ashamed: they are dismayed and taken: lo, they have rejected the *word* of the Lord: and what wisdom is in them? Were they ashamed when they had committed abomination? Nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither *could* they blush: "therefore shall they fall, in the time of their visitation they shall be cast down." (Jer. viii. 9, 12).

But if two men, equally able in the world's opinion, differ in judgment, who shall decide as to right and wrong? No man shall decide. The word of God shall decide. Listen to the decision long since given: "Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight." "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not *according to this word*, it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. v. 21: viii. 20.) But if portions of the word appear to be foolishness to some of natural good parts, how is this? and why is this? Listen to the answer of the word: "The natural man discerneth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are *foolishness* unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. ii. 14.)

God says that the natural man *will* count them "foolishness". Therefore, when a man counts "the deep things of God" to be foolishness, it simply proves that he *is* a natural man.

The natural man is led by his own "common sense": the spiritual man is led by God's *uncommon* sense in the written word.

The natural man's own head is his own little god, and, like a mole in the earth, he fancies, in his blindness, that his little mole-hills are about the same size as God's mountains: and he goes on burrowing in the earth, shunning the face of God's glorious sunshine,

living upon the earth's worms, and amazed at the mole-hills which his own head manufactures. The man of God in 1 King xiii. had no difficulty in answering the king and the people, when *they* tried to lead him aside. He wields the sword of the spirit, the word of the Lord, and turns not aside. He is bold and faithful. But when "the old prophet" come and set a snare before him, *then* he fell.

Satan's most useful men are erring saints. The sheep are prone to follow one another rather than to follow Christ. The world may confirm the world in infidelity, but the saints cannot fall into that pit. "They shall be kept by the power of God (mark it, God's power), through faith into salvation." But they may fall into every other pit of error as regards obedience and walk.

The thirteenth of 1 Kings was a parable to Israel.

Israel was on the eve of being led into error by Jeroboam, and Jeroboam was their king. He invented a religious system for them. He appeared to be considerate of his people, "It is too much for you to go to Jerusalem."

He acted with advice (as men always do when they wish to avoid scripture). "The king took counsel." The snare was prudently laid.

Just at this moment God sent the parable to Israel. A man of God is slain because he did not follow the *very words* of the Lord, but turned aside at an old prophet's request.

The man of God's death would be told all around the coasts of Israel. It would proclaim God's jealousy in regard to His word to every hamlet in Israel. That stubborn fact of the man of God's death would reach some who would never have heard or understood a mere doctrinal statement. Shall Israel, in the face of this fact, with a jealous God before them, dare to worship as Jeroboam would have them?

God *is* jealous in regard to His word. Are we, the true Israel of God, *as jealous*? Are we not very easily led aside by Jeroboams? Do we test and try all by the written word? or do we permit deviations, and *approve* of them, because it would be "too much to expect us to hold to the very word of the Lord?"

So we "take counsel," and make small alterations with the help of little Jeroboams, and shelter ourselves under the shadow of some old preacher's word or name?

"The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means, and my people (*my people*) love to have it so, and what will ye do in the end thereof?"

Have we sympathy with the smallest error? Oh, let us beware. The backslider's ladder has very small steps upon it, and, as he goes down backwards, he keeps his face towards the hill of Zion, and Satan's smooth words beguile him down. "If you have taken one step off the written word in a small matter, the second cannot be any worse than the first: and if a second, then one more cannot be any worse than the second": and he will point to good men, ay, "old prophets" and "old divines," who beckon you away from the words of the Lord to stand upon their forms, their creeds, their most reasonable, wise, and prudent words: ay, their "common sense," instead of standing upon God's *uncommon* sense.

"It is high time for us to awake out of sleep," and to be up: aye, up on the top of the ladder, with both our feet standing upon the truth of God, the whole truth of God, and the truth of God alone.

Washed and cleansed in His blood, we are His for time and for Eternity, and He and He only, is our *model*. Listen to the Spirit of God speaking through John, "He that saith he abideth in Him, ought himself also, so to walk *even as He walked*"—even as Christ walked. As Christ walked so are we to walk even in His footsteps. (1 Peter ii. 21.) Do not, oh do not let us say, like Jeroboam, it is "too much" to expect. Rather let us take courage and go on. (Joshua i. 7—9—18.)

Let us agonize much in prayer about our own growth, and the growth of the children of God. Paul tells us how he agonized about the growth of the saints in Colosse. The literal rendering in Col. i. 29; and ii. 1; and iv. 12, is not "striving," and "conflict," and "labouring," but "*agonizing*"—agonizing for the world in prayer? No, agonizing for the saints in prayer. Why do saints differ so much? Why those childish disputes? Because we are all such weak childish believers: we know so little of the word: our ignorance causeth us to differ. We speak as ignorant children. If we become men, we would put away childish things. If we knew the word of God better, we would smile at a number of the follies which now cause us to differ. Men easily beguile us "with enticing words" now. We are not "rooted and built up in Him." (Col. ii. 7.) We are rooted and built up in a great many prejudices and in childish follies, and we do not love to be warned: our vanity is offended, our prejudices make us wrathful.

"Beware," says the spirit of God, "lest any man

spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the traditions of men (that is Jeroboam religion), after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

The saints are the sickles that reap the harvest : the saints are the trumpets that sound the gospel : the saints are the salt of the earth : the saints are the lights of the world. If the sickles are weak and childish, and only spiritual toys, how shall they reap ?

If the trumpets are filled with worldliness, and money getting, and *earth*, how shall the Holy Ghost sound through them ? If the pitchers are filled with other things, how shall Christ, who is God's Gideon, use them to carry the lamps ? (Judges vii. 16—19—20.) The pitchers ought to be "empty". If the salt hath lost its savour, how shall it arrest the corruption that is in the world ? If the salt flavours of corruption itself, what is the use of it ?

If the lights of the world are poor flickering tapers, half afraid to show any light, shading the lights continually lest the light should offend those who love to walk in darkness, how can dark men ever get light ? If the lights do not endeavour to imitate the Sun of Righteousness, how can we expect to see light break in upon the earth ? Dear reader, what kind of lights are we all ? We show light ~~when~~ it is not required : but the moment we get amongst ignorant ones, we turn our lamp into a dark lantern, and Satan cries "be prudent," and we conceal it. Christ's prudence consisted in showing light to all men : our prudence consists in concealing light. (Acts iv. 29-31.) It is high time to awake out of our sleep, to cast off our slothfulness, to "agonize" for church as well as world, and to hold fast by God's truth, growing in the same, ceasing to be carnal, and desiring to be girt about with the truth of God, and the Lord will assuredly encourage our hearts.

G. F.

THOUGHTS ON THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

IT is easy to perceive that the man who wrote the Gospel of John, wrote also this Epistle.

A comparison of the opening verses of either with the other will convince the reader of this.

Divinely chosen, therefore wisely chosen, he was adapted for his service. Of all the Apostles he seems most clearly and fully to have apprehended the divine relationship of the Father, and the Son, and was therefore fitted to treat of the Church as a family. To this line

of teaching he kept true throughout his Epistle ; being his ministry he, so to say, waited on it. Preserved in that definiteness by inspiration of the Holy Ghost, he does not once employ in this Epistle the term *body*, nor *temple*, nor *church*. Having entered, in blessed measure, into the fellowship of the Father, and of His Son Jesus Christ, the outbreathings of fatherly affection characterizing his writing, "My little children," his usual form of greeting.

These remarks are by way of introduction, my purpose being to notice the Apostle's avowed objects in writing his Epistle.

In correspondence, whether secular or spiritual, men generally do their best to define the object or objects they have in view in writing, and the readers of such communications expect to find them, therefore, read carefully : John by the Holy Ghost did the first, and we should by grace do the second.

With simplicity he enters at once on the glorious subject of his letter. The manifested eternal life which was ever with the Father, the Word, the Son of God ; claiming for himself and his associates the authority of eye witnesses, and even more than that. "That which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, *i.e.*, contemplated, and our *hands have handled* of the word of life." "That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye may have fellowship with us, and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ."

Here we have the primary and comprehensive object before him—the fellowship of those to whom he wrote with himself and his brethren—that their thoughts, feelings, worship, and walk might be in communion, connected with this and as its proper result, was their full joy. "And these things write we unto you that your joy might be full."

Beloved fellow believer, would it not be well to pause here, and ask ourselves if this is our object in our intercourse with fellow Christians ? Not to display superior knowledge to exalt and please ourselves, but to increase their intelligence in the truth, and their joy in the Lord. May He make us ever true to this.

Again, in ch. ii. 1, he says, "These things write I unto you, that ye *sin not*." Observe here the change from the plural to the singular. When treating of testimony he associated others with himself, but in giving instruction and counsel he is sufficient as the inspired Apostle.

His object here is to guard them against sin, the response to which would be their watchfulness against it.

He knew and had declared that God is light, and that fellowship with Him insured fulness of joy; he also knew that sin is *darkness*, the bane of fellowship and of joy, therefore he warned them against it, "that ye sin not". Let us remember this, there is no communion between light and darkness, that God our Father can only hold fellowship with that in us which is like Himself: in Him is no darkness at all, consequently sin, even a sin of ignorance, must check fellowship and joy. Let us watch against it, taking for our motto—"Sin not".

Should we after all fail to watch and pray, and sin, then let us beware of hiding or excusing our sin, and of delaying to confess it; but in integrity of heart at once acknowledge our fault, remembering "We have an advocate with the Father Jesus Christ the righteous, our mercy seat: Thus shall we be guarded, and that by the Apostle's words, against carelessness and discouragement.

He next writes to them respecting Antichrists, seducer (ch. ii. 18) his object being to guard them against such; reminding them of a revealed truth that *the* Antichrist shall come, he tells them there were *then* many Antichrists proving that it was the last times, although not the last days of the last time. This message was wisely given to the little ones, those in the first stage of knowledge and experience as being therefore more likely to be led away. He describes the Antichrists as those who went out from the company of the saints, therefore were once among them, but not of them, they were apostates; leaving the only assembly of God then known, they took rank with the world; forsaking the truth they took ground hostile to it; casting off professed allegiance to Christ they became the slaves of Satan, ripening themselves for judgment; such judgment as both Peter and Jude describe.

Alas! for the number of such *now* in Christendom! Of such let young believers, yea all of us, beware, testing every thing by the simple word of God, and every man by the mind and ways of Christ. "No lie is of the truth, and whosoever denieth the Son hath not the Father"; whosoever deliberately refuses to acknowledge the simple equality of the Son with the Father (and that because He is the Son, see John v. 18, this even the blinded Jews perceived,) hath not the Father, is not

of God; should not have our confidence, as being Christians, nor the title Christians given to them.

Lastly, having instructed, comforted, exhorted, and warned, he proceeds to establish them in the certainty of life, saying, "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God that ye may *know* that ye have eternal life, ye that believe on the Son of God".

Doubtless there are many who have life, yet doubt their possession of it, aiming high in holiness, falling short of their standard, and not established in the truth, they get into a state of bondage, confounding experience and attainments, the results of life with the life itself; they do not see that although their experience is shallow and changing, and their walk defective, still they are children of God, and as such must possess life. God would have them know that they have it, and that it is eternal life; with this object in view, John finally wrote to the believers in his day, and to ourselves in them.

He would have them to know that nothing which he had written, no fearful description of character and conduct, no note of warning struck by him, no solemn exposure of evil nor fearful declaration of judgment could affect the great fundamental truth of the gospel, "He that believeth *hath* everlasting life."

H. H.

Merciful and faithful! full of truth and grace;
JESUS! PRIEST ETERNAL in the Holy Place!
Blood of expiation Thou presentest there;
GOD delights to answer Thy prevailing PRAYER.

All the sore temptation Thou on earth hast known,
Thou dost well remember, sitting on the Throne;
'Mid Thy Joy and GLORY, ne'er wilt Thou forget,
Curse and shame and travail, tears and bloody sweat.

Meek and lowly JESUS, from Thy seat on high,
On Thy feeble brethren beams Thy gracious eye;
Thou dost for our folly BLOOD atoning plead,
Sending timely succour to our every need.

From the Holiest cometh golden music sweet,
Singing that Thou livest on the Mercy Seat;
GOD accepts Thy person, in Thy WORK can rest;
Lo! our names are graven on Thy faithful breast.

Yea! Thy Spirit enters our frail tattered tent,
Pledge of coming GLORY, from the FATHER sent;
Knows HE all our weakness, sweetly intercedes,
With unuttered sighings for Thy saints HE pleads.

Thou hast heard our groaning, glorious PRIEST and KING,
Quickly Thou Thy brethren home to GOD wilt bring,
By Thy BLOOD of sprinkling sanctified and blest,
We with triumph enter GOD's eternal Rest. R. S. W.

THE NAMES BY WHICH WE ADDRESS OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST NOT A MATTER OF INDIFFERENCE.

DEAR BROTHER,—For some time I have been wishing to communicate to you thoughts I have had upon a subject which, I am sure, no one that is spiritual will consider altogether unimportant. I allude to a habit we seem to have fallen into of addressing the Lord Jesus, and speaking of Him, by the name of "Jesus". And let me say at once that in what follows I do not claim to speak with authority, though my own mind is very decided; but rather to suggest for others the train of thought which has led me to the decision I have formed. I once thought that the frequent use of the name of Jesus betokened spirituality of mind, and an apprehension of the place of nearness into which we have been brought. But a deeper study of scripture has greatly modified such a notion. I have learned that there are special truths which cluster round the several names of Jesus, Christ, and Lord; and that the use of these names, whether alone or in combinations, depends upon the truths which the Holy Spirit would suggest or make prominent. No one who believes the epistles to be the word of God can suppose the frequent changes in the use of these names is accidental, or to be accounted for on the ground of euphony. Take, for instance, the Epistle to the Ephesians: Paul, an apostle of *Jesus Christ*, to the saints in *Christ Jesus*: the salutation is from the *Lord Jesus Christ*; and the blessings are all in *Christ*. There must surely be teaching in this, and how interesting the study of it must be! Perhaps I may enter on this again: at present I only notice it in passing, and will pause merely to suggest the clue to it. The name "Jesus" speaks to us of the man who lived on earth; was crucified and raised again; who is now passed into the heavens as man; whom, moreover, God has made both Lord and Christ. (Acts ii. 36.) "Christ" brings in His official position and relationships in resurrection; and "Lord" reminds us of the power, the throne, the glory. An apostle was a witness of the resurrection of Jesus; (Acts i. 22) or in other words, one sent by Jesus to testify that He was Christ; and therefore Paul is called an apostle of Jesus Christ. It is in Him we are accepted, but it is in Him as risen from the dead. And so the word is, "to the saints in Christ Jesus". The same names are used, for it is the same person of whom the Spirit speaks; but they are transposed, because a different thought is prominent.

"Blessed in Jesus," "Chosen in Jesus," "Accepted in Jesus," and such like expressions, are very common with us, but quite unknown in Scripture. It is always "in Christ," and for the reason I have stated. The salutation is from Him as seated in the glory, and therefore from the Lord Jesus Christ.

And now, to return to the subject with which I started. When we kneel down and pray to the Lord Jesus, how ought we to address Him? Would it not be blessed to discover the Lord's mind in this matter? I should indeed deplore getting into bondage about it, for we are called to liberty; but let us not forget that liberty of the Spirit is liberty to do as the Spirit leads. If, then, I pray to the Lord, is it not the joy and strength of my heart to know that He is in the place of power, crowned with glory and honour; and will I not delight to acknowledge Him as such, and address Him as *Lord*? Or if I bow my knees to my God and Father, will I not gladly own that my prayer is in the name of One whom He has exalted—"In the name of the *Lord Jesus*". But to look at this in another aspect, let me ask, Does it not become us to call Him *Lord*? I would not forget the intimacy of the relationships into which we have been brought, or the tenderness of the ties by which love has bound us to Himself. But yet we must remember who *He* is, and what *we* are. He calls us His brethren. His Father is our Father; His God is our God;—but He will not take His place along with us and say, "Our Father; our God." How delicately He seeks to teach us this in His message to the disciples after the resurrection? (John xx. 17.) He is not ashamed to call us brethren; but I think the grace that gives us such a place would itself teach us to call Him *Lord*. And thus it was the disciples always addressed Him and spoke of Him; as appears in a very remarkable manner in the chapter to which I have just alluded (John xx., see vers. 2, 13, 18, 20, 25, 28.) No doubt, in the *narrative* of the gospels He is generally called Jesus, but there it is *God Himself* who speaks. I am not aware of any passage in which the disciples are said to have called Him Jesus, and indeed in one place He commends them for calling Him Master and Lord. (John xiii. 13.) We are not to expect commands to guide us in a case like this, but it does seem to me that that one word of the Lord's ought to be a sufficient expression of His mind to any heart that is true to Him—"Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well." If any would bring in here (for I would not) the relation

of bride as justifying a greater familiarity now, I would remind them that it is specially recorded of Sarah, she "obeyed Abraham, calling him lord".

I might enlarge upon this; but the foregoing is sufficient to convey my thought. And while I again disclaim any wish to press this upon others, I must add that I by no means deem it of little moment. I do not believe that it is the Lord's mind that we should address Him as, "O Jesus," "Blessed Jesus," "Dear Jesus". It jars upon one's spirit. I am sure that when on earth His own never addressed Him so; and I am no less sure that when we shall stand in the eternal glory to which we have been called, made like unto Him, faultless and blameless as Himself, we shall bow before Him and call Him Lord. Nay, shall we not fall down before Him, and cast our crowns before His throne. But, above all, in this the time of His rejection here, ought we not to insist on His title of Lord? Let us learn to speak of Him as the Lord. Let us address Him as Lord. Prayer to the Father is in His name as Lord. If we meet according to the promise of Matthew xviii. 20, we meet, not in the name of Jesus, but "In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. v. 4.) Thus let us constantly remind ourselves and one another, and testify to the world that Jesus Christ is Lord. Every tongue shall confess it one day to the glory of God the Father. May not *our* confession of it redound to His glory even now? A. R. D.

NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON,

By W. LINCOLN.

THE SECOND DIALOGUE, CH. I. 12—15.

NOW the Bride again speaks. She commences by alluding to His own words uttered in ver. 8 as to where He was sure to be found. He, the King, is sitting "at His table," or rather, He is ever present "in His circle,"* with the sheep and under-shepherds all gathered round Him.

But now first let us hear what He is to her! So shall we understand why we are first attracted unto Him; what is that magnet which first draws all of his little circle around Himself! Plainly then He is a "Bundle" and a Cluster—terms denoting the fulness of grace centred in Him, and of which all we receive and grace upon grace. There is no grace that is not in Him, aye

* The reader will observe that the word *sitteth* is in Italics, and not in the Hebrew. The other translation, "whilst the King is in His circle," is much more exact.

and in divine richness too. But some at least of each stream thereof flows into us, according to the abundance of that grace. And if we more fully believed and acted faith in Him, *rivers of living water* would ever be flowing out from us! Compare John i. 14—16; Col. i. 19, ii. 9—19. Myrrh signifies death, and hence to liken Him to a bundle of myrrh is to testify of the greatness of His love in dying for us. He gave HIMSELF for us. He poured out His soul or His life unto death. Isa. 53. See the words of Abigail to David, in 1 Sam. xxv. 29.

As to the word "camphire," or "gopher," there seems to me something wonderful and even mysterious therein. The Hebrew word is connected with our English word *cover*. This word is used with striking emphasis of the Ark, in Gen. vi. 14, which verse literally rendered reads thus: "Make thee an ark of the wood of Gopher, rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and thou shalt gopher it within and without with gopher." Is not this language designed to teach us that there was something which *exuded* from the gopher wood, rendering the ark a fit place of shelter? Now Christ Himself has shed that precious blood which covers all our sins. And this thought above suggested becomes further evident by sundry other translations in scripture of this same word, 'gopher,' or 'camphire'. Thus, in Exod. xxi. 30; xxx. 12; and Isaiah xliii. 3, it is rendered 'ransom'! Again, this same word in the plural is found in Exod. xxix. 36; xxx. 10 and 16; Levit. xxiii. 27, and xxv. 9, in each of which passages it is translated, 'atonement'! Once more, in Exod. xxv. 17; xxx. 6, and xxxi. 7, this same word 'gopher' or camphire is used for the mercy seat.* And so with Him in such endearing aspects does she desire to be occupied during the whole night of His bodily absence! This myrrh ('it' not 'He') she would have throughout this night betwixt her breasts. And this is what, ere He departed, He was pleased to ask of us and even to provide† that it should be so. "Do this," said He, "in remembrance of Me," and His servant Paul added, "until He come"; that is, until the night be quite gone.

* Some render the words in ver. 14 thus: "The man who covers all is my beloved" (or in ver. 13, well beloved, but the same Hebrew word) unto me, in the vineyards of the fountain of my blessing or Engedi." See 1 Sam. xxiv. 1.

† *την αναμνησιν* is much more than "in remembrance of me." For *αναμνησκω* is recordari facio, and has an active signification. The clause might be better rendered thus: "Do this to remind you of Me"!

Hence the Lord's supper is the expression of His own revealed will as to the divine mode of our united worship, and therefore should ever be the central action of His people in their main gathering around Him every Lord's day. It is not material at what hour of the day this great act of His people's worship, and of their fond remembrance of Him should take place. For all the while He is away it is one long and dreary night. They who argue from the word 'supper,' that it should be celebrated in the evening of the day, put natural before spiritual things instead of *vice versa*. No, on the contrary, our worship is at a supper, because our glory is not visible, and all around us is night. But "in His circle," and at His table, worship properly follows. "My spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." See John xii. 3. "The fruit of the Spirit is joy." Yea more; "in Thy presence is fulness of joy". Whilst all fulness is as we are taught in this very Scripture originally in Him, yet does He so delight to fill us, that we too overflow, and thus in our worship that we give to Him, as well as get from Him. 'Tis He who provides for all our need and for all our joy, represented in the symbol by the bread and cup upon the table. But as we eat and drink our hearts are filled, and we adore our God. Even of old, it was His injunction that when they appeared before Him they were not to appear before Him empty: that every one should give as he was able. Deut. xvi. 17. One of His ways with His people it would appear to have been from the outset, was to place them at their ease before Him, by enjoining upon them a feast. I will not cite the case of man unfallen in Paradise. But as soon as we read of redemption, even in type, there was at once instituted not only the sprinkling of blood, but the Passover feast. His own were to make merry, at the time that all Egypt trembled at what was impending. So again, in His original message calling them out of Egypt altogether, one object in this call was stated to be that they might hold a feast unto the Lord. (Exod. v. 1, and x. 9.) The people indeed, not understanding the way of grace, desired in their folly to be put under law. Further, when the kingdom in type and shadow began to be disclosed, David was led to "deal among all the people a cake of bread and a good piece of flesh, and a flagon of wine". (See 2 Sam. vi. 19.) Likewise, when the soul accepts the Lord as its Pastor or Shepherd, quickly it is constrained to declare: "Thou preparest a table before me, and my cup is a brimmer." Ps. 23. And therefore as He is not

now changed, but to-day as yesterday, the same, both when He welcomes sinners, a feast is provided for them, Luke xv. 23, Matt. xx.ii; and also when He receives His own into His presence in His circle, there is a supper of costly viands literally placed before them by Himself. Though will-worship and human religion may set aside all this beautiful way of His, still happy they who "do" as He bids them. Even as to His future kingdom, we have that word of His, corresponding to David's action of old to which we have adverted and found in Luke xxii. 30.

Now we come to His reply to this second word of hers to Him. And if that answer be brief, it is very much to the purpose. "Behold, thou art fair my love." How many Christians as they celebrate His dying love now a-days delight to express their love in such strains as:—

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

What I suggest by citing this specimen of their song at such times is that, in proportion as the word of His lips has been obeyed in these last days, so has His love been correspondingly grasped and enjoyed. Thus ever does blessing follow upon obedience.* And that this statement of His is introduced by the word 'Behold,' demonstrates how important it is. And that it is instantly repeated by Him, intensifies that importance. Or, the former clause may refer to His love of her ere she loved Him, and the latter may signify how pleasant it is to Him to hear her avow that throughout the night, however long it may continue (1 Sam. 24 ver. 1), she will love Him, and His love shall be most precious in her eyes, though He be despised and rejected, and as it were hunted up and down in this world, throughout the reign of the antitypical Saul. Let us not be afraid of this language of His praise of her identifying herself with His lot, as if it all militated against free grace. It is similar in style to what we have in John xvi. 27.

Specially He refers to her eyes of purity. Also in iv. 1, and in vi. 4, He commends her because her eyes are rivetted on Him. Therefore as the point of her second address had been as to how precious her beloved was to her, and how accordingly her desire was ever to

* Contrast the communion service of the Church of England, which while it abounds in the strongest language of the communicant's sins, yet has no place nor provision by any one rubric for a hymn at this time.

be with Him, so His words, though they be few, still they encourage her in this longing of her heart by the assurance of what she is to Him, with a hint probably added as to how she became so very beautiful. How can we be afraid of His presence, when we are beautiful—in His eyes—even as Himself. He is our life; He is our righteousness. All her beauty was obtained, as seems here alluded to, by her gazing upon Him. Man may choose for beauty's sake: God's way is first to choose and then to make beautiful. Man cannot do that. He took us into favour in Christ ere the world was made. And this fact, as to whence our beauty is all derived, the commencement of the third dialogue again continues to establish. For the bride, in ver. 16, uses His own words of ver. 15, and applies them back to Himself. As if she would impliedly say: Indeed all my beauty is of Thee! But here I am anticipating.

BAPTISM. WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURE?

(Concluded from our last.)

III. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BAPTISM.

WE proceed now to inquire what is the significance of baptism. We shall find that the introduction of infant baptism by sprinkling has tended greatly to hide and distort the meaning of the ordinance. At the very foundation of infant baptism is the supposition that baptism was given in the place of circumcision, and has the same import.* We hold this not only to be an erroneous but a hurtful belief. By thus forgetting the spiritual character of the Church, infants have been made "members" of it on their coming into the world, instead of believers on their coming "out of the world." And there has resulted that intimate connection between the Church and the world, which, besides deceiving the latter, has so blighted the spiritual life of the former.† Besides, the tendency to confound the Jewish and Christian dispensations has rendered it well nigh impossible for modern believers to rise to their position, and enter into the enjoyment of their peculiar privileges in grace. We shall not, then, consider it waste of time attentively to inquire into this matter.

* We do not stay to inquire how, if this be so, those who were circumcised were nevertheless also baptised; and how Paul circumcised the baptised, but till then uncircumcised, half-Jew, Timothy. (Acts xvi. 3.) If baptism came in the place of circumcision, why both administered in these cases?

† Cf., 2 Cor. vi. 14.

The supposed analogy between baptism and circumcision is generally stated somewhat thus:—"The Covenant made with Abraham was essentially the same as the Covenant of Grace under which we live. And as circumcision was the sign and seal of that Covenant, so is baptism the sign and seal of this. Therefore, also, as children were circumcised under the Old Covenant; so should they be baptised under the New." This statement is both unsound in principle and faulty in expression.

The fault in expression, in calling baptism the "seal of the Covenant," calls for notice, as distorting the significance of baptism. It is connected with the old superstitious notion of a "charm" in the ordinance. The fact is, that neither circumcision nor baptism are seals of the Covenant. To what end are seals? Henry says these are to "to ratify or confirm the Covenant;" or they are to stamp and certify. Now these two ordinances are not seals of the Covenant; for we are nowhere told that God confirmed His Covenant by a seal at all. When He wished to show the immutability of His counsel, "He confirmed it by an oath;" and it is derogatory to His perfect truth to suppose that His Covenant required a seal. His promise and His oath are all that He has given;* and they are surely enough.

Circumcision is indeed spoken of as a seal. It was the seal to Abraham of his righteousness.† It stamped and certified that righteousness of faith, not from any virtue in itself, but as the sign or mark of God's particular favour, as the sign, namely, of the other covenant whereby God separated Abraham's descendants as a peculiar earthly people to Himself. And even as to Abraham this special mark of God's favour was given as sealing or certifying his righteousness of faith, so also to us a seal is given—a spiritual seal—even "the Holy Spirit of God, whereby we are sealed unto the day of redemption."‡ But, as we have seen, neither circumcision nor baptism are seals of the Covenant. They are signs. Baptism is the sign of the covenant of Grace, as circumcision was the sign to the Jew of the covenant under which he was.

Well now—and here we enter on the consideration of the unsoundness of the analogy in its principle—it is said that as infants receive the sign of the Old Covenant, which is substantially the same as the New,

* Hebrews vi. 17, 18.

† Rom. iv. 11.

‡ Eph. i. 20; cf. i. 13; 2 Cor. i. 22.

so ought infants now to receive the sign of the latter, as they stand in the same relation to the Covenant. This is a fallacy, the fallacy known as "*petitio principii*"; for it assumes the very matter in question. And we have already seen that the assumption is false; that infants do not occupy the same relation to the New Covenant as Jewish infants did to theirs. The flesh now profiteth nothing. If the analogy holds good at all, it is on this wise: that as the descendants of Abraham after the flesh received circumcision in infancy, so should his spiritual seed* receive baptism in infancy, *i.e.* the infants in the latter case must be spiritual infants—"babes in Christ". (1 Cor. iii. 1.) The analogy, then, if it holds good at all, excludes from baptism all but believers; for they alone are the true spiritual seed.

But further, the Covenant of which circumcision was the sign was not "essentially the same" as that under which believers are. The one was of the nature of Law, the other is of Grace: the one was of the flesh, the other is of the spirit: the one was bondage, the other is the freedom of Christ. Paul distinctly tells us that there are two Covenants.† The Covenant of Grace is that whereby Abraham and his spiritual seed are saved in their spiritual union with Christ in faith. The Covenant of Circumcision was that wherein Abraham's seed after the flesh were a peculiar earthly people to Jehovah. The Covenant of Circumcision the same as the Covenant of Grace! See the death-penalty under which it was given:‡ hear how the Jew boasts of it as the foundation and initial work of legal righteousness:§ note how Peter identifies circumcision with the law, and how the Council at Jerusalem ratifies his opinion:|| and mark Paul's word, that he who "is circumcised is a debtor to do the whole law."¶ And who shall say that the Covenants are the same? Thus we see that the supposed analogy is an error. It is founded on a confusion between the two Covenants—an error the tendency of which is to introduce that legal spirit which makes Christ profit us nothing.**

(2.) We have thus seen that the prevalent notion that baptism has been given in the place of circumcision

is erroneous. We shall find, however, if we search and look, that Scripture is not silent as to the significance of this ordinance; while the scriptural significance is not intelligible, unless the form be immersion, and the subjects believers. I trust that the study of this point may be fraught with the same blessing to my reader as it has been to myself.

We know that there are two great features of our Christian life: the belief of the heart, and the outward open confession.* Now we find that baptism is associated with faith (in our Lord's institution of it, as well as in Apostolic practice) just as open confession is. For baptism is intended to be the first solemn overt act of confession. And as such, it is fraught with great significance. Not only does it signify our discipleship, as being baptised into Christ as Master, but also our complete union with Him: we who "have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."† We are identified with Him in His death, and buried with Him by baptism:‡ laying aside—burying out of sight—our old dead flesh. For the going down into the water signifies that we have died, and are buried, with Christ. We see this very beautifully in two great Old Testament figures. For the Old Testament is God's own picture-book of the New. As these eight souls Noah and his family, were saved "through the water"§ by their being in the Ark; even so we who are believers are brought through the waters of the wrath of God, safe in our union with Christ in His unspotted righteousness. So also the children of Israel, after their deliverance from Egypt, passed safely with Moses through these same waters of death which drowned Pharaoh and his hosts.|| Hence Peter, in the passage referred to above,¶ calls baptism "the answer of a good conscience towards God," as signifying our boldly entering into these waters of death with Christ. And further, in our coming up out of the water, is signified our rising with Him, in acceptance, to "walk in newness of life". And we are also reminded of the glorious hope of the Church; for "if we have been planted together in the

* Rom. iv. 11.

† Galatians iv. 24.

‡ Genesis xvii. 14.

§ Romans ii. 23.

|| Acts xv. 10, 24.

¶ Gal. v. 3.

** Gal. v. 2.

* Romans x. 10.

† Gal. iii. 27.

‡ Romans vi. 3, 4.

§ See 1 Peter iii. 20, 21; "by water," *i.e.*, "through or out of the water;" for surely the waters of the flood were waters of death.

|| Hebrews xi. 28, 29; *cf.*, also x. 22.

¶ 1 Peter iii. 21.

likeness of His death, we shall be also (in the likeness) of (His) resurrection."*

All these things, which are of the hidden life of the believer, are openly avowed and visibly represented in baptism. And what a power this outward avowal and representation should be! What a power is lost in the loss of it! If I honestly and intelligently submit to the ordinance of baptism, how shall I continue in sin or conformity to the world; for I am not dead to both? Or how can I continue in darkness of soul, when there is so clearly represented to me my eternal resurrection-life in Christ Jesus? How beautifully fitted such an ordinance is for the first act of confession of Christ: the humbly but loyally and resolutely going "forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach:" gladly, as reckoning that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory wherewith Christ and His people shall be glorified together.†

CONCLUSION.

We have seen, then, from the meaning of the name of the ordinance, from the practice of it in the early Church, and from its nature and significance, that immersion is the form in which baptism ought to be administered. We have further seen how it was instituted solely for believers: that in the early Church it was administered only to them; and that it is only intelligently applicable to them. Shall we, then, on any paltry plea of excuse or sentiment, alter the command of our Master? Can we do so without loss? Alas! we have seen that we cannot. Let us, then, in all humility and love, render to Him perfect obedience. How precious it is to obey the Lord, who hath so loved us! Dare any of us say, "It is not essential: I can be saved without baptism"? Is this not the grudging service of the slave, knowing no motive but the terror of the lash? Be it ours, rather, the more we see of what has been done for us, the more eagerly to obey. Does Peter‡ argue that faith and the gift of the Holy Ghost rendered the baptism of believers unnecessary? No; these gifts establish their right (v. 47) to baptism, and make it their duty (v. 48) to perform this act of obedience.

* Cf., Col. ii. 12; Romans vi. 4, 5. The words within parenthesis in the above quotation from the latter passage, are not in the Greek: the sense of the original is "sharers or partakers of resurrection."

† Romans viii. 17, 18.

‡ Acts x. 47, 48.

But does the reader hesitate as to the duty of being "rebaptized," as it is called? The first question for you, brother, is this:—Have you received Christian baptism? I have sought, under the guidance of the Spirit, to lay before you the form and significance of this ordinance, which Christ instituted for His disciples. The name "baptism" cannot make the ordinance. If you have not, then, received baptism, as a disciple, in the form prescribed by the Master, and so met its significance, and made the desired profession, you have not received Christian baptism at all. The next question then is this:—How long will you decline to obey the oft-repeated command of the Lord who has bought you? Oh that you might have the simple, willingly obedient love of the Ephesian disciples, who gladly availed themselves of the new light given them by the Lord through Paul as to this very question.† "Why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized." And you shall surely find that in boldly confessing your Lord, and in seeking to share His mind, and to enter into your right place of complete union to Him, and complete separation from the world, there is great strength and peace, that passeth understanding.

A. H. L. F.

JONATHAN AND SAUL.

1 SAMUEL XVIII.

WHEN David returned from his victory over Goliath, there was one heart which was immediately and irresistibly attracted to him by a love which counted no sacrifice too great, and which lived on, undiminished, until death. David had appeared before Saul, and had recalled his name to the king's remembrance. He had once lived at court and served the king, but "favour is deceitful," and Saul had forgotten him. "But when he had done speaking unto Saul, the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul. . . . Then Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul." And Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword, and to his bow, and to his girdle." We know not how soon he learned the fact of David's secret anointing as the future king of Israel, but that was not a fact which David could have concealed when they thus

† Acts xix. 1, 6.

made a covenant together. To Jonathan the discovery was a searching test. His own hopes of sovereignty were gone, and he saw in his friend the man who was to supersede him. But nothing altered his affection. He rejoiced in the prospect of this beloved one reigning over Israel; his father's warnings never shook his faithfulness (xx. 31); again and again he gave proofs of a most devoted unselfish love, reminding David how they had sworn, both of them, in the name of the Lord, and seeking amidst all Saul's persecutions to strengthen his hand in God. (xv. 42; xxiii. 16.) Where shall we find in all secular history of a kingdom thus cheerfully resigned, or of love thus triumphing over all pride and ambition? But Jonathan saw in David the chosen of the Lord, and remembered his deliverance of Israel, and loved in him the graces which fitted him to reign.

And Saul at first favoured David and promoted him to honour. But when his exploits were eclipsed and his fame was in danger, envy and hatred followed. Yet he was afraid of him (xviii. 12), and knew well that the Lord was with him. From that time forth, he laboured to defeat the divine purposes, and to rob David of the throne. As his hatred and terror grew he plunged on from one measure of guilt to another; notwithstanding proofs of David's tenderness to him, resolute in his resistance to God's will, till at length he had to own that he had "played the fool and erred exceedingly" (xxvi. 21), and finally that he was sore distressed, for the Philistines made war against him, and God had departed from him and answered him no more either by prophet or dream. (xxviii. 15.) So he dies, himself the defeated one, and the rejected David took the crown and subdued all his enemies around him.

There is a deep practical lesson for us in this contrast, and we may see it exhibited to us again more than once in the New Testament. How lovely is the picture of John the Baptist pointing away his disciples to another who was to increase while he decreased, and likening his joy to the joy of the friend of the Bridegroom! How touching, too, those words of Paul, "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ and be found in Him!" (Phil. iii. 8). And so

as we see the love of Mary, who poured her precious ointment on His head; and of Mary, who lingered near His tomb, how fully do we discern a strength of love to His person rising above all other thoughts and feelings.

On the other hand, we have proof enough that Simeon's words were true (Luke ii. 55), that by His coming, the thoughts of many hearts should be revealed. "They hated me without a cause," was His own testimony of His enemies. They could not bear the thought that He whom they knew only as Jesus of Galilee should reign over them. They would not stoop to His yoke, nor even own the wonders of His power and grace. For "envy is the rottenness of the bones" (Prov. xiv. 30), and this was the root of their hatred. (Matt. xxvii. 18.) He spake as they could not; He healed diseases which they were powerless to heal, He gave sight to the blind and raised the dead; and so the common people followed Him, and heard Him gladly. And thus, just as the praises of David exasperated Saul, the priests were roused to hold a council against Jesus to destroy Him. (Matt. xii. 14.)

We may see the very same contrast in our day. There are those who have seen in the Lord that which has won their hearts, and the love of Christ now constrains them to serve Him. They long to be like Him, and look to be with Him for ever. He is the end of all their labours, and His glory their aim and their delight. To suffer loss for His sake, to be permitted to yield up anything for Him, and to have fellowship with Him in His rejection, constitute their highest honour and joy. And on the other hand, He is despised and rejected, His easy yoke is scorned, His love is slighted, He is persecuted in His members, and the coming of His kingdom is the very last thing for which many are prepared. There may be the poor homage of the lip, but when a testing moment comes, it is seen at once that other lords have dominion over them. And thus it has ever been and will be. "What think ye of Christ?" is the test and touchstone of the heart. Hereby we may examine ourselves. Jesus must be first in our affections. He must reign over us in reality and power, till every thought is brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. As we fall short of this, and still are under the power of other affections—minding earthly things—in that proportion are we living to ourselves, and not to Him who died for us. He will not have a divided affection. It is to His own

that He says, "My son, give me thine heart." And can He not plead with us, and say to all who know Him, "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel, a land of darkness?" (Jer. ii. 31.) Has any good thing that He promised failed? Is He not able abundantly to satisfy the soul, and to reward a thousand-fold for every loss or suffering endured for His sake? Perhaps there are few of us who are not shamed by the thought of Jonathan's quenchless love, and of his happiness in the hope that David would one day sit on the throne which once he regarded as his own. Yet this is a feeble type of the love we ought to have to Him who loved us and died for us, and who is now preparing a place for us, and will come again to receive us to Himself. May the Lord teach us the lesson, and write it on our hearts.

Do not I love Thee, O my Lord?

Behold my heart and see;

And tear each hated idol down

Which dares to rival Thee!

Do not I love Thee from my heart?

Then let me nothing love;

Dead be my heart to every joy,

When Jesus cannot move.

Is not His Name melodious still

To my attentive ear?

Does not each pulse with pleasure beat,

My Saviour's Name to hear?

So may it be. When evil days come may many be found, as in earlier times, who will willingly surrender all for Him, knowing that in heaven they have "a better and enduring substance," and yield up life itself for His Name, in the joyful hope of soon seeing Him as He is.

M. W.

EXODUS XV. XVI.

BELOVED brother, last evening I was reading Ex. xv. 16, and it struck me very distinctly that it gives us the character of the journey which Israel at the outset are to expect to find in the wilderness. As soon as they step into it they are assailed by drought, and even when they come to water, it is Marah, and this was the wilderness of Shur. Again, they speedily find a lack of bread as well as of water. This was the wilderness of Sin. It was the wilderness still, the aspect may change, but all was wilderness. They

murmur (xv. 24; xvi. 2)—they act according to nature—nature was not getting its ordinary supplies, and this nature resents. There was no principle of faith in their souls, and nature or unbelief must be rebuked. The murmurers are called before the Lord, and the glory appears in the cloud (xvi. 10). Sin had made God to show Himself. A bad conscience in the camp had disturbed the glory in its rest. But mercy rejoices against judgment, there was no visitation of sin beyond this conviction of it in the light of the glory. As often now, dear brother, the Lord in like grace shews Himself in convicting light to the conscience, He lets the reins chasten us, but He does no more as to judgment, and He brings the needed supply in comfort, but from Himself. He heals Marah with a tree which He shewed Moses, and rains down bread from His own granary in heaven.

Now all this process is called a "statute and an ordinance," (xv. 25) by which I understand that this was God's ordained plan or process with Israel in the wilderness. This was designed to *prove* them: (xv. 26; xvi. 4). This was a process by which they were taught two great lessons, 1st, that they were to expect nothing *out* of God; 2nd, that they were to expect everything *in* God. Such was the statute, such the ordinance of the wilderness. Such was their probation there, and he was most according to God's mind and purpose who was learning those lessons the best. And this at once gives God His wilderness title, "I am the Lord that healeth thee." Jehovah Rophi—for healing implied that Israel in themselves were out of order—that there was no healthfulness in them, but that God had sure and certain medicine for them. It told them expressly that they were in themselves needy, but that God was their sufficiency (xv. 26). This was His memorial *then*, but it is His memorial *still*. He is still the Healer God. We learn our diseased state, but know Him as the sure Physician. We take our place as those who have destroyed themselves but have their help in Him, and so this will be His memorial for ever. (Rev. xxii. 2). He will be known as the Healer for ever. It was otherwise in Eden. There the tree of life was to maintain creation life in its primitive integrity, in its original unhurt condition. But in the glory this Tree will be presented as a healing Tree, for the Adam or creation life is gone, and the life existing then will be the life of redeemed sinners—of such ones who have known the Son of God

as their Physician. The virtue of that new and eternal Tree is taught us here in the wilderness. The water was bitter but the Tree cured it; we learn the very principle of that joy, which is to be in the glory while still as in bodies of sin and death, indeed then and then only we learn it. The water must be bitter ere the virtue of the tree can be known.

J. G. B.

SIMPLE TRUTHS FOR CHRISTIANS.

The Saviour told the Apostles to teach the disciples all the things which He had commanded them. Christians should learn and observe all things taught by Him and His Apostles; all things taught in all the Scriptures understood in the light of the Gospel; and all things practised by the early Christians and sanctioned by the Apostles, as recorded in the Scriptures.

Matt. xxviii. 20. 2 Peter iii. 2. 1 Cor. xi. 2.

Before the Redeemer died He commanded the disciples to break and eat bread, and to drink wine in remembrance of Him. This was the institution of the Lord's Supper. All disciples of Jesus should observe this institution until He shall come again.

Matt. xxvi. 26-29. Mark xiv. 22-25. Luke xxii. 19, 20. 1 Corinthians xi. 23-25.

It appears that the early Christians came together to observe the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week, the day which is now called Sunday, on which day the Lord Jesus rose from the dead, and the simple inference is, that it was every first day of the week.

Acts xx. 7.

After the observance of the Lord's Supper, the first time, Jesus being present with the disciples, he taught and exhorted them, and they sung an hymn, and this appears to have been the practice afterwards, that is, at the season of the observance of the the Lord's Supper, they gave thanks, prayed, sung, exhorted, &c.

Matthew xxvi. 30. Mark xiv. 26. John xiii. xiv. 1 Corinthians xi., xii., xiv.

The Lord's Supper is an institution which is intended to gather together the Lord's people. It would appear better and safer that Christians should avoid the practice of giving it even to Christians on sick beds; such a practice may degenerate, and indeed has degenerated into a superstitious and dangerous thing. It is a sinful and delusive thing to administer it to a dying unbeliever as a preparation for death.

Acts xx. 7. 1 Cor. xi. 20. Romans iv. 4, 5.

When Christians assemble together for worship, respectable people should not sit in one part of the room, and poor people in another. There should not be cushions and footstools for the rich, while the poor are left without them. To avoid everything of this kind, it is a good way for the worshippers to avoid always selecting the same seats, but frequently to change their places.

James ii. 1-6.

When the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead and ascended to the Father, He sent, according to the promise, the Holy Spirit, to abide with His people. The Lord's people had the Holy Spirit, and were taught by Him, before the resurrection of the Lord Jesus; but since that, the Holy Spirit is with them as an indwelling Spirit.

Psalms li. 11, 12. Haggai ii. 5. John xiv. 16, 17, 26; xv. 26; xvi. 7, 13. Acts ii. 1-33.

When the Lord Jesus ascended to Heaven, He received from the Father, and sent to His people, various gifts; these, among others, are specified:—Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers. There are now no Apostles of Jesus Christ; for to be an Apostle of Jesus Christ, one must see Him, and come directly from Him. Nor do we see now in the Church, Prophets—that is, persons foretelling things by the immediate inspiration of the Holy Spirit, independent of the scriptures.

Ephesians iv. 7-12. 1 Corinthians xii. 28. (See 1 Cor. iv. 9, marginal reading.)

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IN one of my early papers on this precious little book, I remarked that the entire Song consisted of eight dialogues reaching on to chap. viii. 4. And I added that the first four were very short, and the last four were considerably longer;—the first four being more doctrinal, and the latter, from being more tinged with precept and with experience, more expanded. Now in the four verses which comprise the third dialogue, viz., i. 16 to ii. 2, the first three verses are the voice of the bride, and the last verse contains the reply of the bridegroom.

Now in the last verse of the preceding dialogue, i. 15, her Lord had said, "Behold, thou art fair," and had even repeated His assurance of His admiration of her, and then He seems to convey a hint as to how she had become so beautiful, seeing that by nature she was quite the reverse. She had gazed on Him, and so had she been accordingly cleansed, and so had she been accordingly transformed. And to this agrees the language of the Bride when here again she accosts Him. For now she takes up His words and applies them to Him, saying, "Behold, Thou art fair, my beloved". Surely her thought in this hearty utterance of hers was intended to imply that her beauty, all of it, was derived from Himself. What had she that she had not received? Besides which she conjoins another word about Him, explanatory of what He is in her eyes. "Yea, pleasant," is her little superadded expression to His own language applied back to Himself.

By this brief clause she calls to mind how utterly changed she was to what she had been. When she knew Him not she had hated Him, but having come actually to know Him, she is attracted to Him from Whom formerly she was wont to flee away. First, the Holy Ghost uses our sins and our need to drive us to Him. But having come to Him, we perceive how much more there is in Him than merely to meet all this. In other words, we come to love Him for His own sake; to prize Him for all that He is.

The last words of verse 16 appear to me to be in close connection with verse 17. In the other part of verse 16, she had spoken of Him; but here and in verse 17, she speaks of their rest and their house. Our bed or rest beneath (Psalm xxiii. 2), and the beams of our house and our rafters which are above, are alike unchanging and eternal. We who believe do enter into rest, His own rest, "My rest," as it is termed in Heb. iii. and iv. There is a rest when as sinners we come weary and heavy laden unto Him. Then when we seek to obey Him and to take His yoke upon us, we find rest. The former is a rest *given* to the sinner; the latter is a rest *found* by the obedient believer. But neither of these two rests comes up to the rest of Heb. iii. and iv. That is His own rest—"My rest". In fact, the very language is different in the original, for in Matt. xi., each of the two "rests" there spoken of is termed in the Greek an "up rest". But in the rest of Heb. iii. and iv., the language is almost invariably a "down rest". The only exception there, is when we read that there remains a sabbath-keeping to the people of God. This, of course, looks quite on to the future. Thus God is leading and

training us to rest under His own eye, and making us to know that there is no rest perfect and abiding but in His own blessed presence. But together we shall rest in His love, and He will joy over us with singing; whilst wherever He is, there we are destined to be and that for ever. For thus I understand the reference in the words "cedar and fir," the two woods which have a most enduring character. And observe that she speaks to Him as if all were possessed in common by Him and His. And this we know to be actually the case, as is stated in 1 Cor. iii. 21, even up to all the Father's love in Christ passing on to us in Christ. Hence here we read of "*our* bed," and "*our* house," and "*our* rafters". And even in a more intimate sense than dwelling for ever with Him, even now we get the scriptural intimation that we dwell in Him and He in us; that we are His temple, who yet dwell in God; that we are His inheritance, even as also He is ours. (Eph. i. 14-18.)

Wherefore, overpowered by considerations of such grace as this bestowed upon her, and of which she had been so utterly unworthy, her exclamation regarding her nothingness and how it becomes her to take a lowly place forms the due conclusion of her address in this third dialogue. "I," or "as for me, I am *A* rose," or "an autumn crocus," or "meadow saffron of Sharon," or "the plain country and *A* lily of the valleys".* This language of abasement flows naturally from the renewed spirit of one so exalted by His Father's favour and His own grace as she His bride has been. For if we are much in His eyes, we shall surely be little in our own. For now contrast His reply—"As a lily among thorns so is my love among the daughters". (ii. 2). How utterly diverse is a lily to thorns! These are fit for nothing but to be burned, but a lily is so beautiful though yet so often escapes observation, as to be unseen save by Him who put it there. And another perfect contrast the Lord made between His own little flock and the world when He was upon the earth. For, said He, "Behold I send you forth as sheep (or lambs, in Luke x. 3),

* There is no "The" before either rose or lily. In each case, the words are anarthrous. Gesenius, a great Hebrew scholar, renders the word for rose by the autumn crocus, or otherwise by the meadow saffron. As to Sharon, there was as we know a place so called, but its proper meaning is a plain. I am aware that many consider that in this verse it is the Lord Himself who speaks. I have little or no doubt that such are mistaken. His reply is in the next verse. Then all is clear. True, He also says a lily. For you could hardly say the lily among thorns. Besides He takes up her words.

among wolves". But what a great difference in nature and in character between these two. Oh! would that the utter contrariety between the children of God and the children of the devil were more commonly borne in mind by the former. The distinct perception and remembrance of this difference might probably prove salutary even to some of the latter class, as it certainly would be helpful to the former. How can the unconverted realize their awful condition, if they behold the children of God freely joining with them in multitudes of things, when God would lead them to separation from such, and in many cases even to the extreme and absurd extent of attempting to worship along with the unconverted. That is to say, thorns and lilies, wolves and lambs together addressing God as their own Father. The truth is, the world has never yet had a full consciousness of the awful infinite difference between the two classes of saints and sinners pressed upon its attention; but rather the common practice has been to regard all or nearly all as true believers, notwithstanding the wide gulf existing between them. But this has been bridged over by fleshly reverence and natural piety and religiousness; merely wood, hay, and stubble in the day of the Lord's appearing. He, the Lord, knoweth them that are His, and very soon, indeed, probably nearer the time are we than we are prone to think, He will present the one class before the Presence of His glory with exceeding joy, whilst the wicked He will consign to the lake of fire where they have no rest, and where the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.

In brief, therefore, the sentiment conveyed in this third dialogue seems to be, on her part—"Oh! to be like Him". His reply conveys further the assurance that He can never confound any others with those whom he so loves. We will attempt to gather the four desires together, when we come to the close of the next dialogue, which is the conclusion of the first part of this Song.

ASCENSION DAY, 10th May.

BEING a holiday in these parts, again found many of the Christians from the Canton de Vaud gathered in a large barn, kindly lent for the purpose, some little way above the village of Morges, which is situated on the banks of the Lake of Geneva.

It was a fine day, and the brilliant sunshine on the mountains, still covered with the winter's snow, and on

the bright green and flower-covered fields around us—with the blue lake at our feet and Mount Blanc rising in the background—its top wrapped in clouds, rendered the scene indeed a lovely one, and led on in thought to that day when He whose right it is to reign shall come and claim *His* kingdom and take *His* place as earth's rightful Lord.

Amongst those taking a part in the meeting was our aged and beloved brother, M. Olivier, who, although over 80, spent the day amongst us, also M. Faux, Betty, and other brethren.

The meeting began at 10 A.M. with singing and several prayers. The first chapter to the Ephesians was then read and expounded by different brethren till noon, when all dispersed around the house to partake of the lunch each one had provided. One hour and a half were thus spent in brotherly intercourse, to refresh former friendship, or to make new acquaintances in the family of God.

At 1:30 P.M. the meeting was opened with the same spiritual exercises. The 58th chapter of Isaiah was read, and much was said "against doing our own will," on verses 3 and 13.

Then the subject of baptism was touched on, which at the present time is occupying the minds of many; and we would ask the prayers of the Lord's people that it may not be only an outward form gone through, but that the power of the truth conveyed in the outward figure may be more and more manifested in the life and walk of all following in this step of obedience.

Thus ended another re-union, and perhaps the last before the coming great gathering at the coming of our Lord for His saints. J. A. B.

SHADOWS OF CHRIST.

PART X.

MOSES.

"The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."—DEUT. xviii. 15.

IN Moses, the deliverer, the law-giver, and the mediator of Israel, much is to be learned of Him who, in each of these characters, is his great antitype.

At the very outset, the circumstances of his birth are peculiarly suggestive.

As the time of the promise drew near, the chosen people—the elect seed—grew and multiplied in Egypt. But Egypt grew none the better, rather did the multi-

plication of the people of Jehovah's choice rouse the enmity of the seed of the serpent, until in fear and hate the edict goes forth that every male child shall perish at its birth.

Another time of promise drew near—even the birth of Israel's seed, of the man child who is destined to rule all nations. Again the ire of the serpent's seed is roused to its fiercest pitch, and fear and hate combined to cause the issue of another murderous edict—that every child in Bethlehem of two years old and under should be slain.

But Moses in his day and the Lord Jesus Christ in His, were the God-appointed deliverers of a chosen race, and the purposes of grace that fill the heart of God are not to be frustrated, however they may be opposed or even seemingly deferred by the malice of the enemy.

The hiding of the child Moses for three months by his parents is, in Heb. xi. 23, attributed to their faith. He was a "goodly child" (Ex. ii. 2), "a proper child" (Heb. xi. 23), "exceeding fair" or "fair to God" (Acts vii. 20). These expressions seem to indicate something more than that admiration of the parent for its own that is familiar to us all. Something must have been seen by those believing parents that warranted their faith in his being the future deliverer of Israel. Perhaps they indeed regarded him as the promised seed who was to bruise the serpent's head—faith ever longed for this, to be the mother of the Great Deliverer was the cherished hope of Israel's daughters. Often were fondly cherished hopes disappointed, as plainly appears in the case of Eve when she named Cain, saying "I have gotten the man from the Lord," and it may be that partial disappointment awaited the parents of Moses, but however that may be, their faith at least counted upon God for his preservation and waited for the fruit that would surely ripen from so fair a bud.

But may there not be in all this a foreshadowing of Him who, though "His visage was more marred than any man's," was yet in His own person from infancy to glory "fairer than the sons of men," "the chief among ten thousand and altogether lovely".

Painters have sought with greater zeal than wisdom to depict the countenance of the Lord of Glory. But in no scripture of the New Testament do we find any allusion whatever to His personal appearance. On this the Holy Spirit of God has maintained strict

silence. Nor is it for us to pry into that which God has withheld. By-and-by "we shall see Him as He is". But is it not rather the moral grace and beauty and glory of the Son of God that we are called adoringly to discover; and is it not as the wondrous beauty of His character is unfolded to our view that our hearts find suited expression in the very language of the seers of old?

Faith next commits the cherished one to the ark of bulrushes by the river's brink, and God's providences never fail to wait upon the motions of His grace. Still is this well known to those who have eyes to see it.

The mother is sent for to be the nurse; and in time the child is delivered up to Pharaoh's daughter, and she names him Moses (drawn out), "and, she said, because I drew him out of the water".

Connecting with this Ps. xviii. 16—"He sent from above, He took me, He drew me out of great waters"—a passage which evidently refers to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and in which the same Hebrew verb is used. It is not hard to see that even the name of Moses, and the circumstance of his being laid in the river, and saved out of it, tells the story of a Resurrection Deliverer.

The next time we see Moses, it is not hard to discern in him *the heart* of a deliverer.

"When he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the Children of Israel; and seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian, for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God, by His hand, would deliver them; but they understood not." (Acts vii. 23-25.)

He "*visited*," he "*looked on their burdens*" (Ex. ii. 11), he "*defended*," he "*avenged*".

Such are the ways of our God in Christ Jesus. "Forasmuch as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also, Himself, likewise took part of the same, that through death He might destroy him that hath the power of death, that is the devil, and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." (Heb. ii. 14, 15.)

Thus the Lord of Glory, that he might be the Kinsman-Redeemer, identified Himself with the bond-slaves of Satan. As it has been well said, "He came so near that He could redeem, but not so near that He could be defiled". And not only did He become

partaker of flesh and blood; He visited and looked upon the burdens of those to whom He thus allied Himself.

Such was the spirit of His three years' public ministry. He was not found in kings' houses, or dwelling among those who are clothed in soft raiment, but amongst the poor, the blind, the halt, the maimed, the devil-possessed, the leprous, the dying, the dead. And with what a heart He looked on their burdens!

It is written that "the Children of Israel *sighed* by reason of their bondage," but it is also written of our great Deliverer that, in the tender sympathies of His heart, He *sighed* as He looked up to heaven, finding in that glance up to His Father His resource and consolation, as He turned from the deaf and dumb, whom He was about to restore. (Mark vii. 34.) Again, at the unbelief of the Pharisees, "He *sighed* deeply in spirit". (Mark viii. 12). Again, "He looked round upon them with anger, being grieved by the hardness of their hearts". Again, see how He defends the Satan-bound woman in Luke xiii., so that "all His adversaries were ashamed".

And follow Him to the grave of Lazarus. Listen there to His groans. Behold His tears, and learn the heart of Him who has espoused our cause, and perfected Himself through sufferings to be the Captain of our Salvation.

But Moses was not understood. Even those he sought to deliver resented his interference as an intrusion.

And so thoroughly is man the slave of Satan, that yet he knows not the hand that would deliver. "He hates the light because his deeds are evil." He hugs the very chains that bind him. "Though He had done so many miracles" (all of them miracles of gracious deliverance) "before them, yet they believed not on Him" (John xii. 37)—and love that would have saved, disappointed and grieved, lingers and weeps on Olivet over the guilty city that knew not the day of its visitation.

The avenging time has not yet come; but it hastens on.

Of Moses, it might be written as of the Lord Himself—"He came unto His own, but His own received Him not". Rejected by them, he flies to the wilderness, and there again a scene occurs that shows the heart of the deliverer.

The seven daughters of the priest of Midian, driven away by the shepherds—in whom is seen the true

character of the world, where might is right and self is ever first—find at once in Moses a champion. His was not the spirit that could quietly stand by and see the weak oppressed—He boldly stood up and helped them, and instead of suffering them to be hindered, he watered their flock.

The reception he met with in the house of the Gentile was strangely different from that which he met with from Israel. Here, though a stranger, he is received without suspicion. He had helped the feeble—he had sought no recompence. For a little while he was left without, a stranger still, but soon he is seen a dweller there and for his reward a wife is given him, by whom he has a son—"Gershom"—for he said, "I have been a stranger in a strange land".

Surely in this, as well as in the similar story of the marriage of Joseph, there is a type of the elect bride now being gathered and espoused unto Christ, chiefly from among the Gentile, and during the time that, rejected by His own people, he is hid from their view.

Thus it is that the Gentile stranger is brought into a nearer and dearer relationship to Israel's deliverer than even his kindred of Israel's seed. J. R. C.

THE PSALMS.

[THE following suggestive paper we take from one of the old "Letters of Brethren," published in 1841. It contains much that is now familiar to many, but which remains, unhappily, quite unknown, and therefore unconsidered, by many others. These remarks, of course, do not exhaust the subject, but they will suffice to indicate the true key to the right interpretation of a Book which is often strangely misapplied.]

AFTER being so long accustomed to consider the Psalms as adapted to Christian worship, there is some difficulty in coming to the simple interpretation of this important portion of Scripture truth; but the labour is so delightful, and the reward of comparing one passage of the word of God with others, so great, that I believe we shall all find the blessing of searching out the literal meaning of this wonderful Book, and may the Holy Spirit of Truth direct the examination. I only submit to you some thoughts which have occurred to me in reading the Psalms with this view, after having my mind directed to the subject by some

esteemed Brethren. I think we have all felt at times how difficult, yea how impossible it is, to adopt language so unfitted to our standing before God and to our position in the world, as we find in many, perhaps most, of the Psalms; and how much less they are suited to the lips of the unconverted. But have we diligently enquired to whom these portions do apply? I believe the full answer is to be found chiefly in the prophetic parts of Scripture, a few portions of which I desire to select. But first I would dwell for a few moments on the precious testimony to the sufferings of Christ, and the glories which should follow, which we find so largely detailed here. The Lord Jesus walked upon earth as the faithful, righteous Israelite. He was the Just One vexed with the conversation of the wicked: the Righteous Man dwelling among them, who in seeing and hearing vexed His righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds. But it was silent suffering (Isaiah xlii. 19, 20), and only the Spirit of Christ in the Psalms opens the depth of it to us. . . . Nor is this all. The Spirit of Truth, as if anticipating the blessed office of Comforter, largely celebrates here the coming glory and the reign of Christ with all its attendant blessings to Israel and the earth; and what wonder that, knowing all this beforehand, the Spirit and the Bride continually cry "come". Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly. But though these thoughts concerning Him whom our soul loveth are deservedly engrossing, I feel they are in the heart of every saint—and my special object now is to trace a line of prophetic truth running through this book, which may not be so familiar. In suffering, as in glory, it has pleased the Lord, though in all things He has the pre-eminence, to associate others with Himself; and of this association I believe the Holy Ghost peculiarly testifies in the Psalms, and our gracious Head so intimately identifies himself with His members, and so faithfully maintains his relationships or fleshly connection with Israel (Rom. ix. 5), that we forgetting this, and not tracing the mind of Christ and the unchangeable purposes of God, often see confusion where the most beautiful order exists. In order to understand the Psalms, I believe we must constantly keep in memory these general principles. There are three distinct classes constantly referred to here, viz.:—the Jews, the Gentiles, and the Church of God. These are each sub-divided into two classes. There are Jews

keeping the law, and Jews breaking it. There are Gentiles opposed to God and His Christ, and there are Gentiles worshipping the Lord. There is the Church of God in suffering with Christ, and in glory with Him. The earth is also viewed in two ways—under the curse as now, and in the regeneration when the Lord reigns over it, and creation ceases to groan and travail in pain. I would only add, I believe we shall find very constant reference to the Wicked One, even the man of sin, or Antichrist, in his prosperity and in his destruction. An Hebraist will notice how frequently we have “the wicked” in the singular, where the distinction is not so clear in our translation. I desire to give a few portions of Scripture descriptive of the character, position, and suffering of the remnant of Israel, since they are so closely linked with our precious Lord, as to earthly circumstances and national relationship. Paul, who so greatly loved his brethren, said, “they are not all *Israel* who are of Israel,” and at the close of his argument tells us, “*all Israel* shall be saved”. (Rom. xi. 26.) These two facts seem important, and throw great light on the prophecies, which show there will be such a great destruction of the nation, and yet a remnant will be saved. Where then shall we find the meaning of Israel? Let us consider him whom the Lord called “*an Israelite indeed*,” for it is the mind of Christ we want to get. (John i. 43-51.) Nathaniel was acquainted with what Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write; he was expecting a *good thing*, and was willing to follow on to know the Lord, though in ignorance of His person. He who looked on the heart, said concerning him, “Behold an *Israelite indeed*, in whom there is *no guile*”. Nathaniel wondered the Lord should have known him, but when convinced the eye of Jesus had been upon him in his deepest concealment, he felt and owned Him Son of God and King. Upon this acknowledgment, the Lord promised he should see heaven opened. I believe the remnant of Israel is of the same character as Nathaniel, and will share his blessing. Let us trace this. In Zeph. iii. 13, we find similar language—“The remnant of Israel shall not do iniquity, nor speak lies; neither shall a deceitful tongue be found in their mouth”. And it is this chapter which throws so much light on the Psalms, for in them we trace the afflicted and poor people, trusting in the name of the Lord, expressing great indignation against all hypocrisy and falsehood; hating lying, and

abhorring the deceitful man. Subsequently we find them singing and rejoicing as foretold in this chapter; because the Lord has turned away His judgments, and cast out the enemy; and above all, because the King of Israel, even the Lord, is in the midst of them. Every detail of this chapter is most interesting, and bears immediately on a large portion of the prophetic Psalms; as we shall see in comparing them together. Before the Lord quitted the temple for the last time, He said to the Jews, “Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord”. Hence we may be sure that at the Lord’s coming, there will be Jews prepared to say this. Psalm cxviii. describes fully that the occasion of it will be their deliverance out of great tribulation, and the result will be they shall say, “thou art my God”. All nations shall compass them about (10-12), but they shall be destroyed, for though the Lord chastens His people sorely, He has not cut them off (verse 18), and they will rejoice in the day of the Lord (24). If preaching the Gospel could have prepared Israel to welcome the Lord, there was ample opportunity given (Acts iii. 19-26); and had the preached Gospel proved the way of saving all Israel, the Book of the Acts of the Apostles could not close as it does, nor would such a word as 1 Thess. ii. 14-16, stand on record. The salvation of Israel is plainly declared to be effected by the coming of the Deliverer in His own person (Rom. xi. 26, Is. lix. 20). And He will stand up in a time of trouble such as never was, since there was a nation even to the same time; and at that time Israel shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book. (Dan. xii. 1, compared with Rev. xiii. 8.) In all the land, two parts of the people will be cut off, and the third part will be saved, after passing through fiery trial. (Zech. xiii. 8, 9.) A reserved number will be pardoned, and declared without iniquity (Jer. l. 20). God’s exceeding love is proved by His pardoning the iniquity, and passing by the transgression of the *remnant* of His *heritage* (Micah iv. 6, 7, 11-13). And that *Heritage* is Israel. (Jer. xii. 7, 8, 9.) The Lord will appear to the joy of those who have been trembling at His word, hated by their brethren, and cast out (Is. lxvi. 5), and such a people we find described in the Psalms, with the detail of their sufferings, occasioned by those ungodly brethren after the flesh. The Lord will not destroy all, but bring a *seed* out of Jacob, and out of Judah an *inheritor* of

mountains; and His elect shall inherit it, and His *servants* shall dwell there (Is. lxxv. 8). See also the description of these servants, 13-16, compared with Mal. iii. 16-18, and iv., and Rev. viii. There is a remnant in the midst of the land, after the rest are gathered as grapes, and trodden as a wine press (Is. xxiv 13, Rev. xiv. 20). The joy of the remnant in their deliverance at the appearance of the Lord (Is. xxv.), and their song in the following chapter, will help us greatly in understanding some of the psalms of praise. Is. xxvi. 20, 21, tells us how they are hid from the judgments. But without multiplying quotations from passages scattered throughout all the prophets, let us turn to Micah v. 7, 8, where the remnant is described in a twofold character. They are to be the ministers of God in two ways, as a dew amongst all nations, spreading the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, and filling the face of the world with fruit; and as a *lion* to execute the judgment written: even as the Lord is called the dew (Hosea xiv. 5), and the Lion, in many places. I believe Ps. xvi. and others like it describe one office; Ps. cxlix., and similar passages, the others.

A diligent comparison of the prophecies concerning the remnant, with the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, must show the fallacy of a very common, but causeless assertion, that the return from the Babylonish captivity was the fulfilment of God's promises to Israel. Rev. vii. would alone be sufficient to prove the Lord's unchangeable purpose "to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel". The twelve tribes are named here, and a certain number of each untouched by the final plagues, and preserved amidst universal and desolating judgment.

COVERING (or, "MERCY-SEAT," Ex. xxv. 17):

Ἰλασθητόν (ROM. III. 25).

GOD, the Infinite, the Eternal, has declared HIMSELF as Love,—GOD is Love. HE has shone out from the "clouds and darkness" with which, to human endeavour, HE was encompassed, and has revealed HIMSELF as—what? As the Spirit, self-existent and immeasurably wealthy in the excellencies of HIS own nature, as the Ocean whence has flowed every stream of being, as the Creator, the Sovereign, and the Judge. True, but

rather is it as a *Father* that the scriptures of truth delight to represent HIM. Yes, *the great GOD has a heart*. Love could not rest satisfied with the contemplation of its own beauty. It created hearts capable of response; these hearts became "hateful and hating," and, from the recess of infinity, it went forth "to seek and to save that which was lost". Man fell, but Love would not give him up. It would stoop to the lowest abyss of his degradation, in order to exalt him to its throne, and in his mad flight of estrangement a voice continually followed him—"My son, give me thine heart!" In the Bible we have a record of GOD in the character of a father seeking (oh, how earnestly!) to win back rebellious children, using all means possible to gain their affectionate obedience, employing for this end the ministration of pleasure and pain, of prosperity and adversity, applying every resource of moral suasion.

But man had sinned; how could GOD'S love embrace him? Sin had defiled even "the heavenly things themselves" (see Heb. ix. 23), and had polluted the way which led unto the Father's holy place. When GOD looked upon man HE saw sin—yes, *sin*, alike in the development of outward action and in the secret chambers of the heart. How could holy justice regard, except to wither with its avenging lightnings, the author of such deep, such flagrant criminality? How could mercy be extended to the rebel? How could man be just with GOD? This was the problem which Love proposed to itself, and there was but one solution. The offence must be *expiated*, the sin must be *covered*, ere the rebel could be looked upon as loyal, the sinner as righteous. What expiation, what covering? Justice had decreed—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die," "The wages of sin is death"; hence death must be the propitiation, the expiation. "The blood is the life"; hence blood must be the covering. Whose death? whose blood? That of the rebel and sinner himself? No. This would satisfy Justice, but would it satisfy Love? It would satisfy the *Sovereign*; would it satisfy the *Father*? And so Love found out a Ransom, and laid help upon One that is mighty. In the eternal counsels, the sinless Son became the Christ of GOD, and offered Himself as the expiation demanded by Justice, and, as the propitiation for the sins of the world, effected the propitiousness of the Divine Sovereign. Then was slain "the Lamb of GOD," that Lamb which GOD

provided HIMSELF (see Genesis xxii. 8). That "better sacrifice" purified "the heavenly things," and made "a new and living way" unto the Father; that sprinkled blood was the covering, the propitiation, for sin. Now Justice and Mercy might embrace, now it was possible for GOD to be just, and yet the Justifier of him who should believe in Jesus, and whose sin should thus be "covered" (Ps. xxxii. 1). To this had reference the expiatory and vicarious sacrifices which marked the old economy, and the sprinkling of the ark's lid with blood, rendering it a Mercy-seat (Hebrew—*covering*), i.e., rendering it a place where GOD might, by outward sign and token, declare HIS propitiousness to the sinner-worshipper, when, in the fulness of time, the Antitype appeared, and GOD sent forth HIS Son as the *propitiation* (see Rom. iii. 25, and 1 John iv. 10)—it was *not* "to be" the propitiation, but as one who had *already* become so, and had already effected the propitiousness of GOD (as a Sovereign) toward man; *not*, as is too often taught, to reconcile GOD to man, but to reconcile man—"hateful and hating" man—to GOD. Christ came forth as One who had made a free pathway for GOD'S love, and having brought holiness to deal remissively with sin, and love to deal transformingly with hatred, was now the *Apostle*, to bring sinful man into reconciliation with holiness, and hating man into the acceptance and obedience of Love.

The Hebrew word for "*covering*," which is loosely rendered in the English Old Testament by "*Mercy-seat*," is well supplied in the Septuagint by "*ἱλαστήριον*," for it was the atoning or expiating blood that both satisfied the Judge, making inquisition for sin, and covered over the sin. "*ἱλαστήριον*," then, looks, not forward, to the sinner to make him well-pleasing, but backward, toward GOD, as having made HIM well pleased. When the Son of GOD assumed the relation of the Christ, He assumed the office of Expiator, Propiator, and Pleaser. "The LORD was well pleased for HIS righteousness' sake." And what was Christ's righteousness? *His expiatory and vicarious death* (see Rom. v. 9, 10, 11, 18, 19, 21).

THE LATE J. J. M.

"THE MIND OF CHRIST."

THE character of the mind may be effectually tested by this proposal, "What are the things, or cir-

cumstances, which meet a *welcome* from us, and what are those which are felt to be an *intrusion* on us? The mind that was in Christ may be thus discerned, and how blessed the employment of looking into that mind, and how precious the fruit it yields! I would notice a few instances in His history, which have struck me as very significant. The defenders of the law, as they judged themselves, drew the sinner into the presence of Christ with all her guilt thick and crimson upon her, but this was an *intrusion*. He was as if He saw them not. He was surely *not at home to them*—John viii.

On another occasion, little children were brought, objects that were of no account among men. His disciples treated them as intruders, but He *welcomed* them to His nearest intimacy. So, those who had their various sorrows, and plagues, and necessities came, and again they were regarded by man as in Christ's way, but He again *gave them the heartiest welcome*, and all that they wanted, as far as He had it for them. (Mark vi. 36-37; Luke vii. 38; Matt. xv. 23, xix. 23, xx. 31.)

His mother presented to Him an opportunity of exhibiting Himself in the world; so, on another occasion did His brethren; and the multitude offered Him a crown. But this was felt, and, with greater or less warmth, treated as *intrusion*, as a something which sought to retouch or change the whole complexion of His mind. It was all contrary to Him. (John ii., vi., vii.) Peter would have had Him spare Himself, this again tested the perfect mind that was in Him. It was all *intrusion and out of place*. There was a strong current of self-devoting love that would have borne Him any where in service to others, and this thought of Peter's was therefore a sad trespasser. (Matt. xvi.) When the woman brought her precious box, i.e., when faith would disclose His hidden glories and present them to Him, man, wretched man, did not understand such a secret, and was for having her rebuked and her box taken away. But what said Jesus? What said He who had refused so firmly to *display Himself in the world*, to this prospect of glories which *faith presented to Him*? This precious faith and its offering received a *full welcome* from Him, and He who would take nothing in a vain and evil world, delighted in knowing that all was His in and from God. He who refused the kingdoms of the world from the prince of it, in season will rejoice to take it all from the Father, and the faith that could apprehend this was most grateful to Him. (John xii.)

Other instances might be given, but let those suffice, for what a mind do they discover to us. If the *guilt* of others come it is *intrusion*—if their *sorrows* or *need* they are *welcome*. If honour or ease to Himself *in the world* be presented, all is *shunned* as something that had broken in on the whole current of His soul. But if honour, and ease, or glories, that are to fill creation with brightness by and bye, and which flow to Him *from God*, then welcome the sight, welcome the forethought of such dignities and joys as these. Perfect master! Precious mind of Jesus! beautiful in all its tastes and actings, whether we, or God, or the world call them forth! What did all the occasions find out in Him, but a mind perfect in every pulse of it! As these occasions are tests, they find out the hidden parts of the belly. What is that which meets a welcome? The answer to this interprets the heart. If a sinner's *need* was welcome to Christ, but not his *guilt*, if His own honour *in the world* was intrusive to Him, but His honour *in God* delightful to Him, what manner of man was Jesus, we may ask? And what is the world or the men that form it? It is written of them, "A man's gift maketh room for him". Most true—man is welcome to man if he bring his present with him. Man was welcome to Jesus when he brought his necessities with him. Our neighbour is too often welcome to our wretched hearts, if he bring with him some tale of another's *faults*, but not, if his tale be about another's *necessities*, but Jesus was the blessed divine contradiction of all this, the man surely "after God's own heart".

J. C. B.

THOUGHTS ON PSALMS III. AND IV.

J. G. B.

THE 3rd psalm is an evening, the 4th, a morning meditation of the Lord Jesus. He is sorrowfully musing on the increase of those who trouble Him, and rising up into the bosom of God both for aid and repose, He could lie down and sleep in the blessed consciousness of one whose every word, thought, and act brought joy and yielded fruit to God, and He could awake sustained by that Lord, to whom his evening meditation and morning hymn rose up with acceptance, whilst the day as it passed away, found him without a movement of eye, hand, foot or tongue in which the Father could not delight. He was indeed the first wave, sheaf, excellent, and comely, with which God could fill His bosom and rejoice; we are the empty

materials brought out of earthly habitations—the leavened loaves—blessed that we are looked at in the perfect One. He the only fruit of earth, on which the eye of the holy, blessed God could rest with unclouded joy and delight—the only flower of earth whose fragrant purity sent forth its pleasant smell to God, uncontaminated by a weed. The sorrows of Jesus were deeper than words could express; but His joy was such as none ever tasted. The consciousness that every pulse of his nature was in perfect harmony with the mind and will of God—every chord of that blessed instrument attuned to the mind of heaven—every thought of that heart a response of love and obedience. Such was the blessed, holy Lamb of God.

"WATCHING DAILY."

(Prov. viii. 35.)

1. Oh child of God, so weary with earth's toil,
And ceaseless strife.
Thy Master chooseth thee for high behest,
And fruitful life.
Oh, gladly wait
Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
To do His bidding for the day grows late.
2. Take thou His message, then hasten back
To His dear feet,
And He will greet thee with His tender love,
And comfort sweet.
Then gladly wait
Beside the portal of the Master's gate,
For the next message, as the day grows late.
3. And mourn not sorely, if thine errand seem
All fruitless now,
The message was thy Master's, and His mark
Is on thy brow.
And thou didst wait
Beside the portal of the Master's gate
As the shades gathered, and the day was late.
4. Not now the time of reckoning, it will come
To thee at last,
And thou wilt smile to think of weary hours
That shall be past,
When thou didst wait
Beside the portals of the Master's gate
To do His bidding, ere it was too late.

1 John i. 9.—*If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*

TO CHRISTIANS. Dear brethren in Christ. May I affectionately and humbly ask you to bear with me in saying a few things in connection with the above text. I do not desire to force my view of the passage on any one, but rather lovingly submit it for your consideration, knowing that you all have an unction from the Holy One. If I be wrong, correct me, but if I be right hold up my hands and contend for the truth, for in doing so you may materially help many children of God.

The use which has been not seldom made for some time past of those words—"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins," &c. : is this, to show from them that it is wrong, improper, unscriptural, for a child of God who has sinned in thought, word, or deed, to ask God to forgive him. On no account, on no consideration, under no circumstances must he say to God, "Forgive me". The sin may be small, or the sin may be great, the amount of conviction may be small or great, but in no case must a child of God say to his Father, "Forgive me". Nay, if his conscience be troubled on account of sin committed, and he finds the sigh arising from his heart, the sigh which means—"Father forgive," he must subdue that petition as an unholy thing, an unscriptural request. Why? Because it is written, "if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins". It must be confession alone, nothing more, the word says: "If we confess our sins he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins".

If the scriptures really mean and teach *this*, it is of course well. If it be indeed intended by the Lord that this our text should be stripped of its connection with the rest of scripture, and made to teach what the rest of scripture does not teach, let it be so. But if the meaning of the text is mistaken and children of God through being taught that they are now in such a position that they must never pray to God to forgive them their sins, are in danger of becoming proud, heady, and unsubdued [he that hath eyes to see let him use them], then the danger of the error is very great, and He who could put a right estimate on the widow's two mites will not despise even a feeble attempt, if it be directed by Him, to expose an error dishonouring to Himself and calculated to be exceedingly injurious to His people.

Now let us look at some passages of scripture, and may the Holy Spirit guide us into truth.

Leviticus iv. to vi. 7, contains nearly all the directions concerning the sin and trespass offerings in Israel, both for the High Priest, the ruler, the whole congregation, and individuals of it. The command is, that when any Israelite has sinned (as specified), he is to offer his offering, and then the sin is forgiven. In each case, except that of the High Priest, this is expressed.

Now suppose those scriptures were used then as 1 John i. 9 is now used, and one should say, on hearing an offending Israelite pray—"God forgive me"; "you are to offer an offering, and then your sin will be forgiven; but you must not pray to God to forgive you, that would be contrary to the scriptures". Would that have been right? How did believing Israelites act? Take an instance. David sinned against God in the case of Uriah's wife. When he confessed his sin, the prophet Nathan said, "the Lord also hath put away thy sin, thou shalt not die". (2 Sam. xii. 13.) But those words did not bring peace to David's mind, and he could not rest without an assurance of forgiveness, so after Nathan had spoken to him, (see the title of Ps. li), David prayed "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. . . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow". [Observe how confession and prayer are united.] Why did not David say, I will offer my sacrifice, and then the sin will be forgiven. To pray for forgiveness would be unscriptural. David did not despise the sacrifices, see 16 and 17 verses, yet David prayed for forgiveness, and Jehovah put his prayer on record, and its words are inspired words for our instruction.

It is written in Proverbs xxviii. 13, He that covereth his sins shall not prosper, but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy. Now imagine that these words—He that confesseth, &c., had been treated when they were written as 1 John i. 9 now is, although indeed in words they go farther, he that confesseth and *forsaketh*; the forsaking is only implied or supposed in 1 John i. 9. Suppose some Rabbi hearing Daniel identifying himself with his people, and praying in his confession, "O Lord forgive" (as in Daniel ix. 19), should say, "Daniel, it is wrong and unscriptural to pray, O Lord

forgive; the word says, only confess and forsake. Now if the sin which you have confessed as your own, has been confessed and forsaken, the conditions are fulfilled, and it is wrong to add, O Lord forgive". But does God himself thus speak to Daniel? Rather, does he not put on record the words of this greatly beloved man—"O Lord forgive," as inspired words which pleased him.

Would it have been right, losing sight of the tenor of scripture, and binding one's self down to a mere verbal understanding of the words confess and forsake, as if they meant only confess and forsake, to make all pious Israelites after they were written, guilty of acting contrary to the scriptures for saying in their confessions of sins, O Lord forgive. If I am not greatly mistaken, it is in some such manner as this that various persons now, who, notwithstanding it is to be hoped are dear Christians, are using the words of 1 John i. 9.

Let me add a few words more, which have a reference to this subject of the believer's confession of sin. Turn to Mat. vi. 9-13. "After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever, Amen." Now I do not insert this, generally called the Lord's prayer, for the purpose of showing that we ought to have it as a form, and often to repeat it verbatim. We are in what may be called, peculiarly, the dispensation of the Spirit, and should pray in the Holy Spirit. (Jude 20.) He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit in our hearts, and no form whatever can express the spiritual breathings of God's children. And, indeed, our blessed Master's words—"After this manner, therefore, pray ye": coming after the warning against using vain repetitions in prayer like the heathen, would seem to show, that although He taught the disciples how to pray, He did not intend to confine them to His exact words. Notwithstanding, however, that a form of prayer appears inapplicable to the present time, it is remarkable how much the substance of the prayers referred to agrees with the substance of the prayers of Christians who are really taught of God and pray in the spirit. How striking its first expression, "Our Father," putting us at once into the Father's family; and the

words, "Thy kingdom come"—the Father's kingdom, agreeing with Matt. xiii. 43.

It is well to observe here, for it is of deep importance that the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ, when he chose so to teach, are equal in light to what was taught by the Holy Spirit after his resurrection. That the disciples did not always understand his teachings, does not alter that fact. It confirms it. God gave not the spirit by measure unto him. (John iii. 34.) I would lovingly but earnestly press what I am now saying on my dear brethren in Christ, because if rightly understood, and wisely acted on in reading the Gospels, it will save them from a dark and sinful thing which has of late years been coming in—the turning away from, or not receiving certain parts of the teachings of the Lord Jesus which are applicable to us, and very valuable to us, because He uttered them before the Holy Spirit (always with God's people), was given as an indwelling spirit at the day of Pentecost. In considering this, look at Mat. xiii., this dispensation called there the kingdom of heaven, is fully brought to view, its beginning, course, and ending.

Bearing those things in mind, look at Mat. vi. 14-15. "For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." These words are given by the Lord to show us that those who utter the prayer—"and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors," will not be answered, will not be forgiven, if they themselves do not forgive those who trespass against them. Now look at Mark xi. 25-26, "and when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any, that your Father also which is in heaven, may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father, which is in heaven, forgive your trespasses". Here the same thing is, in substance, repeated—the necessity of forgiving others, when we (believers of course), pray to be forgiven ourselves. And it is of importance to remark that the repetition of these words occurs late in the gospel of Mark, only a few days before the Lord was crucified, showing, I think plainly, that they were intended to apply to the time after the resurrection, and of course to the days in which we live. [I cannot pass this without remarking, although it is not exactly in connection, that the 18th chapter of Matthew, applies evidently to the present dispensation, there also called the kingdom of heaven. It is needful

to mention this, because it contains precious directions about discipline in the Church, and some persons are beginning improperly to teach that these directions have no reference to Christians now.]

I am assured of the great truth in Heb. x., that all the Christian's sins are atoned for, that he is perfected for ever, eternally washed, sanctified, and justified. Complete in Christ, and that all the forgiveness he requires when he sins, is *the forgiveness of a father to a child*, to be realised by faith in Him who died for all his sins, and is now in heaven as his great High Priest, ever living to make intercession for him. Let us beware in our confessions of sin, of stopping short of that. But does not God search the heart, and is not the desire of that heart for forgiveness taken by Him as if the words were expressed—"Father, forgive".

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Blessed statement, full, large, comprehensive, and to him who is quickened by the Holy Spirit, and knows his own sinfulness and weakness, most sweet and comforting truth, but not to be so understood as to make it contradict all the other teachings of scripture concerning the forgiveness of the sins of God's believing people. Not to be so understood as to exclude the necessity of forgiving others when we desire to be forgiven ourselves; nor to shut out what is of vital importance in the confession of sin, the realising in the conscience the risen High Priest, His finished work on earth and His all-prevailing intercession in heaven. Nor yet to hinder the child of God who has sinned from saying in his confession—"Father, forgive".

Now, dear brethren, test these things by the scriptures. (Acts xvii. 11)—looking prayerfully for the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If I be wrong, teach me.

In the meantime, my impression is, that it is a fearful thing for a Christian, while on earth, to get into such a state of soul as to be, under any pretence whatever, above saying, when he has sinned—God forgive me.

P.

WALK IN THE LIGHT.

(Continued from page 79.)

BUT there is a difference also between *basking* in the sun, and *walking* in the light of the sun; a difference between that dwelling in communion with Him in the closet, or in the openings of His truth and grace;

whether it may be in trial as the soul learns to leave his burden on the Lord; or it may be in prosperity, as the heart basking in His presence lays it at His feet and praises Him. There is a difference, I say, between these experiences of light in blessed radiance, and walking in the light in the ordinary active transactions of life. I feel that there is such a walk to be attained, and I occasionally see some persons who seem to have attained it in large measure. A walk so near to God, that the very motives in each little circumstance of our life will be referred to Him; that we will not speak this thing, or that, nor do anything except in the conscious presence of the Lord. Now I am not speaking of a direct voice of revelation in the soul, saying, "Do this," or "Do that"; but when the soul is walking in the conscious realization of His presence, and in sweet humble-minded trusting to His guidance, He has promised that in His light we shall see light. I believe if we were thus habitually, our minds would be attuned to His mind, and the voice of the written word, or the passing providence of His hand, or the sympathy of our hearts with His heart, would be as a voice heard behind us distinctly, saying, "This is the way, walk ye in it," when often now it is not heard amid the noise of the world's voices. And you and I, when we go to do our ordinary business, would do it in the sun-light.

We never think of providing a lantern to walk by in day-light; the sun-light is the light in which we are to walk; we are conscious that we have light in the natural world to go and do our business. This is what we want to act upon in the spiritual life, never to do anything by the light of the world's candles, instead of the light of Jesus' presence; never for worldly motives which will not bear the light of His heart-searching eye. Just as far as I see it, I would speak to you about this. I believe that just as one would use the sun-light in the every-day life, though it might be a cloudy day, and though the eye was never actually fixed upon the sun, or the mind engaged about the sun: so the conscious light that streams from the presence of Jesus will stream out, so that I may be doing a matter of business, and doing it in the consciousness of the presence of the Lord, and by the light which He gives upon the matter; even though there may not be any direct contemplation of Him, or opportunity of direct communion with Him in prayer. I would ask you to think how far are you walking guided thus? See the blessed promise, "If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fel-

lowship one with another." Now this "one with another," from the context, is not each other only, it is with Jesus as well as with one another. Fellowship with Jesus in your secular employment! Do you think He does not care about that earthly business? Do you think He, who has the hairs of your head numbered, does not care about all your affairs? He wants you to understand that His heart is in ALL your matters, every one of them. And on the other hand, He wants that you and I should enter into His heart about his blood-bought ones. He wants that we should enter into all His yearnings, walking in His sweet heavenly light. He has promised this fellowship, if we only *keep* in the light.

Earthly things permitted to enwrap the soul, at once shadow it. When they come in with power, cry to Him to put down the flesh, and reveal Himself. He is able, He is willing, and He will do it by His own sunlight, for it will repel the very darkness. In Eph. v. 14 (marginal reading), the light saith to the sleeping believer, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light". And again, we have, "Put ye on the armour of light". Satan cannot stand in the light. Keep close to Jesus. Lord, I have no strength against Satan, do thou deliver me; I look to thee to do it. I grasp thy strength by faith. I look into that face of light, and trust that heart of love. Jesus, Lord, thou wilt deliver me; I will not doubt it.

Sometimes I hear Christians urged, as it were, to a sort of hand to hand encounter in the strength of the new life. I do not believe in such. I believe the Christian has no strength to conquer but in Jesus Himself, and the shield of faith is trust in another, even in Him. And it is as the soul is in communion, as the full light is shining in and upon our hearts from the face of the Lamb, that our language will be, Lord, I look to *thee* to deliver me; I have no strength, but I expect *thee* to do it, according to thy word. And this faith finds an immediate answer; for "if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another". J. B.

THE REFORM CLUB, 4th June, 1877.

DEAR SIR,—I believe that we are living not only in perilous times, but in the closing days of the Christian dispensation. How necessary for those who are on the Lord's side to be about their Master's work, to be up

and doing. Just now there appears—and no doubt is—a fresh awakening upon this important subject of the second advent of our Lord and the consequent awful judgment upon the living nations, just as they are "eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage". If I understand aright the book of the Revelation, the seven seals, seven trumpets, and seven vials are all to be poured out and executed upon the ungodly world, and that pre-millennially with respect to time. Is it not the duty of the Church to sound this terrific judgment aloud, and with the voice of a mighty trumpet, yea, with a voice of thunder, to apprise the wicked world with what is about to happen? Thousands upon thousands of all classes of the community are now living without any warning in every town in this highly civilised country, as we are wont to term it. How are they to be warned? I answer, by well written tracts, brief and to the point, consisting of one or two pages. There are little and large publications upon the subject in shoals, but, as far as I know, no short tracts. I have written to the Tract Depôts of Edinburgh, Dublin, and London, as well as to Mr. Drummond of Stirling, for a brief tract upon the second advent, without, I am sorry to say, obtaining one. Three classes of subjects want the warning—1st, the Church which is His body; 2d, the tares or nominal Christians; 3d, those openly ungodly who make no profession. When is the Church going to get rid of its half-heartedness and rise up courageously, and, in the majesty of her power, to proclaim to the perishing world this very solemn and most important subject of the coming of our Lord to judge the nations? Not the last great white throne judgment, for that I believe to be post-millennial. Preachers, teachers, and evangelists cannot from a multiplicity of occupations—go into every hole and corner of the land to preach and teach this most vital and important event; but, where they cannot enter, a well written, brief tract may go and not only into the dark and murky alleys of the land, but to the very ends of the earth. If we cast our eyes abroad we find all the systems are undergoing a change—the very foundations of the social, political, ecclesiastical, civil, military, and naval organisations of our own country—and of every other—are gradually or suddenly disintegrating, and rapidly going to pieces. What is all this subversion and catastrophe to result in? I answer really and truly, from my inmost heart—in the coming of our Lord. Let me con-

clude with that momentous and most sublime quotation, "I will overturn, overturn, overturn, until He come whose right it is, and I will give it Him".

Believe me,

Dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully,

JOHN SHAW, M.D., F.G.S.,

&c., &c.

Well written two page Tracts may be forwarded to the writer of the above letter.

SIMPLE TRUTHS FOR CHRISTIANS.

IT is the duty of Christians to discern and acknowledge every spiritual gift which the Lord may give to any of His people, whether rich or poor, learned or unlearned, and to submit with thankfulness to all ministry which is of Him.

1 Corinthians xvi. 15, 16. 1 Thes. v. 12, 13. Hebrews xiii. 7, 8-17.

The priests under the law were dressed in a different manner from the people, and the High Priest, as a type of the Lord Jesus, had magnificent robes; but such shadows have passed away. They are now what the scripture calls "beggary elements". They are far beneath the dignity and simplicity of the ministers of the gospel.

Exodus xxviii. Hebrews iii., iv., v., vi., vii., viii., ix., x. Gal. iv. 9.

Nor should any child of God take the title of "Reverend". The apostles did not take this title.

Psalms cxi. 9. Romans i. 1. Galatians ii. 9-11.

No service in the Church of God should be performed for money. It is a dreadful thing to use the Lord's gifts for money, or to make any part of his service—either in evangelizing, or to the Church, a profession or trade. Tithes, &c., were given to the Priests and Levites under the Law. But with the passing away of an earthly priesthood, this also passed away.

Hebrews vii. 5-9, 10. Acts xx. 35. 1 Peter v. 2.

But as all Christians who are in need should be helped by their brethren, so especially should those who care for their souls; and evangelists and Christians labouring in the Lord's vineyard should be willingly helped in temporal things by Christians, and should willingly receive this help. It is one thing in such cases to make a bargain for money, and quite another thing to labour for the Lord, and be willing to receive the help He sends through His people.

1 John iii. 17. 1 Timothy v. 17, 18. Philippians iv. 17, 18.

When any one believes on the Lord Jesus Christ, he becomes His disciple; and in order to be really, practically His disciple, he must forsake all that he has—that is, he must, in spirit, make an entire and full surrender of himself and all that he has to his Lord, and consider himself to be one who is a stranger in this world, God being his portion, and Heaven his home. He is to believe and act as one who knows that in his business or occupation in life, his trade or calling, he is only a steward for the Lord.

Luke xiv. 33. Romans xii. 1.

When a lost sinner believes the Gospel, his fortune is made, for he then becomes an heir of God, and joint-heir with Jesus Christ. Thenceforth he should live without carefulness, trusting his Heavenly Father for all spiritual and temporal blessings.

Romans viii. 16, 17. 1 Cor. iii. 22, 23. 2 Cor. v. 7. Luke xii. 22-32.

The children of God should not merely read the scriptures; the Lord Jesus said that the scriptures should be *sought*. (Those who cannot read should, therefore, learn to do so.) They should ponder what they read, and pray always for the teaching of God by His Holy Spirit. Frivolous religious books, such as religious novels, are *injurious*. The scriptures alone are able to make wise unto *salvation* through faith, which is in Christ Jesus, and to perfect for His work one who labours in the Lord's vineyard.

Deut. vi. 6, 7; xi. 19. Psalm cxix. John v. 39.

When the people of the world revile, persecute, or do evil to the children of God, they should not return evil for evil; but, on the contrary, they should pray

for them, and return blessing for cursing, and good for evil. The unconverted are much to be pitied, for they are fast hasting on to eternal judgment and eternal punishment. Vengeance belongs to God. Matthew v. 38-48 ; xxv. 41-46. Romans ix. 1-3 ; xii. 19-21. Revelation xx. 11-15.

But when the children of God do those things which are evil, they should be dealt with in discipline by the Church ; a distinct rule being given for the case of an individual trespassing against an individual.

1 Cor. v. 2 Cor. ii. 5-11. 2 Thes. iii. 14. Matthew xviii. 15-35. Luke xvi. 3, 4.

If any Christians have children they are responsible to the Lord for their training. They should train them for Him ; in precept and example, seeking to teach them the knowledge of the great salvation, and to build them up when they have received that. They should begin to train their children early—as soon as they are born.

Ephesians vi. 5. Connect 2 Timothy i. 5, with iii. 15.

Christians should redeem the time ; avoiding vain amusements, foolish talking and jesting, and unprofitable conversation. Their speech should be always with grace. They should be known as the epistles of Christ. Ephesians vi. 4-15, 16. Colossians iv. 5, 6. 2 Cor. iii. 3.

Christians should be patterns of simplicity and plainness in their houses and housekeeping, and they should not be attired in costly array, neither should their adorning be gold or pearls, &c.

1 John ii. 16. Rom. xii. 2. 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10.

1 Peter iii. 3, 4.

Christians should avoid entangling themselves with the politics of this world ; their citizenship is in heaven, they are only strangers in this world.

Philippians iii. 20. 1 Peter ii. 11.

They should all be industrious, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive ;" and if any Christian will not work, who is able to do so, and can procure employment, he should not be helped in temporal things.

2 Thessalonians iii. 6, 12.

Christians should be prudent and economical, yet large hearted and liberal ; not laying up treasure for themselves on earth, but laying up treasure in heaven. John vi. 10-13. 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7. Matthew vi. 19-21.

Christians should love one another exceedingly, as the members of the body of Christ, with a chaste and holy love, as redeemed by the precious blood of their Saviour, and children of the same Holy Heavenly Father ; and this love should be shown in active kindness, in bearing each other's burdens and infirmities, and in exhorting one another.

John xiii. 34 ; xv. 12, 17. 1 Peter i. 22, 23. 1 John iii. 11-19.

Casting all their care on Him who cares for them, they should live for the blessing of their fellow-creatures, seeking to communicate the gospel to the unconverted, and doing good to all, especially to the household of faith.

1 Peter v. 7. Phil. ii. 15, 16. Gal. vi. 9, 10.

Christians ! the secret of power is the life of faith—the abiding in Christ—the walking in spirit.

Heb. x. 38. 2 Cor. v. 7. John xv. 1-11. Gal. v. 16, 22, 23.

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ON GIVING:

A SUBJECT OF PERSONAL INTEREST TO ALL
BELIEVERS.

GOD is the great Giver. He is not worshipped "as though He *needed* anything, seeing He *giveth* to all life and breath and all things". (Acts xvii. 25.)

Nevertheless such is His gracious way, and such the honour He bestows upon redeemed sinners that, having first "loaded them" with His benefits, He calls them to draw near to Him, not as those in poverty though "poor in spirit," but as those who, being enriched out of the fulness of God, are able to offer acceptably of that which they have received.

On this ground Moses pleaded with Pharaoh that not even a hoof should be left in Egypt of all that God had given unto Israel, for said he, "thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord until we come thither". (Ex. x. 26.)

Again in Ex. xxiii. 14, 15, we read, "Three times thou shalt keep a feast unto Me in the year, . . . and none shall appear before Me empty". So also in Deut. xvi. 16, 17, "They shall not appear before the Lord empty: every man shall give as he is able according to the blessing of the Lord thy God which He hath given thee".

So again when God would appoint for Himself a dwelling-place in the midst of Israel; He spake unto Moses saying, "Speak unto the Children of Israel that they bring me an offering: of every man that giveth it *willingly with his heart*, ye shall take my offering". (Ex. xxv. 1, 2.) And the result appears in Chapters xxxv. and xxxvi.—until "Moses gave commandment

and they caused it to be proclaimed throughout the camp, saying, Let neither man nor woman make any more work for the offering of the Sanctuary. So the people were restrained from bringing, for the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much."

So also was it at the preparation of the materials for the building of the Temple, as David said, "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee, for we are strangers before Thee, and sojourners". (1 Chron. xxix. 14.)

The law concerning tithes and first fruits taught the same lessons. "All the tithe (or *tenth part*) of the land, whether of the seed of the land or of the fruit of the tree, is the Lord's: it is holy unto the Lord. . . . And concerning the tithe of the herd or of the flock, even of whatsoever passeth under the rod,* the tenth shall be holy unto the Lord." (Lev. xxvii. 30-32.)

These tithes were to be reserved for the use, First, of THE GIVERS, as they ate them in the presence of the Lord, "at the place where He chose to put His name". (See Deut. xiv. 22, 23.) Secondly, for the LEVITES, as they were God's servants, and had no inheritance in the land of Israel; and Thirdly, for the *stranger*, the *fatherless*, and the *widow*. (See Deut. xiv. 29.)

And is it not most blessed to see in these ancient ordinances the character of Jehovah and His desire to have His people like Himself? When He says the tenth is "holy (or separated) unto the Lord," it is not that He may appropriate it to Himself, but that He

* Referring to the shepherd's rod, as the sheep, &c., *passed under it* in being numbered.

may give it back in blessing to Israel ; gathering the givers to eat and drink these very tithes and firstlings (see Deut. xv. 19, 20) in the joy of their hearts in His own bright and holy presence. (See Deut. xii. 5-7, 17, 18 ; xiv. 22, 23.) So also with the offering of the materials for the tabernacle and the temple. It was not that He might deprive them of what they had freely given, but that these their gifts might be fashioned so as to provide for them a richer blessing still, even the manifested presence of God in the midst of His chosen people.

The same is seen in the prohibition to eat blood. Was it an arbitrary command of a selfish God who reserved the life for His own altar ? Nay, verily ; but in the same breath in which the blood is reserved, it is said, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood : and I have GIVEN IT TO YOU upon the altar, to make atonement for your souls : for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul". (Lev. xvi. 11.) Truly His commandments are not grievous. "Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord."

These ordinances and appointments in Israel, beautiful and perfect in their way as they all were, have passed away with the dispensation to which they pertained. The worldly sanctuary, the human order of priesthood, the earthly altar, the fleshly sacrifices, the firstlings and the tithes, all belonged to the commonwealth of Israel with Jerusalem as its centre, the place of God's choice—His dwelling-place and His rest.

The scene is changed from earth to heaven. There is the Holy Place not made with hands, of which the former was but a figure. Thither has the great High Priest ascended in all the glorious acceptance of His one offering, in virtue of which, all who believe in Him are perfected for ever. We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat that serve the tabernacle. Christ is our altar, which sanctifieth every gift presented by Him, as well as our Sacrifice and our Priest.

Man, in his blindness to this great truth of the change of the dispensation and the transfer in the meantime of all the ordinances of worship from earth and an earthly people to heaven and a heavenly people, has persistently sought to mix up the principles of the two ; to put, as it were, the new wine into the old bottles—a vain attempt to combine what is essentially antagonistic. Consequently we see around us buildings of human device identified with the principle of the

temple of old and called "The house of God" ; varying from the very simple structures of some of the denominations who, whilst calling it by the name, would repudiate any special sanctity as to the building, up to the ornate and costly cathedral with its imposing architecture, its holy place railed off, its communion table exalted and called the altar, its priestly offices and vestments, supported by the titles of the increase of the land, and all this defended and pleaded for on the ground of Old Testament Scripture, and so plausibly reasoned out that those who give of their substance to sustain it all, lifeless or even antichristian as it may be, imagine that their gifts are as acceptable to God as were the offerings of Israel of old.

There are two kinds of worship spoken of in the New Testament, viz., "Worship in spirit and in truth," and "Will-worship". The one is that which the Father seeks—which in the unction and power of the Holy Ghost is offered to Him IN TRUTH, or according to His holy Word. The other is that which unregenerate man has given, *for not having the SPIRIT*, his worship could only be in outward and carnal things, *and not heeding the WORD*, his worship could only be self-devised or Will-worship.

And not only by the unregenerate has such been offered, but also, alas ! by children of God who, refusing the call to separation from the world, have had to descend to a style of worship that would suit the tastes of those who have no heart for heavenly things, and not arouse the conscience of those who are unreconciled to God.

But whilst the payment of tithes and the sanctification to God of the first born of man and beast has altogether passed away—as pertaining to the old covenant—the God who appointed these ordinances is the same God still. They shewed forth His character, and expressed His thoughts as to His people and their relation both to Himself and to His servants, and to the poor and the destitute amongst them, therefore the substance and spirit of them is found in the New Testament, although in a form answerable to the spiritual and heavenly character of the dispensation.

If God was known as the great Giver under the old covenant, how much more fully is He revealed in this character under the New. He has bestowed His "UNSPEAKABLE GIFT". (2 Cor. ix. 15.) He has given His only-begotten Son (John iii. 16), and in Him we have the gift of eternal life (Rom. vi. 23), the

"gift of righteousness" (Rom. v. 17), the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts xi. 17). Nay more, we are taught by the Spirit thus to argue, "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also FREELY GIVE US ALL THINGS". (Rom. viii. 32.)

So also the Lord Jesus Christ is shown as one with the Father in His divine liberality. He gave Himself to God for us. (Eph. v. 2.) "He gave Himself a ransom for all." (1 Tim. ii. 6.) "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.)

Likewise, also, the Holy Spirit—Himself a gift—is also a giver, distributing to each member of the body of Christ according to His own will (see 1 Cor. xii. 8-11), ministering light, and joy, and peace, and comfort, and strength to those in whom He dwells.

Truly our God is the God of all Grace. Our souls may well exclaim with the prophet, "How great is His goodness, How great is His beauty". (Zech. ix. 17.) Be it ours so to behold the beauty of the Lord that, growing in likeness to Him, we may show forth His virtues, and reflect His character.

God being thus fully revealed in the New Testament as a Giver, goes farther, and tells us, by the lips of His Son, "that it is more blessed to give than to receive". (Acts xx. 35.)

He has more joy in imparting to us his treasures than in receiving our worship and service in return. Not but that He seeks and values this, and failing of this, His grace were received by us in vain; yet apart from this, and infinitely higher, it is the blessedness of God that, out of His infinite and inexhaustible resources, He is the Eternal Giver. Love knows this joy in some feeble degree, even in us. Even natural affection, in the various relationships of life, finds its joy in giving, without respect to recompense. But "God is love," and His gifts are gifts of love; and faith discovers this love of God in His precious gifts, and so it is written, "We love God because He first loved us".

This "more blessed" place of giving, God desires His children to know and enjoy. Hence it is that much is written in the New Testament about giving—much that is strangely overlooked, even by those who are wont to read the scriptures with some attention and discernment.

One thing is very clear at the outset. No passage in the New Testament lays down any rule as to *how much* is to be given to the Lord.

Some contend that this could not be, because we are altogether His, and only stewards of what we possess; and that, consequently, to set apart any definite proportion is a going back to Old Testament principles. There is, it must be admitted, a measure of truth in this. But this is hardly more fully acknowledged in the New Testament than in the Old.

Moses (Ex. x. 26) and David (1 Chron. xxix. 16) both owned this. In one sense we are, indeed, only stewards; for we have nothing that we did not receive, and, as stewards have to render account of their stewardship, so will the believer be called to render account of every talent entrusted to him by His Lord. But some do not see that the very Lord whose steward the Christian is, has appointed that the money he earns shall be devoted to special purposes.

One purpose is, that he should support himself. As the Apostle says, "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you, 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". (2 Thess. iii. 7, 8.) Some, through mistaken ideas as to faith, abstain from laying aside any of their earnings; and, consequently, if they get out of work, or sick for some weeks, they are in destitution, and seek that relief from the Church which properly belongs to the aged and the helpless. To take the purse and the scrip was forbidden to the disciples at one period, and enjoined upon them at another, by the same Lord. (Luke xxii. 35, 36.)

Again it is written, "If any man provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel". (1 Tim. v. 8.)

Here, then, is another use which the Lord intends His stewards to make of the money entrusted to them. It is, therefore, not *selfishness*, but *obedience* for a man to provide for his own—not merely his own wife and children, but also, if need be, his father, mother, and *aunt* or *uncle*, as is expressly mentioned in 1 Tim. v. 4.

By neglect of these commands, the faith has often been practically denied, and the way of truth evil spoken of—mere natural affection in the unregenerate often going farther than grace in the Christian,

But the will of our Lord as to the use of money does not end here. The love of God, His tender compassions and considerate care, if operating at all in the souls of His children, could not be restrained within such limits as these. Therefore are we taught to look beyond the necessities of our kindred, and to consider the household of faith, the poor and needy ones therein, and those whose call to service in the gospel has led them to devote themselves wholly to such work; nor even here are we to rest, but as we have opportunity, we ought to do good unto ALL MEN. (Gal. vi. 10.) The practical question, then, to be determined is not "How much shall I keep to myself, and how much shall I give to the Lord?"—but "How far am I constrained, by the love of Christ, to look beyond the circle that natural affection would embrace? and even at personal cost and self-denial, to be a giver to those whose claims upon me would never have been owned, had not grace implanted in the soul the love and compassion of God?"

Under the dispensation of Law, God made a specific demand. He appointed that one-tenth should be devoted to such purposes, and He called that portion specially His, for He Himself delighted to be identified in this special way with the Levite, the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow. They were constituted thus partakers of HIS PORTION, and not pensioners on Israel's bounty.

So under the dispensation of His grace, whilst no specific amount is demanded; and it could be said to Ananias, "Whiles it remained was it not *thine own*? and after it was sold was it not *in thine own power*?" (Acts v. 4.) Yet God still identifies Himself specially with the poor, the aged, the widow and fatherless, the persecuted and distressed, as well as with His servants labouring in the Word and doctrine. What is given for His name's sake to such, he regards as given to Himself; and knowing, as He does, that the claims of such can only be cheerfully responded to by His own love and grace—knowing that mere nature must either despise them, or, in the spirit of bondage, grudge them—He marks such fruits of grace for special recognition in the day of His appearing.

J. R. C.

(To be continued.)

ROOTS OF BITTERNESS, AND HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM.

A WORD IN SEASON.

NOTHING we are sure can be more grievous to God, than our receiving, without pain, evil reports of our brethren. We ought to look on our brethren as "in Christ," *dear to God*.

The very thought of blemish should affect us with shame, and send us first of all, with the evil report to our Father.

Joseph when he saw the evil ways of his brethren, sought no ear for the evil tidings but his father's. Even so, the child of God should run first of all with the evil tidings of his fellow Christian's failure to his heavenly Father, and seek directions from Him, ere dealing with the matter.

God in His Word has given minute directions for His Church in this, as in other matters, and were His directions sought and acted out, roots of bitterness would seldom come above ground, but would be at once plucked up, ere they yielded their fruit of alienation and division.

Grace will always be as strict as law, as to rights—and if brethren are prohibited by their Lord from going to law (1 Cor. vi.), it will be seen, that the laws for offences are such as to prevent one from taking advantage of another,—by receiving and retailing to others, what in many cases is but gossip in regard to a brother's failure, in such a lawless way as would render him liable in damages for defamation in the courts of the world.

And first of all in regard to Luke xvii. 3 to 5. It is clearly the Lord's mind, that if our brother trespass against us, we are by no means to pass over his sin, but must rebuke him or bring his sin before his conscience, *for his good* (1 Cor. xiii., love seeketh not *her own*), and if after putting his trespass before him according to the Word, he is led to repent, owning he has done wrong, then we are to forgive him—that is, the trespass is never to be again a barrier in the way of our walking together. And further, if he trespass seven times in a day, and seven times in a day see his sin and turn from it, we are to forgive.

The apostles felt this a hard saying, as we must also, and said, Lord, Increase our faith! that is, let us have such faith in thee, that we shall at all times take *thy way of it*, knowing it will be the best, though it seem hard.

We are to be followers of *God*, as dear children, and so, when Peter asks our Lord in Math. xviii. 21, "how oft shall my brother trespass against me and I forgive him? till seven times?" Jesus said, "I say not unto thee, Until seven times, but until seventy times seven," and then from verse 23 to the end of the chapter, he tells out the manner of God's forgiveness, showing that when we as sinners owned the righteousness of God's claim on us (verse 26), he was moved with compassion (verse 27), and forgave us; and we are called on, in turn, not to receive the grace of God in vain, but on *repentance*, to forgive.

This does not mean that we are to forgive unless our brother repents—this would not be as imitators of God. Nevertheless, forgiveness must ever be in our hearts, fully ready for the erring one.

We must not suffer sin in our brother, *but the moment his conscience is reached, and he repents*, then are we to forgive.

Many instances of God's forgiveness might be given, but through them all this one principle will be found to run:—

1st, God requires acknowledgement of the sin.

2nd, He forgives at once.

3rd, And in God's forgiveness there is fulness, "their sins, and iniquities, *I will remember no more*".

Lord, Increase our faith!

In Math. xviii. 15 to 20, we have what we might term the legal course to pursue, in contrast with the lawless way of acting on an evil report, before it has been brought to *proof*.

In this scripture we are taught—

1st, To deal with our brother by *himself alone*, regarding what we have against him.

2nd, To do this with the distinct object of *gaining* our brother—implying that we have been to our Father for grace to keep down resentment.

3rd, If we fail, then we are to take with us one or two more in order that it may be fully witnessed to, if need be, in the Assembly.

4th, This failing, then, *but not till then*, are we to tell it to the Assembly, and if he refuse to hear the Assembly, then is he to be to us as one outside.

In all this, there is *strictly impartial justice*, leaving no room for the lawless way into which we are liable to fall of whispering the scandal, till bringing it before the Church is a sham, *seeing that all have heard it previously*.

Thus in breaking our Lord's rule here, we are morally incapable of judging—we *are ourselves needing to be judged*.

Let us look at this scripture till it is written on our hearts, and roots of bitterness will not easily spring up.

Let us note the first step—"go and tell him his fault *between thee and him alone*"—not a soul present, but *you* and *he*, and therefore no one is to hear it but the erring one.

Failing remedy here, one or *two* at the *most* may hear it, if we tell *three*, we are transgressors, and how shall we see to pluck the mote out of our brother's eye, when this beam is in our own?

Is it not the case that the Church of God often reaps the fruit of sin in this respect?

How many assemblies present the spectacle of brethren alienated, and all because this simple rule of the One who died for us, is practically ignored—does not the Lord Jesus Christ seem to look down on each one of us and say, "how call ye Me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?"

Math. v. 23, 24, opens the way to the one who has trespassed against another, to anticipate his action, as considered in the foregoing.

The Lord would ever have in us an exercised conscience.

We are aware that some would call in question the applicability of this scripture to our subject.

But the principle does apply, and Heb. xiii. 10, favours its application.

It seems clear at least, that if any one gather with God's children to offer the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, but remembers his brother has somewhat against him, it must be a hindrance.

The Holy Ghost says in effect, don't wait till your brother act out Math. xviii. 15, but go and be reconciled, that is, remove out of the way what you know will hinder his fellowship with you.

This is opposed to nature, as all rules for the guidance of redeemed souls must ever be. Nature would stand on its rights and say "well if I have offended *him*, let him act out Math. xviii. 15 to me." Grace would forestal the offended brother, and do voluntarily what Math. xviii. 15. bids *him* do.

May the Lord grant to us tender consciences and obedient hearts, so that Satan may not get, as he has often got, an advantage in keeping apart those whose privilege now is to dwell together in unity, and may

we learn and see that His commandment is exceedingly broad, covering not only our brother, but ourselves—thus giving daily opportunity for the manifestation of that grace and forbearance which is wrought in us, as we yield ourselves unto the God of all grace.

T. C.

CIRCUMCISION.

IN Genesis xv. Abram was declared righteous by faith, and in Ch. xvi. we find him, through his want of the patience of faith, bringing in the bondwoman and her son into his house. In Ch. xvii., the Lord manifests Himself to him as “God Almighty,” and calls on him to “walk before Him and to be perfect”; that is, to walk before Him in the character of God Almighty, or God sufficient for him, which word was a rebuke to Abram for declining from faith as in Ch. xvi., and a calling of him back to his standing in faith as in Ch. xv. Abram falls on his face, in token of receiving the rebuke, with the submission of joy and faith; and then God talks to him, and promises him the covenant, and gives him circumcision as the token of it; and this seal of righteousness—this token of the covenant, sets forth, I judge, the character of this righteousness, and the foundation of this covenant. Abram had righteousness before, and was interested in the covenant before; but nothing had been presented to him by which he might have learnt the character of this righteousness, or the title of having the covenant confirmed to him. But circumcision was suited to instruct him in these things, setting forth death and resurrection, on which, as we now clearly know, all depends, whether it be justification, life, or inheritance. Thus circumcision published the secret of all blessing, it unlocked the source of life and unfolded the title to glory, for it exhibited both the end or putting off of life in the flesh, and another or a risen life; for the child was to be circumcised the 8th day—*i.e.*, the resurrection day. There was blood shed in circumcision, the expression of the life flowing out, and because of the life thus poured out, or this blood of the covenant, Jesus was raised from the dead, the Shepherd of the sheep. He was constituted Saviour, through His true circumcision, or His death and resurrection. (Heb. xiii.) He became the head or life of the family, in this way, as circumcision had sealed Abram “the father of many nations.” It is quite true that circumcision became afterwards

connected with the law. “Moses gave circumcision”—all scripture shows that, and no one questions it; in one stage, therefore, of the divine providence, it was death to be circumcised, because that would have expressed a putting from grace, so that Christ did not profit. (Gal. v. 2-4), but still, as the Lord says, circumcision was of the fathers. In another view of it, it was before Moses, and may be looked at, as apart from the law (John vii. 22), and accordingly, we find it in connection not with the law, but with faith—in other words, we find Ch. xvii. in connection with Ch. xv. and not with Ch. xvi. because, as I have noticed above, Abram falling on his face before “God Almighty,” was his recovering of his standing in faith, so that God speaks to him as “faithful Abram” again about the covenant, and gives him the token of it; and Rom. iv. authoritatively shows us Ch. xvii. in connection with Ch. xv., and not with Ch. xvi., so that we may most surely look at circumcision in its connection with grace, not with law; with the fathers, not with Moses; and it comes, as I said, to publish to Abraham the *character of that life of righteousness, and the title of those promises which he already had.*

And there are other instances like this; take Adam for one of them. He had faith, for he called his wife's name Eve, he believed the promise that her seed should bruise the serpent's head, or destroy him who had brought in death, and therefore he spoke of her as “the mother of all living”. But after this the Lord gives him the coats of skin to cover him; what was that but another seal of the righteousness which he already had, publishing to him the secret of all righteousness, *putting him into Him whom the slain beast represented.* So, in the cleansing of the leper, the poor leper is healed, the Lord has met him outside the camp and the whole work is done, the leprosy is gone, his flesh is rescued from the sentence of death, and he stands in a risen or new creature character: but again, after this, the Lord puts him through the ordinance of the two birds, by which He published to him, now that his leprosy was healed, where the virtue lay that had rescued him from death and uncleanness. The death and resurrection of the blessed Son of God, are set forth in this ordinance, as they are set forth in the rite of circumcision, and both come forth and address themselves to those who already stand in healing and in righteousness, before God. Thus circumcision publishes the ground of our righteousness—Jesus dead and

risen—but it publishes also, our own moral condition, as God's family; for, as such, we have put *off* the flesh, we have no confidence in it, and our life is alone in the Spirit, or in the power of the risen Son of God. It matters not whether we be of the heavenly or earthly family, we are a circumcised, or dead and risen people—a new creation—loaves formed out of the sheaf of first-fruits—or sinners crucified and alive again in the Christ of God. I believe that our circumcision thus also sets forth that which alone is our life before God. It tells what baptism tells, that we are in the Spirit, and not of the flesh, or that we are dead and risen. The *truly* circumcised or the truly baptized worshippers of God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh, they have put off the body of sin and of the flesh. (Phil. iii.; Col. ii.) They know really what circumcision is (Rom. ii.), as the House of Israel will know it by-and-by, when the stony heart is taken away, and the fleshly heart is given to them. (Jer. xxxi.; Heb. viii.) These voices I hear in the ordinance of circumcision. It was the “token of the covenant”—expressing that death of Jesus, by which the covenant was made sure, and by which He rose, the Shepherd of the sheep.

It was a covenant therefore, which they were to keep. (Gen. xvii.) The keeping of it, or the circumcising of the male children, was the expression of their faith in that blood-shedding on which the covenant rested, so that no uncircumcised person could take his place in the nation, as God's nation—hold the feasts, or do service. We keep the covenant by *rejoicing in Christ Jesus*. That is a part of our circumcision, as worship in the spirit, and having no confidence in the flesh, are other parts of it—these three characters (Phil. iii.), setting forth thus the purposes of the old ordinance. Just as we hear the same voices in death and resurrection, I hear them, both as the ground of my title to blessing, and the character of my life to God. To have returned to circumcision in the flesh, after the Gospel of the death and resurrection of Jesus was published, was clear evidence of confidence in the flesh, and consequent revival of the Law, and thus the apostle speaks of it (Gal. v. 2). But that does not, in the least degree, affect the meaning of circumcision, as given to the fathers—nor will the fact that Jewish children were circumcised, make it imperative that children of believers should now be circumcised, because in Israel, certain national, earthly,

family blessings are to be enjoyed, which are not to be enjoyed by believers now, who on the other hand, have personal, heavenly, church blessings. When the Lord revives His family, earthly, national purposes, as in Israel by-and-by, then families and nations may be again circumcised. But now it is a question between the sinner himself and God, leading not to a nation here, but to a church in heaven. And it is easy, as connected with this, to see the two-fold character of our Lord as Christ—He was Christ the Messiah, the anointed one when *born*—as He is Christ now as *risen*. He was Christ as born in the city of David (Luke ii.); but He is now Christ, as raised from the dead (Acts ii.) He was once “Christ after the flesh”—but now He is “Christ as the head of resurrection”—not after the flesh, but in the Spirit; through death and resurrection. (1 Cor. xv) His second character of the Christ, is connected with Him as “Lord” in a high way—He was Lord before He rose (Luke xix. 34), but not in so exalted a way, “Therefore let all the House of Israel know assuredly that God has made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ”. Israel is never to know Him again as “Christ after the flesh”—but as Christ the head of new creation; just as we now know Him, connected with His Lordship as risen from the dead, and ascended to the highest heavens. It is quite true that during the kingdom, Israel will not have arisen with Him in all the results—the heavenly results of this second character of His Christhood, as the Church will; but they will stand under Him, as the head of the new creation, as surely as we shall, *only* new creation in earthly and not in heavenly places. I do not see it necessary to say that we are *dependent* on the promises made to Abraham. Do they not respect the earth? and are not the promises for which we look, rather what was undertaken, through exceeding riches of grace before the world began? I allow that I see something in Gal. iii. that may arrest the thoughts on the subject. Two things I clearly see there—that we get the blessing and the spirit in connection with Abraham—that is, we get *justification* and *life* in the same way that he did, or that the Jews will. His blessing is ours, through the blood or death of Jesus, we are justified; and the life that He gets, we get, that is, life in the Spirit, or life from the resurrection of Jesus. I know that we get an inheritance by promise, as he or the Jews did, or will. It is all by

promise—the same chapter tells us that ; but still I ask, are our promises, or is the nature of our inheritance at once glanced at, or contemplated by the promises or inheritance spoken of in the covenants to Abraham, I question that much.

J. G. B.

PROPHETIC NOTES.

A FEW SCRIPTURE CONNECTIONS CONCERNING THINGS TO COME.

IN Rev. xii. 5, we read that when the Church is raised according to 1 Thes. iv. 17, Israel again comes up in remembrance before God for testimony and blessing on the earth. (Rom. xi. 24, 25.)

The prophecy of the "man child," who is to rule all nations with a rod of iron, is given us concerning Christ and His Church in Ps. ii. 8, 9 ; Rev. ii. 26, 27 ; and fulfilled in both, Rev. xix. 5, showing us that we have in Rev. xii. 5 the mystical body, head and members of the one Christ, as we get it revealed to us in 1 Cor. xii. 12 ; Eph. iv. 13. "A perfect man" ; not only having his full complement of members, but each member having attained its own fulness according to the divine measure. Verses 6 to 14 show us "the woman," (the Jewish nation, or rather here the Jewish remnant, because the nation is still in unbelief,) nourished by God for the first half of the seven years or periods intervening between the rapture of 1 Thes. iv., and the coming in flaming fire of 2 Thes. i. Simultaneously with this the witnesses prophesy, having power for 1260 days, (same period), Rev. xi. 3. Compare Zec. iv. "These are the two anointed ones that stand before the Lord of the earth." In both these scriptures the prophecy is in connection with a rebuilt temple. During the first "time, times, and an half," the power of Antichrist is kept in check, while the woman is nourished from the face of the serpent, and the witnesses finish their testimony. We are told that one of his heads was wounded to death, but his deadly wound was healed. (Rev. xiii. 3). Thus we see divine wisdom making room for Israel's testimony after the gospel of His grace, preached by the Holy Ghost through the Church, shall have been rejected. Their power is aggressive against their enemies. Rev. xi. 5, "If any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, &c." We may find reference here to the "two wings of a great eagle," (Ch. xii. 14), under whose sheltering strength the woman is hidden for a time. Though waters like a flood be cast

after her (Rev. xvii. 15), her help is in God. Satan wrestles now in heavenly places, because our standing and our citizenship is there, but when the Church shall be caught up, and the Holy Ghost indwelling, no longer hinders the filling up of iniquity (Dan. viii. 23 ; 2 Thes. ii. 7), then shall Satan be cast down to the earth (Rev. xii. 9). The Church shall be beyond the reach of his malice, hidden with Christ. The golden candlestick (Zec. iv.), will be then the only light for God in the deepening darkness, and hence to extinguish it will be the aim of Satan. For this he gives his power to the beast (Rev. xiii. 4), and supernatural skill to the false prophet (Rev. xiii. 15) ; but blessed be God, His faithful ones are kept to the end. We find in Ch. vii., 144,000 sealed from the coming judgments, servants of our God.

Observe that from Caesar Augustus (Dan. xi. 20 ; Luke ii. 1), to Antichrist (Dan. xi. 21), time is not counted, because the natural branches are broken off that the wild olive branch or Gentile bride might be grafted in (Rom. xi), and God in a sense is not now dealing with the earth, because his people are a heavenly people ; but when the Church, the first object of His affections and His purposes, shall be at home with Him for ever, then the thread of prophetic truth is taken up again, and we get the career of Antichrist on to the 70th or last week, when his dominion shall be taken away. But during the 1260 days of Rev. xi. 3, xii. 14, Antichrist is in league with the Jews (Dan. ix. 27), and it is not until the midst of the week that he causes the sacrifice and offering carried on in the temple to cease, and places there the image of the beast (Dan. xi. 38, 39 ; Rev. xiii. 15), polluting the sanctuary of strength with "the abomination that maketh desolate," having with him those that forsake the holy covenant (Dan. xi. 30). Again (verse 22), we read of the prince of the covenant "overflowed from before him." See also Dan. viii. 11. We get here the fulfilment of the Word of the Lord (John v. 43.) "If another shall come in his own name, him ye will receive." He "shall have intelligence with them that forsake the holy covenant." The nation blinded by Satan, notwithstanding the 1260 days of divine testimony, will receive him as the promised Messiah, fulfilling the parable of Luke xi., when Satan, in seven-fold wickedness, shall return to the house, and the last state of rebellious Israel be worse than the first. But God's everlasting grace must work out its

unchanging purposes, despite of Satan, and make the darkest hour of Israel's blindness the opportunity for deliverance. This period seems to interleave with Rev. xi. 7, xiii. 5-11, where the scriptural form of Satanic rule arises, having the two-fold power of the first beast, and exercising also the more subtle tyranny over the minds and worship of men. "He had two horns like a lamb, and he spake as a dragon." Compare Dan. vii. 20, viii. 23. We find the same form of power in Rev. xvii., under another symbol of the woman who shall make "all nations drunk with the wine of her fornication." Here we see spiritual wickedness and departure from God supported by temporal power; "the beast that carrieth her" having ten horns or kingdoms which yield to him their strength. He "was, and is not, and yet is." The same rule once existed having the secret of its strength in false worship, but it will be surpassed in blasphemy by that which is to come, in that he shall not regard any God, but shall magnify himself above all (Dan xi. 36, 37). In Dan. xi. 38; Rev. xvii. 4, we see "the woman" identified with the worship of the "strange God" whom Antichrist "shall acknowledge and increase with glory." Here we have Satan's imitation of the woman of Rev. xii; and again in verse 39 we read, "He shall divide the land for gain," because Jehovah has commanded a division in righteousness (Ezek. xlviii.) yet to be fulfilled in the millennial day. Dan. viii. 24 tells us, "His power shall be mighty, but not by his own power," which we get explained in Rev. xiii. 2: "The dragon gave him his power." After the rising of the second beast, the two forces seem to blend for the time, the false prophet making an image to the beast, and causing all to worship it, and to receive a mark in their foreheads. Here again we trace Satan's imitation of the sealing of Ch. vii. In Dan. viii., we find mention of the one horn, growing out of the last or Roman kingdom, taking away the daily sacrifice, and continuing to the end of the indignation. See also Ch. viii. 19 to 22. We read that it is called a "little horn," because "he shall come up and become strong with a small people" (Dan. xi. 23): but he shall "wax exceedingly great towards the south, and towards the east, and towards the pleasant land." We trace his course in Dan. xi. 25, 29, 30, 31, but "he shall stand up against the Prince of princes, and he shall be broken without hand." This then is the time of Jacob's trouble, such as was not since there was a

nation to this time (Dan. xii.; Matt. xxiv.); but it must last until the power of the holy people shall be scattered, for that which is determined shall be done. (Dan. xi. 33, 34; Zec. xiii. 9.) But still God's purpose is to bless Israel, and when the work of purging is accomplished (Dan. xi. 35), He will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle, that He may be sanctified in the eyes of the heathen, and fulfil in millennial fullness His promise to Abraham (Gen. xxii. 18). See Ezek. xxxviii. 9, 16; Zec. xiv. 2.

During the time of siege (Zec. xii. 3), He will pour upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and supplication, and they shall look upon Him whom they have pierced (Zec. xii. 9, 10), that He may come to deliver them according to Matt. xxiii. 39. See Zec. xiv. 3; Matt. xxiv. 30, 31; 2 Thes. i. 6 to 9; Rev. xix. 11 to 16. We see the nations, the beast, and the false prophet gathered together to make war against him that sat on the horse, and against his army. We see their utter destruction (Ezek. xxxviii, 19 to 23; Zec. xiv. 12 to 15; Rev. xix. 20, 21, and all the fowls filled with their flesh. Then opens the glorious reign of millennial rest and blessing, when the blood stained earth shall blossom and rejoice (Isa. xxxv.), and the nations ruled in righteousness, come up year by year to Jerusalem to worship the King, the Lord of Hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles (Zec. xiv.; Isa. xi.; Ps. lxxii.; Rev. xxi., xxii.)

A. E. W.

THE TWO NATURES.

THERE are many Christians who are uncertain as to their acceptance with God. With not a few, after all their open profession before men, and their painstaking religiousness of life and walk, the question still remains unsettled as to whether or not they *are* Christians. Numbers are sincerely and deeply exercised in mind; and, singular as it is, they seem doubtful and unhappy in the same proportion as they are sincere.

With many, the great obstacle to their peace lies in the deficient manner in which they have received the truth. This is seen in the indistinct sense they have of the truth,—even that most vital to them. What they seem to be mostly occupied with is not the truth, but religiousness; not the Word, but *themselves*, from which dark shadows constantly fall, awakening suspicion and doubt, which not infrequently deepen into terror, even of God and the future.

Truth is effectual only as it is known and received. Each truth has its own form in the Word. All the truths affecting our standing or condition before God have their own forms divinely shaped; and to the soul that knows them they are truly blessed and beautiful. I have known some of them,—such as Christ the believer's completeness; the Church the fulness of Christ; or the believer, dead and risen with Christ, made nigh, one with Christ, sanctified in Christ,—when heard or seen for the first time, breaking calmly and brightly over an entire audience of believers, grandly dispelling at a moment the doubts and fears of years, the ignorance of a life-time.

But a dim sense exists as to what the Christian is. The Christian is to be viewed in two aspects,—as a child of Adam, and as a child of God. As by natural descent he is a child of Adam, so by spiritual birth he is a child of God. This latter is a great and glorious fact. It invests the Christian with a dignity which may apparently fail to apprehend. They speak of the Christian as an *adopted* child of God. This is true; but it is not the whole truth. He is "*born of God*" (John i. 13.) He is as truly a child of God as he is a child of Adam; and as by natural birth he inherits the nature of Adam, so by regeneration, or second birth, he becomes a "partaker of the Divine nature" (2 Pet. i. 4.) He is thus a complex being; for, in becoming a child of God, he does not cease to be a child of Adam. The two natures remain in him unchanged. His old nature is not modified or ameliorated by the impartation of the new; nor, on the other hand, does the new nature become soiled or corrupted by reason of its co-existence in the same being with the old. They remain the same. There is no blending or amalgamation. They are essentially and eternally distinct; and not only so, but "contrary the one to the other." The old nature is unalterably and incurably corrupt, while the new nature is divinely pure in its essence, though for the present, if we may so speak, enveloped in a house of clay, surrounded by a body of sin and death.

But a dim sense, as I have said, exists of these two natures, the knowledge of which, in many a morbid and miserable mind, would be a key to unlock the dread mystery of its gloom. It is in the light of these two natures alone, as clearly revealed by God, we can at all properly understand what we are. It would not be difficult to trace them out as they are unfolded in the Word.

Paul speaks of one as "*the old man*," whose name, derivation, character, and doom are distinctly stated. No one can doubt that "*the old man*" means *the natural man*,—man as possessing the nature of the first Adam. When Paul uses the word, he means himself, his "*old self*," as the text is. Let this, then, be firmly fixed in the mind; that "*the old man*" with the flesh in him is only another name for ourselves as sinners. And as to our character as such, it is no bold figure merely but a grave and solemn fact, which Paul declares of the old man, when he says that he is "*corrupt according to the deceitful lusts*". (Eph. iv. 22.) The corruption is easily traced, even as the river to its source and the fruit to its tree. We were, so to speak, in the loins of Adam, whose nature became radically corrupted by sin. Descending from his loins, we inherit his nature, with ~~his~~ deeds, which are corrupt, and which call down upon us the sentence of God against sin; which sentence, in our case as with Adam, is *death*: "*The soul that sinneth, it shall die.*"

It is precisely here that salvation comes in. In the first promise, it is shown that the seed of the woman should appear as Deliverer. The enemy, instead of bruising, slaying Adam, which he deserved, would bruise *Him*; in virtue of which bruising Adam lives. Thus early was death for sin, and life for righteousness, made manifest. This long shadow, the longest that fell from the cross, found its great fulfillment in Christ, who "was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace," or which purchased our peace, "*was upon Him.*" When Adam, or any of the first believers of our race, saw this promise, which, however, was spoken, not to Adam, but to the serpent, they saw two things: they saw death as due to them, now borne, or to be borne, by another; and in that death as borne by another for them, they saw their own right to live. They *were* dead, for the curse was upon them: they now *live* for the curse has been transferred to another. Should their position of *life* be called in question, either by their own doubts or by others, they could say, looking at the gospel of the first promise, "*We have been bruised; we have died; bruised together, and dead together with Him.*"

This is precisely the doctrine of *the sixth of Romans*,—that glass of the Word by which the believer sees a true photograph of himself. In that chapter, Paul shows us in full the penal doom or death of "*the old*

man." "Knowing this," he says at the sixth verse, "that OUR OLD MAN IS CRUCIFIED WITH HIM." You will observe that the apostle does not say of this doom that it is *future*, or that it is now in progress. Nothing of the kind. He speaks of it as *an accomplished fact*. His words to this effect, both in Romans and Galatians, are most emphatic. In the Romans he says, "Knowing this, that our old man is [*was*: see Greek] crucified." And in Galatians he affirms, "I am [*have been*: see Greek] crucified."

Now where, let us ask, is *the scene* of this doom? Is it, as many imagine, in ourselves? Verily, no. Are *we* to undergo a long, slow, lingering slaying of ourselves? Verily, no. The scene is *the cross*. No words can be plainer. "I am crucified"; and "Our old man *is* crucified"—literally, nailed to a tree—consequently, completely slain, dead. Now if this be true, may some believer say, "Then is my punishment past?" I answer, *Past*. "And the sentence against me—the natural man, the sinner—accomplished?" I answer, Just so, *accomplished*. "And my old self—about which I have had such days of darkness, and fear, and sorrow—is really and truly dead?" I answer, And *buried*. For burial, also, is spoken of. "We are buried with Him," says Paul, "by baptism *into death*". Interment is the destruction of the last link which holds a deceased object visible to our senses. Remembrance, even, is blotted out by the long damps of the grave. Thus completely has God set aside our old corrupt selves, as out of sight, out of mind. "Your sins," He says, "and your iniquities, will I remember no more." Moreover, the dead are free. The avenger *may* harass the living, *may* pursue his life, but when DEAD the pursuit ceases. The end of life is the end of the pursuit. If the corpse be claimed, it is only to bury it. And there, in the grave, the weary are at rest; the servant is free from his master; the law can pursue him no farther. Hence "He that is dead," or as the Word is, "*has died*," is freed from sin. You say you did not know this. Well, this is what we want you to know. Only in such knowledge, can you have peace or rest. Many there are who see *Christ's* death, but have never seen their *own death* in Him. Nature cannot see it. Unbelief cannot see it. Only *life* can see it. Hence said the Lord to Nicodemus, "Except a man be *born* again, he cannot *see* the kingdom of God".

Such, then, in few words, is the beginning and the

end, the life and the doom, of the old nature, which is penally or judicially dead; and such is the position before God, whether living in the sense or energy of it or not, of every believer. God reckons him as having received on the cross the desert of his sin, as having died, and as being, therefore, so to speak, on the other side of his doom.

And now, for a little, as to *the new nature*. It likewise is easily discovered in the Word, and is known and felt in the actual experience of every Christian. The name—new nature, or new man—gives the title of "old" to that which was before. Paul refers to both where he says, "I," that is, the natural man, "am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me". The life which we have in Christ is not, as many imagine, "the lengthening out to eternity of our own life"; nor is it that its old corruptions are brought by it into a gradually altered and improved state. Not a single modicum of the old will ever find conveyance into the new. It is A NEW CREATION. The Spirit of God is very explicit here. We are said to be "*created anew* in Christ Jesus". We are in Him as the new creation. We are in Him even as the old creation was in Adam as its head. He, Christ, passing by the nature of angels, joined Himself to the seed of Abraham; that is, became man. He took upon Him the life of man: He laid down His life instead of, or *for*, man's forfeited life. He took our sickness and sorrows upon Him, that He might bear them; and our sins, that He might expiate them. This done, He is quickened from the dead, raised from the grave, as *the beginning* or Head of the new creation. This, as believers, is *our position*, as seen by God. We are dead, risen, and forgiven all trespasses in Christ—He the Head; the Church His body. As the Head, so the body. As in Adam, the old head, all die, so in Christ, our new Head, do all live. The circumcision made with hands was the painful cutting off of the literal flesh; this dreadful circumcision of *Christ's death* was for the putting off of the body of sin,—the sins of the flesh, which sins were laid, on the cross, upon Him who was mighty to save, and which, being expiated, were left in His grave. "For in Him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power: *in whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the*

body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: BURIED WITH HIM IN BAPTISM, wherein also YE ARE RISEN WITH HIM, through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, HATH HE QUICKENED TOGETHER WITH HIM, having forgiven you all trespasses; blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, NAILING IT TO HIS CROSS." (Col. ii. 9-14.)

This, I repeat, is *our condition*. In virtue of *ONENESS* with Christ, we are as He is. We have died with Him, and *are* dead. We are raised together with Him. His death is ours: His life is ours. "The sins of the flesh" which in death He put away were not His, but ours; and the "handwriting" which He *blotted out*, which He *nailed to the cross*, was not against Him (excepting as He took our place), but against us. He died for our offences, sins: He was raised for our justification. In Him we are accepted, made nigh, before God. His righteousness, title to heaven, rank, inheritance, and glory as Mediator, are all ours,—His gift to us who believe. The grave, from which, after all was perfectly finished, He arose, which He left open, is a scene full of life to the believer. The folded napkin and the seated angels show how that *God*, who is the God of order and of heaven, had raised Him from the dead. And the stone rolled away from its entrance forms, as we stand on it, a Divine ellipsis, whence we look back upon the "old things,"—sin, and the curse, and death,—which are all "passed away," and forward and upward on the "all things which are new".

Now, he who sees and knows Christ hath life; and he hath life *in* Him. The beginning of it within us is of Divine power. We are born of God, by whom we are made alive. We are "*God's workmanship*". The moment a soul is "quickened" by God, there is life. The very dawn of it in the soul is known by its *wants*. This is analogous to all life. There are no desires, no longings, no wants, in a corpse. The quickened soul wants sin removed; it wants peace; it wants God. The answer to all which is Christ, who has put away sin, the knowledge of which is peace, and the peace is *peace with God*. How different is all this from the vain attempt of working out our own death for sin, or of labouring for our own life! We have all in Christ.

Such, then, are the two natures; the one the old,

which has been crucified; the other, which is new, and which is of God. The one, as we have said, remains essentially corrupt; the other essentially holy. "It sinneth not." The evil nature, though it has had its doom, is still *in me*, and opposes itself to the energy and work of the Spirit, who dwells in the new man, and who is *ungrieved* within us in exact proportion as sin and the flesh are not allowed, and Christ, to whom He testifies, is received by us according to the riches of His grace and the purposes of the Divine love in Him.

This subject has many practical bearings. *It is vital to peace*, which, in the absence of Divine knowledge, can never flow like a river. Said a beloved Christian, "I *do* see the truth of the old man crucified; but, alas! I am not crucified". Her words, "But, alas! I am not crucified," showed that she did *not* see it. I explained that the term "crucified" did not mean that the *presence* of evil, or even that its tormenting energy, was gone, but that its *doom* was gone. The value of which fact lies in this: that we have suffered in Christ the death due to us; that our punishment is overpast; that, although we deplore and abhor *the presence* of the evil in us, judgment upon it has been executed, according to John v., where it is declared, "He that heareth My word, and believeth on Him that sent Me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation,"—*judgment*, as the word is,—"*but is passed from death unto life.*" This being understood, the believer is free from the sentence and the punishment of sin. He will "not come into judgment." Thus, when Christ returns, according to Thess. iv., it will be to receive us *unto Himself*, that we may be forever with Him, in love, and in the inheritance of the glory which He has given us. He will come, not to judge or condemn: judgment and condemnation are overpast. He will come, not to raise again the question of sin, but to deliver us fully and finally from its very presence. Says Paul in Hebrews, "As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was *once offered to bear the sins of many*; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time WITHOUT SIN UNTO SALVATION."

The subject bears likewise upon the question of *practical holiness*. The one nature is holy, essentially so: the other is essentially evil. In the one, the new man, the Spirit, dwells, producing its Divine fruits: in the other, self is the animating, ruling principle. Though we are not now living as formerly, "*in the*

flesh," that is, a life in which self is the animating, ruling principle, we still have the flesh *in us*. But we are not to own it. We are not to mind the things of the flesh. We are to walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. We are told by Paul, in Galatians, what are the works of the flesh; but he says, that, if we *walk in the Spirit*, we shall not fulfil them: we shall not, in fact, do the things, the evil things, that otherwise we would. This is our walk,—a walk in the Spirit, and according to holiness,—to live and act, not according to the evil which is in us, but according to the instincts of the new life, according to the Spirit that dwells within us, according to Christ.

It is affirmed of the Christian, that he hath "put off the old man with his deeds," and hath "put on the new." The two courses are open to him, and they are opposed. If he walk in the flesh, he grieves the Holy Spirit of God, whereby he is "sealed unto the day of redemption." If he walk in the Spirit, he mortifies the deeds of the body, crucifies the flesh. Walking in the Spirit, moreover, is the sure way of rest and peace. To be spiritually-minded is peace. Walking in the flesh, we grieve our own spirit. Thus was it with Peter. By the flesh that was in him did he deny the Lord; by the Spirit that was in him did he mourn that denial. The appeal, "Lord, *Thou knowest all things, Thou knowest that I love Thee*," showed the reality and certainty of the new life, and its Divine power, notwithstanding the darkest assailment of evil.

This, I repeat, is *our walk* as believers—not to own the flesh, not to mind the things of the flesh, but, as we have put on Christ, to live and act according to Him. It is in proportion as we do this that we are *practically holy*, and are, as seen by others, *growing* in holiness. But as the rich fruit-bearing branch receives all from the vine, so this life of holiness finds its root in Christ. It is all of him. Knowing him, His grace, what *He* is to us, and what *we* are in Him, what our life, our rank, our holiness, our inheritance, and our glory, all that,—as HEAD, he is to HIS MEMBERS as revealed to us in the Word, this is *the power* that enables us to mortify the deeds of the body, and makes us, with more and more emphasis, *morally* and *practically* what we are judicially—crucified, dead, dead to the world, dead to sin.

This theme of the two natures will aid us *in our estimate of others*. Because of the flesh that is in them, many are uncharitably judged. This is the case especially in regard to young Christians, who are expected

to be faultless, or nearly so. The allowance ordinarily made for older christians is not unfrequently denied to them. And not unfrequently the estimate made of them is according to the evil only, and not according to what is truly and plainly good. Judged by such rule, weighed in such balances, Abraham, Lot, David, Peter, and numerous others would be found wanting. I have known Christians who, on seeing little children, who, in these remarkable days of awakening, have become "lambs of the fold," manifesting, in some unguarded moment, the temper and disposition of the old nature, have hastily concluded that they were never the subjects of the new; that they were still unregenerate. Do we apologise for evil, or lightly view it? No, indeed, but simply account for it, charging it home upon the flesh, which, in the youngest or oldest, wars against the Spirit, even as the spirit wars against the flesh. Some may say this is a convenient doctrine. Nay, *not* convenient, but a sad and melancholy fact. To treat it as a mere convenience, or as liberty to sin, is *Antinomian*, to *know* it as an evil root in us, which has to be mortified, kept under, whose every growth has to be severely cut, is the doctrine of Scripture, and accords with the experience of the holiest and best of Christians.

But this subject *sends forth a sound as of a parting knell over all that properly belongs to the flesh*. Beneath that sound, *self-love*, or the love of *self*, so strong in most, ought to wither and die. They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh. They are counted as dead, and ought to be *practically* so. Why, then, nourish corruption? or desire that which is dead? The dove cannot feed on corruption like the vulture. The instincts of our new life are all opposed to the body of sin and death. Yet do many Christians long after self, and seem to allow it as their animating, ruling principle, as if loath to part with it. What the Lord said to Samuel may with propriety be said to them, "*How long wilt thou mourn for Saul, seeing I have rejected him?*"

But now, what are "the things of the flesh"? They are "the works of the flesh"; all our sins, corruptions, and other deadly evil, the dark catalogue of which Paul gives us in the 6th of Galatians, of which he says, "They that do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God". They are, moreover, the mere righteousness, religiousness, and supposed goodness of the natural man, such as is described by the apostle in Phil. iii., and which he says he counts "but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus," that he might

"know him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death,"—all that, again, on which, by mere nature, self would depend for happiness, or make its portion : worldly honours, riches, wisdom. These are but the adornings of the dead, perishing flowers thrown into the mystical grave, honey which was not allowed by God in the service of the first tabernacle. They are not our portion. Yet the loss of any of them, with some, is the loss of peace. The loss of youth, of comeliness, of years—like the fly in the pot of ointment—deprives of its pleasantness the whole of life's cup. These are not our portion. Our portion is in Christ, who has brought us unto God. There is our true life. In him we have lasting love, and holiness, righteousness, completeness, perfectness, for ever ! Say, what is self in comparison to Christ ? what the loss of youth, beauty, life itself, to the incorruptible inheritance in Him ? Or what the passing away of days to Him whose chronology is ended, His days being numbered by eternities ? Do we understand these things ? Paul did when he said, "What things were gain to me, *those* I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ, and be found in Him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith".

And now, O Christian ! think what nature is thine, how begotten, and who hath begotten thee. Think of the glorious worker, God, and of His divine workmanship, which thou art, created anew in Christ Jesus, a "new creature," "partaker of the divine nature". And think of how thou hast been loved, even from the time-less ages ; how HE, "whose years have no end," no beginning, from behind the lattice-work of eternity saw thee, loved thee ! Think for what end thou hast been loved ; that with all saints thou mayest show as in a mirror the riches of His grace, and that, as part of that body which is Christ's "fulness," thou mayest sit with Him on His throne, share with Him His joy, dwell in His love, and reign with Him for ever.

And think of how thou wast purchased. God, as in the glass of His purpose, showed to Christ the Church. Christ loved His Church, but could not, because of sin, possess it as His own until He had redeemed it by His

own most precious blood ; until, in fact, He had given for it all that He had—His life, *Himself*. And think by whom thou art inhabited.

Think what Spirit dwells within thee ;
Think what Father's smiles are thine ;
Think what Saviour died to save thee ;
Child of heaven, can'st thou repine ?

And think not so much of the evil that yet inly torments thee. It is a doomed evil, judicially conquered, slain, crucified, dead, given into thy hands. Let thy foot be as firm upon it as Joshua, in the energy of the Spirit, put his foot upon the necks of the kings of Canaan. And living in this power, and the freedom which it gives, thou can'st serve. Freed from thy old masters—self, the law, and sin as a condemning power—thou can'st "serve the Lord Christ". But if thou must sometimes "groan, being burdened," let songs mingle with thy groans ; for "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us".

And, finally, think of what by grace thou art, even *now*. Thou art "once purged," "made nigh," "clean every whit," "accepted," seated inside the heavens, where the blood is before God, the presence of which is the full and final dismissal of all sin from before God, and of all terror from thee, who art perfected forever, one with Christ, accepted, righteous, complete in Him.

This is our new and heavenly life,—a life, the same in Christ and His members, in the body as the Head ; a life incorruptible, inalienable, and eternal. None but redeemed sinners who have believed can know it. Except a man be *born* again, he cannot see it ; but, being born, he *can* see, and, seeing it, he *is* born,—born again, and can now not only, "*see the kingdom*," but, on knowing and seeing it, has really and truly "entered" it. Blessed entrance ! Precious entrance ! What we want is a heart to know "the grace wherein we stand," to appreciate and enjoy it ; which may the Lord by His Spirit give !

SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD.

I WOULD like to turn the attention of God's dear children to that solemn passage in the Word of God, 2 Cor. vi. 14, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers : for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness ? and what com-

munion hath light with darkness?" There have been many opinions as to the meaning of these words of God, especially in these last days in which we live. Some say, and truly, that it refers to marriage between believers and unbelievers; others, again, that it means separation from the religious sects and systems of an ungodly world. This is also true, but, my dear brethren and sisters, does it stop there? Nay, it goes further. I say it is quite possible to be breaking bread and drinking wine every Lord's day in outward separation from them, and yet not be out from among them in spirit. How many of God's dear children come every Lord's day to break bread and drink wine, and during the rest of the week they go hand in hand with a world whose skirts are stained with the blood of Jesus. Oh! I specially speak to you, my dear sisters in the blessed Lord Jesus, and ask you, in the light of the judgment-seat of Christ, if this is separation? Nay, what God wants now-a-days is, that we, men and women, should testify, as Jesus did when in the world, that the works thereof are evil. Is it any wonder that the blessed Spirit of God is grieved when we are gathered together, and that He is hindered from opening up to our souls the preciousness of our Lord Jesus Christ, as He would if these things were not so. Oh! if you are trying to live for Jesus, the sooner these ways are changed the better, if that love of His which led him to Calvary's Cross does not constrain you to forsake *all* that you have and follow Him, what a miserable witness you will be down here for your rejected Lord. I care not what it is, a society or a trades-union, God wants you and me to have no fellowship with them. "Be ye not," says the Holy Ghost; mark these solemn words, dear reader. But some may say, If I do not belong to the trades-union I shall starve, I may as well throw away my tools, and what shall I do then? This is looking at the subject naturally; but when we look at it in the presence of God, what do we find? Look at that precious verse, Heb. x. 38, "Now the just shall live by faith". Then you may say, It is easy for one to speak thus, who has neither wife nor children. Is it not as easy, my dear brother, for God to support a man with his wife and family (though he should have a dozen children) as it is for Him to care for one? God may try you, He may try your faith, but remember, he has said, "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee," and "the very hairs of your head are all numbered," yes, numbered by God. May He enable you and me to be

more and more separate from a world that is at enmity with our loving Father and God. Oh, I do pray that you, dear sisters in the Lord Jesus who are scattered up and down this world, may keep yourselves separated from it and the evil. What a power you would be for God if this were so! If you have become entangled, the sooner you break off the yoke the better, and thus give your soul the liberty you should enjoy. Remember, if you connect yourself in any way with the world, you are putting a yoke upon your own soul. May the Lord enable you and me so to live in the presence of our Lord Jesus, that we shall be able to detect any evil the moment we see it springing up. For Christ's sake, Amen and Amen!

J. M'E.

"THOU ART WORTHY."

WORTHY to fill the Throne
Of Heaven and earth is He
Who bare the curse alone
Accursed upon the tree:
Who by His death did death destroy
And from death's throes brought forth life's
everlasting joy.

Let men man's praises sing
And glory in the dust:
We in our God and King
Christ crucified will trust,
Our righteousness, our praise is He!
Who blotted out our guilt, made guilt upon the
tree.

Our song shall never stay
Our harp be ne'er unstrung,
Still sweeter grows our lay,
Yet louder each glad tongue,
And yet the tide of music rolls
Onward in deepening floods from ever gladdening
souls.

Praise: praise for ever more
To God our Father high:
Praise to the Son who bore
Our guilt and came to die:
Praise to the Spirit, Holy Dove!
Who in our hearts still sings the Everlasting Love!

R S W.

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THE FOURTH DIALOGUE, Ch. II., 3-7.

IN verse 3, with which this fourth dialogue opens, the Bride speaks of what her Lord is to her. It is well to be occupied with Him; well, for it is healthy for the soul, as it is glorifying to God, who gave Him up that, by death and resurrection, He might become our Lord. (Rom. xiv. 9.) How different, indeed, is He from all others. All the types of Him are but shadows, faint and feeble, compared with Him, the Substance of them all, the great Antitype. Oftentimes, for instance, the types have need to be doubled to represent Him at all adequately, as in the case of Moses with Aaron, David with Solomon, Elijah with Elisha, the two pigeons, the two sparrows (Levit. xiv. 4, margin), the burnt and the sin offerings, and many more; for in Him all fulness dwells. He is full of grace and truth. He gives salvation and everlasting life and the Holy Ghost, whom He has received of the Father, and encourages us to wait for His own personal return. If we who believe in Him are sons, evidently it is through Him we become such. If others aid us, if others prevail with God, all is owing to Him. As the sight is rare to behold an apple tree in the midst of a wood, so it is a wonderful thing that He pitched His tent among us, and was made like unto us. Yet even when on earth, the beams of His glory were ever and anon bursting forth before the astonished gaze of His disciples. So now being glorified, He is our Lord and Saviour, our great Shepherd and High Priest, our Friend and coming Bridegroom. Of the apple there is

almost an infinite variety; yet not so much is this the case compared with Him who has sympathy with us in all our trials, who has succour for us in all our weakness, who has kind words and looks to cheer us up whilst in our difficult path, who sends us deliverances every now and then when we are almost crushed in spirit, and who will stand by us and deliver us fully from all our enemies at the end; and then who has crowns, which are tokens of His approbation, to be given to us when once we have arrived over there, and which same crowns He would have us eye and expect, even now, in order that victory, over and over again by the way, we may win! Moreover, the joy of His friendship and of His love—the joy of gladdening His heart somewhat who has gladdened and continues to gladden ours, and then the bright and brightening prospect of His welcome of us soon and for ever to Himself, is most sweet. Then who can tell all that He is to God, both eternally and in His work of obedience unto death, most fragrant in God's own account for us? But in so far as we can appreciate what He thus is, and what is God's own estimate of His precious work, and, moreover, that in all this preciousness of His we every moment appear before God, so can we exultingly apprehend how near and dear to God we are in Him. (Eph. i.) Hence, with the Bride, we can well exclaim, "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my Beloved among the Sons". And here she is seen resting in the delightful consciousness of what He is and of all He is to her. She and we came first to Him for salvation. She and we are surprised more and more at what we find in Him and in His love to us beyond all our expectation. (2 Cor. i. 20.) Oh!

Thou great Son of God, how vast, how tender, how constant is Thy love to us! and what a God is He who gave us such a Saviour!

The latter half of verse 3 suggests to us that we should sometimes seek for leisure to place ourselves under our Lord's eye, and to meditate there upon what He is and upon all He is to us. The present is notably a time of bustle and of hurry. Even the children of God allow themselves to be far too much taken up with the cares and the business of this life, and to neglect, or at least not determinedly and steadily to seek for seasons of hallowed communion with the Lord. But it seems to me that if our souls are to be fat and flourishing, we must have seasons of retirement, not only from business, but from our nearest friends—seasons, I mean, not only to pour out our hearts before Him, but also seasons for drinking in large draughts of His precious love. The way to do this is by contemplation of His perfections, and by feeding through the Word without reserve, and under His eye, upon Himself; for thereby great delight in Him will be our daily portion, and sweet foretastes of what is in store for us will be conveyed by the Spirit into our inner man. Thus shall we become heavenly minded, with our affections *set* upon things above, and thus when we go into the world shall we be strong, and do exploits.

In verse 4 this animation of soul is heightened by the reflection that all our salvation and all our enjoyment of His love now, and all our hopes as to what we shall presently in full possess—that all this was His own eternal desire, was His Father's sovereign arrangement, and has—so near the glory as we are—all been brought about and carried out by His own determined purpose, and by the unchanging love of His heart. "He loves His own to the end." 'Tis He, our own heavenly and matchless Lover, who has done all this. 'Tis He who brought each one of us from our sins, from our unbelief, and from the world, with all its transitory pleasures, into His house of wine, where even now He feasts with us, refreshing His own soul as He refreshes ours—Himself rejoicing in His own love, which love He spreads as a banner over us. Now this banner reminds us of union with Himself and with each other even now—of warfare, it may be, on the morrow, but of victory, final and complete, at His return. "They overcame by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony, not loving their

own lives unto the death." Thus do they learn that they are destined to ascend to heaven under a purple canopy. And the more the banner is eyed, the more distinctly will what He is to us be apprehended, and the stronger shall we be for the fight; and this thought that hitherto He Himself has done all for us, and that His love will constrain Him to befriend us right through, suggests to her a beautiful plea to the effect that He Himself should see to her being cheered with flagons and comforted with those apples off the Apple tree before her, that all this should be done by His own pierced hand. Of His love revealed to her soul by the Holy Ghost, she is just now brimful. She would that this were ever the case; but she, like to all God's people, alas! knew what leanness of soul sometimes is. And hence her prayer is—Do Thou Thyself present to me now such copious draughts of Thy love; do Thou Thyself anticipate me by Thy grace whether I am wandering from Thee, or whether I am returning to Thee, and so convey anew afresh into my soul such an exquisite sense of Thy favour as shall make me full of joy and peace in believing. Oh! do not let the responsibility of my abiding in Thy love so entirely devolve on me, but that rather, if I fail, Thou mayest prevent me with the blessings of goodness, Thou mayest Thyself restore my soul, putting in Thy finger by the hole Thyself hast already made in the door of my heart. For in verse 3 she herself takes the apples, but in verse 5 she entreats that He Himself will present them to her. Take, for instance, those two apples—one in John xv. 9, and the other in the last words of John xvii. 23—and whether, oh, believer! you take these now into your own soul, as you are perfectly welcome to do, or whether at certain times they come unexpectedly with a certain peculiar vividness and power, rejoicing your heart—in either case, it is well. If the latter way be the sweeter, the former way, being in the exercise of faith, is well pleasing to God; and anyhow, as the 6th verse implies that which she had desired—namely, to be fed and refreshed in spirit by His own hand—He at once willingly accedes to, transcending also her expectations. For at once and as if in amazement at His grace, she is constrained to exclaim in rapture, "His left hand is under my head and His right hand doth embrace me". And is this Thy way, Thou holy and blessed One, that when we ask great things, even to be treated according to the riches of God's grace, Thou dost

delight in going beyond all our thoughts? So was it in the beginning of Thy mercy towards us. We then trusted in Thee for no more, probably, than for salvation from hell; and on our coming to Thee, Thou at once didst grant to us this indeed, but also therewith the power to become the Sons of God too. Oh! may we so come to know Thee, and that God who sent Thee, that we may cease to be surprised at our cups being brimmers.

And now, as if at present his joy can reach no further, and as if grace, in teaching us to expect that we shall be for ever with *such* a Lord, can grant us nothing beyond this, therefore the Lord, now for the fourth time in the progress as yet of this song, speaks in reference to all this joy which she is experiencing in Him, and which she had been attempting to express, save only that as she commenced to express it, that joy in Himself waxed greater and greater. For verse 4 goes beyond verse 3, verse 5 transcends verse 4, and likewise verse 6 vastly exceeds all that is in verse 5; and, in fact, is the climax of her heavenly joy.

Therefore the Lord now says, "I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field, that ye stir not up nor awake my love till SHE* please".

And this same charge which we here find for the first time at this the close of the last of the four brief and doctrinal dialogues, will be found likewise at the close of the fifth dialogue, or first of the more experimental ones (ch. iii. 5), and again at the close of the last or eighth dialogue in ch. viii. 4.

In all these three places the word "He" should be rendered "She". The point of the charge is that whenever our souls have been brought by His grace to the experience of His great love, as in Psalm xxiii., or in John xvii., it is not His will that we should ever be disturbed there, but in repose and rest of spirit we should dwell on the confines of glory on the tiptoe of expectation for His immediate and personal return. Yet, alas! we do get away from Him. For we are poor, silly sheep, and prone to wander. Nor will it avail to ascribe those wanderings all either to Satan or to the world. David did not in Psalm li. blame Satan for his fall. Daniel, in his prayer pleading in behalf of his nation, took all the blame of that people's departure from God upon that nation, himself included (Dan ix.).

* See the remarks on this revised translation here from "He" to "She" in the January number for this year at page 3.

When in 1 John we are directed if we stumble to confess our sins, the sentiment surely is that we ourselves should put our own heads in the dust of self-abasement. And most certainly it is never the Lord's will that we should depart a while from Him, abandoning communion with Himself. His will is that we should be sanctified wholly unto Himself.

But if, in any case, any one is to be blamed when we become less spiritual, probably the unconverted professors, the religious, "the daughters of Jerusalem" may have something to do therewith. When we are in the presence of our open enemies in the world, we may be upon our guard; but not so easily with those who call God and Christ theirs, but in whose hearts there is no savour of His love, as is plain by the readiness with which they turn away from holy and heavenly subjects.

On the other hand, the Holy Spirit within us cannot brook the least sin, or departure from Christ. For then He retires into our hearts' most inner sanctuary. He is grieved, and we must grieve and confess even the least fault, ere He can have His own way with us again. Like the "roes or the hinds of the field," who, on the most stealthy approach of aught strange and novel, retire further and further away; so, if we listen to aught foreign to the love of Christ, does the Spirit retire inwards. For His way of work is to begin from within first, acting on our spirits, then on our souls, and lastly on our bodies; so in contrary order does He recede until we have mourned and owned our failure. Nor is restoration to full communion always that which is immediately accorded, as we may learn from the type in Num. xix. 12. He will make us know what an evil and a bitter thing it is to sin against a God so good, and against a Christ Whose love to us is so great.

In short, as we saw at the conclusion of Dialogue I. that the Bride's desire in brief was to SEE HIM, and again in the Second Dialogue that her longing desire was to be WITH HIM, and likewise in the Third Dialogue the expression of her heart is to be LIKE HIM—so here, as the sum of the Fourth Dialogue, her wish, growing more and more by favours already granted, is that FOR EVER she may be with Him. We know that this, too, is in some measure granted to us even now, if and as long as we do want it to be so. Whence easily we may conclude that when we are finally delivered from all our foes, and there is nothing remaining which can possibly allure us away from Him, our heart's prayer shall then be wholly granted, and so shall we be "for ever with the Lord".

ON GIVING.

(Continued from Aug. No., Page 116.)

THE duties to which we are summoned by the word of the Lord, are without exception, if we read them aright, most precious privileges, and such surely in no small degree is the duty of giving.

It is not the privilege of the rich only, though theirs is in an especial way, doubtless, this stewardship. It is written in 1 Cor. xvi. 2, "Let *every one of you* lay by in-store as God hath prospered him."

So it is remarked of the Macedonian churches, that "In a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality, for to their power I bear record, yea and beyond their power they were willing." (2 Cor. viii. 2, 3.)

And can we forget the encomium passed by our Lord Himself upon the widow whose "two mites which make a farthing," cast into the treasury, together with the offerings of the rich, escaped not His observation, who knew and appreciated the faith and love that led her to cast in "*all the living that she had.*"

When David would offer sacrifice in the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, he declined to receive it as a gift, saying, "I will surely buy it of thee at a price; neither will I offer burnt offering unto the Lord my God of that which doth *cost me nothing.*" (2 Sam. xxiv. 24.)

But alas! how little of this spirit is there now. How few there are who willingly *deny themselves* that they may have to give to the Lord.

Some give "out of their abundance". Let not their gifts be underrated or despised because they have much. The word of the Lord to the rich is, "That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate." (1 Tim. vi. 18.) Money thus spent is not squandered, but "*laid up in store,*" safely deposited in the hands of a good banker who will see to it, that such service is not forgotten in the time to come.

But there is another side to this. "Though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it profiteth me nothing". Here is a costly offering, a possible supposition.

The *quantity* is abundant, but the *quality* is wrong. Much is given, but the motive that constrained to it was not *love*. Therefore He "by whom actions are

weighed," who looks on the heart and not on the outward appearance, regards it not with complacency costly though it be; whilst another who gave "a cup of cold water only," that which cost absolutely nothing, but which was given under the constraint of the love of Christ, shall in no wise lose his reward.

It is therefore of highest importance that we jealously search and guard our motives in this ministry. It is possible to *give* in order to be seen of men—to have the name figuring respectably in a subscription list. It is possible to fix the amount that shall be given, by the amount others have given, a species of worldly emulation leading to the determination that we shall give as much as they. It is possible to give merely from a sense of duty, or because it is our habit to do so. Without having considered the matter, or having communed with God about it, dropping the smallest coin into the box, the accustomed half-penny, or the silver threepenny piece; a gift, but not of love, a lifeless form, obnoxious to Him who desires the worship and service of the heart.

Let the world go on in its formal routine; let those who know not God's grace so give out of their bondage and legality, but let not those who have rejoiced in Christ Jesus, who have known Him as their Saviour, and owned Him as their Lord, thus mock Him with their niggard formal unconsidered gifts.

The principle of giving is twofold. First "as God hath prospered," (1 Cor. xvi. 2), and secondly, "Every man as He purposeth in his heart". (2 Cor. ix. 7.) Before giving comes prospering "If there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not". (2 Cor. viii. 12.) If through adverse circumstances a believer be in debt, if there be claims upon him by shopkeepers, and others lawfully due which he cannot meet, if the finger of the ungodly can be pointed to him as one who owes and pays not, how then can the gift of such an one be acceptable to the Lord.

He cannot give what he has not got. To give to the Lord that which is withheld from one to whom it righteously belongs, is the same in principle, as to offer unto God stolen property.

Yet such has been done, and for what object? Simply to stand well with fellow believers, to pass for being "liberal," or perhaps "well off". Let any one who has thus dishonoured the Lord "cease to do evil and learn to do well". God's order is "*soberly first*, then

righteously, then Godly." Charity at the expense of righteousness is not God's charity.

But as a man is prospered in his work, so let him give. Let him "purpose in his heart". This does not imply merely a putting of the hand into the pocket, and taking out whatever coin comes first. It clearly points to a well considered amount, proportioned to the prosperity given; prayerfully and solemnly, yet cheerfully set aside for the service of the Lord. Moreover, in connecting this action with "the first day of the week," (1 Cor. xvi. 2), is there not a special instruction. It is the day upon which the Lord of Glory rose from the dead; the day upon which His saints in obedience to His command, have gathered together to "break bread" in remembrance of Him. (Acts xx. 7.) A day of holy and blessed associations when above all times the heart of the child of God is impressed with the love that passeth knowledge; is it not therefore as though our God would have us to form this purpose of our hearts under the immediate constrainings of the love of Christ, that so our giving might be no act of bondage but the fruits of grace, no mere observance of a commandment, but the spontaneous voluntary offering of a renewed soul, an act of worship as real, and as really acceptable, as the thanksgiving and praise of those who surround His table—"An odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing unto God". (Phil. iv. 18.)

But the glory that such a scriptural course of action yields to God, does not stop with the giving. Follow the line of effects described in 2 Cor. viii. 11, 15, and see how the stream of blessing extends.

First there is the thanksgiving of the apostle, as of one who watched for their souls, and joyed as he saw the fruit of divine grace in their liberality. Next there is the *supply of the wants of the saints*—this, of itself alone, no unworthy object. Then there are the many thanksgivings for wants supplied, ascending as sweet incense from many hearts to the Father of Mercies. Then these relieved ones glorify God as they see this evidence of real "*subjection to the Gospel of Christ.*" And as they *praise* they also *pray* for those whose love has ministered to them in carnal things, and *long after* them with responsive love, love that springs up spontaneously, as the exceeding grace of God is thus witnessed and admired in them.

Well might the apostle end the subject with a suitable doxology, "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift".

But whilst this service is thus abundantly to the glory of God, there is a further result in blessing to the givers, that must not be overlooked. There is, as it were, a sowing and a reaping. "He that soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; he that soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully."

God is a *cheerful* giver, and He is a *bountiful* giver. "He giveth unto all men liberally, and upbraideth not." He would have His children to go and do likewise, and in order to encourage us to do so, He tells us that He looks at what is given as *seed sown*, to bear a harvest of everlasting blessing when He comes again; as money laid up in store, given to the poor, but "*lent to the Lord*" to be returned again with interest. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love which ye have shewed towards His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints and do minister." (Heb. vi. 10.)

And in the meantime, lest any fear that want should come upon us as the result of liberal giving, should hinder the outflow of what by grace is in the heart, He again encourages with such a verse as is hardly equalled in scripture for its *superlativeness*—"God is able to make ALL grace ABOUND towards you, that ye ALWAYS having ALL-SUFFICIENCY in ALL things may ABOUND to EVERY good work."

What a God we have!

A word or two as to the way in which our contributions are to be bestowed. Let every one "*lay by him*". This is private. It is in accordance with the forcible words of our blessed Lord, "Let not thy left hand know what thy right doeth". He knows the vile tendency of our corrupt hearts to love the praise of man, more than the praise of God.

The considered and proportionate amount of the income laid aside—let guidance be sought as to how it shall be disposed of. It is the Lord's, but it is not on that account to be recklessly spent. Take heed lest through mere natural sentimentality, it be spent in building up what God is breaking down.

In most cases in scripture where this kind of ministry is referred to or acknowledged, it is as coming from an *assembly*, not from an *individual*. Here also there is a wise reason. We are prone to look to *man*, easily induced to hold men's persons in admiration because of advantage, and those who have in larger measure this stewardship, might be unduly deferred to—it is so common, and so essentially in the flesh to

look up to the rich, and to look down upon the poor. Hence it seems to be the Lord's way where it can be done, to gather together the gifts of rich and poor, and to have them distributed by qualified persons in whom the saints have full confidence.

This of course is not to the exclusion of individual liberality for which there is abundant scope at all times, but especially in contributing toward the support of labourers in the gospel at home and abroad, it seems fitting and scriptural that ordinarily such should be bestowed through the assembly. It diminishes the snare of looking to man, and also affords opportunity of real fellowship to such as could only give a very small sum, and whose gifts, though as much valued by God as the gifts of the wealthier, might otherwise be withheld.

Finally let it be specially noted, that "giving" is not the word usually employed in scripture for this ministry.

It is a Greek word variously rendered by "fellowship" (see Acts ii. 42; 2 Cor. viii. 4), "contribution" (Rom. xv. 26), "distribution" (2 Cor. ix. 13), "communication" (Heb. xiii. 16). (See also Rom. xii. 13; Phil. iv. 15; 1 Tim. vi. 18.) This expresses a far deeper and more blessed thought than simply giving for the relief of necessity.

It involves a real entering in sympathy into the need, and feeling for the suffering of the needy one, so that not only is there the hand opened to help, but the heart uplifted to God for blessing with the help given.

We have thus seen that upon this subject God has spoken abundantly and plainly. Were His word given heed to, and His instructions obeyed, no work really of God would lack support, no ministers sent forth by Him would want, no poor saint would pine in the workhouse, or starve in the garret. As it is written concerning the manna "He that gathered much had nothing over; He that gathered little had no lack". The motto of the Red Republic may be "Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity"—a liberty to sin, an equality that cannot brook a superior, a fraternity that is from hell; such is the spirit of the last days.

But are not these like all the most successful devices of Satan *perversions of truth*? Is there not a liberty of truth in which the Christian is to stand, a fraternity of sons of God, and an equality too that sets aside no principle of subjection to authority, but that shares its

fulness with another's wants and loses not thereby. (2 Cor. viii. 14, 15.)

"The liberal soul shall be made fat."

"There is that scattereth and yet increaseth, there is that withholdeth more than is meet, and it tendeth to poverty."

J. R. C.

ON THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

THE Holy Ghost in this Epistle, looks at human nature, or the flesh, in the Saint, assuming it to be capable of yielding the same fruit in him as it does in any unrenewed man. I believe that it is this view of the common nature possessed by *all*, which gives character to this Epistle. And the flesh, in the Saint, being the source of all possible mischief, the great rule is to *renounce* it, and to find our springs of thought and action, not in ourselves, but in God. This is our only security for holiness and righteousness, as James clearly shows.

Accordingly, in the first chapter, the Apostle shows the source of all moral evil—that it comes from our being drawn aside by *our flesh* or *our lusts*. And, on the other hand, the source of all moral good—that it comes down from the *Father of Light*. And this being so, the duty of the soul is to take heed, and act but little from oneself, and much from God; for we ourselves should only send up superfluities of naughtiness; but that by receiving the engrafted word—by continuing in the perfect law of liberty, or reflecting God in His ways, we should be blest in our deed. Thus he establishes the great principle of all that is really evil, and shows the source of all that is really right and good in us; and then shows this fruit in *acts*, in *words*, and in *thoughts*. Thus, in the second chapter, he shows in our acts or conduct, that if we have respect to persons, for instance, we are partial in ourselves, and are acting in direct opposition to *God*, who has chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them. And he then proposes the law of liberty (being that very law in which the blessed God is now acting towards us sinners), as the rule of our conduct; following this exhortation to *action*, by citing the cases of Abraham and Rahab, to show that all profession, without action or works, is nothing worth. Then in the third chapter

he speaks of words, or the tongue—he shows that the tongue of man is an untameable beast—ever bent on mischief, readily inflamed by hell, and then instrumentally inflaming the whole moral machine of man—inciting or corrupting the whole course of nature. And the remedy is, by making or using the tongue, not as the *channel* of any word of wisdom that arises in, or springs *from ourselves*, but of that which is from above. Then indeed, but then only (that wisdom being itself so divine and so pure), the tongue which it uses, will be a member or instrument of righteousness—a channel for the flow of pure and refreshing waters—the hand employed in sowing the seed of a holy harvest. In the fourth chapter he looks at the *thoughts* or *lusts* within—and he shows them to be the fruitful springs of all the actual mischief that is abroad—he shows that the spirit within us is ever, as by the necessity of its own nature yielding evil; and that our only relief lies in the grace of God. Having thus opened and enlarged on his doctrine, and shown the flesh yielding its fruits in *acts, words, and thoughts*, and that it is the spring of all that is wrong, and that from it nothing whatever but what is wrong comes, he calls on the saints (in whom this flesh is, just as it exists in the unconverted), to *renounce* it—that is, to renounce themselves—to have it under submission to God's hand, to humble themselves—to turn their laughter into mourning—to watch against all the boasts of the natural man; and having laid down this rule of all holiness and righteousness—that is the renunciation of nature.

At the conclusion of this chapter, he says, “to him that knoweth to do good [being thus instructed], and doeth it not, to him it is sin,” as it is sin now to follow the suggestions of nature, saying, as many do by way of excuse, or even commendation, “it was very natural”. He next shows, in those whom he calls “rich men,” the way and end of all who have nature or the flesh uncontrolled—who live in pleasure, and “are wanton”—“nourishing their hearts”. Such, of course, cannot be the saints whom he is counselling, but he presents such persons to the view of the saints, that they may be a solemn warning to them of the end of nature, if left thus to its own way—after this he calls the saints again to patience, encouraging them by the example of the husbandman, who waits for the precious fruit of the earth, and has long patience for it, until he receive the early and later rain—by

the example of Job, and of the Prophets, and he adds some little detached advices, all bearing on the great principle enforced in this Epistle—namely, the *renunciation* of nature, and the propriety of regarding God as our *object* and *resource* in everything; presenting Elijah in such a way, as to make him an illustration of this doctrine—he tells us that “Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain, and it rained not on the earth, by the space of three years and six months”. Here the Apostle owns nature, or the flesh in Elijah, to be just what it is in any other person—he could not procure the smallest degree of relief or strength from it—all his resource was in God—wherefore “he prayed”. This is exactly in accordance with all the previous teaching—shewing what it had inculcated—that the nature possessed by the Saint—the flesh derived by him from fallen Adam, *was capable of any evil*, and never led to the performance of anything good—and that consequently, *all his strength and resource was in God*. The conclusion of the Epistle is in all respects the same. *Our own way* is shown to be *erroneous*, needing conversion, and conversion from it will both save the soul, and hide, or prevent the commission of a great deal of sin, which assuredly will be the result of: going on still in *our own way*.

Thus a great practical lesson is read to us, by the Spirit of God, throughout the Epistle of James—teaching us that nature can yield no fruit whatever to God—that the spirit which is in us lusteth to evil, and that our real fruitfulness springs from our growing upon *new roots* altogether—from our being grafted on a new stock of Life, in Christ Jesus.

TESTIMONY FROM YOUNG BELIEVERS.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS.

VERY DEAR BROTHER IN JESUS OUR GLORIFIED HEAD,—I can say He is increasingly precious to my soul. O it is the joy of heaven begun below to realise, by the Spirit's power, my ONENESS with my risen Christ: my life hid in Himself. And how sweet, to realise the freedom wherewith the Son hath made me free—to look at His sorrows and tears, going through the billows of the wrath of God to set me free, and to give me joy and peace and eternal life. It was no trifle that purchased our souls. How sweet it is to be alone with Jesus.

"I will not gaze on glory,
But on my king of grace."

When I was a Methodist I never saw these precious things, and eternal life was a word far out of my reach, though my soul was struggling for something—I did not know what—but honour be to our adorable Saviour, who is making it all plain now step by step.

I bless God on every remembrance of you ; from the first time I heard you preach, you were the means of opening the way to liberty to me and many more.

MY DEAR BROTHER IN JESUS,—I can say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name".

As I get on with the Lord in His word, the more I enjoy of Himself.

I can see myself quickened, raised up, and seated together with Christ clearer than I did at the first.

How sweet to enter in spirit within the veil, and gaze back to the work all done by the Man of Calvary.

The flaming sword, that turned every way to guard the way to the tree of life, is for ever sheathed for me. He died for me. It is a rest the world can neither give nor take away.

I can see my separate place clearer, not only in our way of meeting (that's what it leads to), but it is to be separate unto God from the power of ALL sin—

"Safe in the arms of Jesus."

Looking at the smile of my reconciled Father, and knowing no will but His ; but so nearly are the flesh and the spirit connected, that I find it requires the same Almighty power that quickened me to keep me, as this corrupt nature would be a co-worker with the very Satan.

But I am happy now to think of the coming of the Lord. It is ages now since

"He braved that storm for me,"

but it will not be ages again till I see that very visage—

"Marred more than the Sons of Men."

Thank God that I am forgiven. When I think of that day when He comes, yon blue heavens and everything shall pass away ; but the forgiven soul shall see Him as He is, and be like Him. It will not then be the vision of faith as through a glass darkly.

"When earth's songs have all been sung,
Labour ended—trials done,
We'll meet again, O happy word,
And be 'For ever with the Lord'."

COMPLETE IN HIM.

MY life is hid with Christ in God,
Who then can reach to wound it ;
My hope is based on Jesus' blood,
Who then can e'er confound it ;
My anchor's cast within the veil,
Nor earth nor hell can reach it,
My righteousness, is God's alone,
Who then can e'er impeach it.

In me there dwelleth no good thing,
In Jesus I'm complete,
My way is dark by snares beset,
But He will guide my feet ;
Yea, though I fall, I'll rise again,
His hand shall dry my tears,
And when in love I'm perfect made,
'Twill cast out all my fears.

I'll cast my care upon the Lord,
Because he careth for me ;
In Him my fluttering soul shall rest,
His wings extended o'er me,
In him rejoicing evermore,
Earth's joys shall not allure me,
His love provides me every good,
Omniscience can procure me.

As Christ midst heaven's high glories sits,
The Lamb of God accepted,
So, though on earth to Him I'm joined,
And cannot be rejected,
Heaven's harps shall sound my welcome home
To mansions in the sky ;
A sinner saved by grace alone,
A son of God on high.

INCENSE

MY soul has been delighting a little to-day in a few passages of the precious Word, and I am sure you will readily share them with me ; they are our mutual property—yours as much as mine. In looking at the 1st chapter of Luke's gospel, I was much struck by the lovely connection between it, the 8th of Revelation, and Exodus 30th. "And the whole multitude of the people were *praying* without at the time of *incense*, and there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord, standing at the right side of the altar of *incense*." "And another angel came, and stood at the altar of incense, having a golden censer, and there was given him much incense, that he should add it to the prayers of all saints

—and the smoke of the incense, with the prayers of the saints, *ascended* up before God out of the angel's hand." What wonderful similarity between both these scenes is to be observed, though the place is changed from earth to heaven—the shadows giving way to the full and blessed reality. The fragrance of Jesus, which once ascended from the typical altar, now fills the very presence of God, and is there as the chariot to waft into His bosom the prayers and praises of His poor, weak, but precious ones below; and what may we not expect, when they are thus borne into our Father's presence? Surely the result must be that the barren woman shall have joy and gladness, and shall sing with a loud voice. Oh! how little we realise all the value which God sees in Christ—all the delight and joy which His perfectness yields to the heart of the blessed God. Clouds of incense are ever ascending from Him, and gladdening the heart of God, and in that incense our holy things are accepted. Exodus xxx. 1-8 is very lovely. "Aaron shall burn thereon sweet incense every morning, when he dresseth the lamps; he shall *burn incense* upon it; and when Aaron lighteth the lamps at even, he shall burn *incense* upon it, a perpetual incense. (Lev. xvi. 13.)

"BECAUSE OF HER IMPORTUNITY."

MANY years ago the Lord laid it upon the heart of a Christian lady to pray for the conversion of a young lady friend, a Roman Catholic, who was apparently shut away from every opportunity of hearing the truth as it is in Jesus. Years rolled on, but the heavens seemed as brass, and the object of many prayers as far from Christ as ever. The Lord's child stayed herself upon His word and promise; and each succeeding year found her praying still, with unwearied faith. After *forty* years had elapsed from the time when she first began to speak to the Lord about her friend's soul, this aged saint fell asleep, and went home to be with Jesus, without seeing any fruit of her constant supplications.

In the meantime, the brother of her friend had married a Protestant and a Christian; and shortly after the old saint's death, the Roman Catholic lady came to stay on a visit with her sister-in-law.

One day she took up a book—"Christ and the Tabernacle," by Frank White, and began to read. She read the book through, fascinated by its difference from any of the religious books she was accus-

tomed to, and meeting the text—"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life, no man cometh unto the Father but by Me," she received the truth as a little child, and was truly converted to Christ; and shortly afterwards boldly renounced Romanism.

What an encouragement to prayer such a story is! How wonderful we think it, and yet it is only what ought to have been expected! Nothing is too hard for the Lord—not even the barriers of Popish darkness—yet half our time we pray only half-expecting an answer, or giving up in despair if we don't get an answer soon. We forget that oftentimes it is "because of our importunity" we "have the petitions" we ask of God. We should not "be weary in well-doing" in the matter of prayer, as in everything else; "for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not," yea, even if our reaping-time, when we shall see the fruit of our prayers, come not before the day which shall reveal all things.

S. G. L.

ELDERSHIP.

ALTHOUGH it may be pleaded that the power to ordain elders has passed away from the church with the gift of apostleship, yet eldership, in the sense of oversight, was never by divine direction either altered or withdrawn, because the need which it was intended to meet has never ceased to exist. A gift may be withheld by God in sovereign wisdom, but a servant whom the Holy Ghost has fitted for an office, it remains for the church to accept.

The necessity for rule is the same, or, perhaps, greater than ever; and the grace that in brighter days supplied the need is unchanged and unfailing still. Where, then, is the difference? If it was necessary in the days of Timothy and Titus to "reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and doctrine"; to take care of the church of God, not only by earnest labour in the Word of Truth, but also by diligent rule; how much more when the Laodicean luke-warmness of these last days has dimmed her light and marred her testimony? Does Christ care less for His church than He did in apostolic times, when her gifts and grace made her a light to the world; or has His power failed in her hour of weakness to meet her deep, deep need? Every heart that knows Him will answer, No! Where, then, is the difference? Have we failed to accept the supply? Have we slighted and passed over

the provision He has given for the order of His own house? We are ready to hear evangelists and teachers; to get our ears filled, and, perhaps, our hearts edified with the rich truths of Scripture, but where is the word of exhortation and reproof;—not the mutual exercise of responsibility one toward another as we are taught it in John xiii., but rule in the church of Christ as He has given it, and by those whom He fits and sends.

What place have we given to the Epistles to Timothy and Titus? If "all Scripture is profitable for instruction in righteousness," we are surely accountable to God for these. What have we done with the example of the apostles, in Acts xv. and xx., where we find distinct mention not of the church meeting, but of the elders being gathered together to consider matters relating to the flock, over which the Holy Ghost had made them overseers? How is it that so much of our own thoughts and ways have found place where Jesus Christ should be Lord alone to the glory of God the Father? We may, indeed, truly answer, that all is in confusion; but God is not the author of it, and we are individually responsible to Him for our share in the ruin. We may plead that the candlestick of the church is judicially removed, but is it not because her light has almost gone out? What have we done to rekindle it? In the days of Nehemiah the true-hearted ones did not wait for help, but the priests repaired the wall of Jerusalem, every one over against his own house. Blessed be God, the deeper the darkness and the more hopeless the confusion, the richer are the promises of strength and blessing to the faithful servant who walks alone with Him.

JOHN THE BAPTIST.

IT has pleased Him whose love is without partiality, undivided, and undivisible, being infinite to each of its objects, and yet embracing all equally, it has pleased Him, I say, to exercise a sovereignty in disposing of, arming for, and employing His own in service to Himself; determining their time, place, circumstances, and ministry, as will best subserve His glory, which is evermore His object. This is true also in connection with the church's distinctive calling and place. It was so with the subject of this paper. John was a remarkable man,

(i.) In the circumstances of his birth.

(ii.) In his manner of life.

(iii.) In his character.

(iv.) In his relative position both to the Messiah, and to the nation of Israel.

(v.) In his ministry.

He stood alone.

The circumstances of his birth were remarkable.

He was the child of his parent's old age, a child of promise, and given in answer to prayer. Although the promise had been questioned by his father, saying, "How shall I know?" his unbelief could not hinder the birth of the child, although it tied his tongue. How differently was Mary's enquiry met by God? She was instructed, but not reproved. Wherefore this difference? because Zacharias had, at least, two examples of like grace and power to look back to; Abraham and Sarah, Elkanah and Hannah, therefore he should have believed it possible in his own case, and not asked a sign. Mary's was an unprecedented case, there was no example of like grace on record, a sign given by the God of Israel of His purpose to bless them.

Oh that we, dear reader, may so trust God in dark and difficult days and circumstances, as that we may sing without check of the living grace and power.

The day of his birth arrived, and the consultation respecting his name was closed by the father signifying in writing, in obedience to Gabriel's word, that his name was to be "John," this done his tongue was loosed, and being filled with the Holy Ghost, he uttered the remarkable predictions contained in Luke i., verse 67 to end.

John's manner of life was not less remarkable than his birth. He was withdrawn from the scene of his future service to be alone with God.

"The child grew and waxed strong in spirit, and was in the desert until the day of his showing unto Israel."

As with his Lord, little is known of the interval, one brief reference to his manner of life suffices, for God's object was not the man, but his *ministry* and *relation* to His Son, the Messiah. "His raiment was of camel's hair, with a leathern girdle about his loins, and his meat locusts and wild honey". Apart from earth's pleasures and follies, of self-denying habits, outstripping the Pharisees, whose hypocrisy he had yet to expose and condemn.

Jehovah was polishing this His shaft in secret, that when the time for using him should come, he might be

ready, sharp, and smooth to pierce and divide in the consciences of men.

The Lord Jesus in Nazareth and Paul in Arabia were afterwards examples of the same divine order, as Moses also was before.

It will be well for us, dear reader, to remember this and know that time spent in waiting upon God is time well spent.

"Prepare," says Solomon, "thy work in the field, and afterwards build thine house."

God has made everything beautiful in its season. His gifts are always well timed, as well as being good and precious in themselves.

It was so with this gift, this gracious visitation of Israel by the commencement of John's course and service. Those who responded to his appeal found it so, and the folly as well as the sin of those who rejected it we can discern.

John's character is gathered from the account of his ministry, and was beautiful, lowly, and loving, yet bold and uncompromising. This, the one exception recorded in Luke vii. 19-31, rather proves than otherwise, especially as commented on, and used by Him who never flattered, any more than he unduly censured any, His estimate always correct, His mind true and sober.

God's time arrived for service, and His servant suddenly appeared, and that in his relative position to Messiah and to Israel.

Before his birth, at the salutation of Mary, he leaped in his mother's womb, wonderful but significant fact; he afterwards rejoiced at the sound of the bridegroom's voice.

His relation to Messiah, his father Zacharias had described, "Thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way," and the Holy Ghost distinctly says "*This is he* who was spoken of by the prophet Esaias saying, 'The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.'" He was therefore the forerunner of the Messiah, and a witness to Israel. Thus standing out from the nation in testimony, beholding, hearing and touching the Messiah, he was remarkable in his position.

So also was he in his *ministry*.

This too his father, inspired by the Holy Ghost described. "To give knowledge of salvation to his people by the remission of their sins" (Luke i. 77), and

when John came he preached the baptism of repentance in order to the remission of sins.

This announcement was made not in Jerusalem, but in the place of separation, in the country round about Jordan; an appeal to the Jews preparatory to the appearance of Messiah. Gabriel had foretold when promising his birth, "Many of the children of Israel shall he turn to the Lord his God. For he shall go before Him in the spirit and power of Elias, to turn the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people *prepared* for their Lord." In harmony with this, as we have noticed, was the prophecy of his father.

Thus spake the Holy Ghost and Gabriel. Now let us examine John's description of himself, and his ministry. With respect to himself, when the Jews sent Priests and Levites to enquire "Who art thou?" "He confessed and denied not, but confessed I am not the Christ" (Messiah). "Art thou Elias?" "I am not." "Art thou that prophet?" He answered "no." "Then who art thou?" "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight." (John i. 19-24.) To this testimony he afterwards referred when the Jews sought to reproach him for envy, by the fact that all men drew to Christ. "Ye yourselves bear me witness that I said I am not the Christ, but am sent before Him. He that hath the bride is the bridegroom, but the friend of the bridegroom which standeth by and heareth him, rejoiceth greatly because of the bridegroom's voice, this my joy therefore is fulfilled, He must increase, but I must decrease." Yes, he was the friend of the bridegroom, and rejoiced to see his own disciples pass over from himself to Christ, as the bride to the bridegroom. When he had twice pointed them to the Lamb of God two left him and followed Christ, these drew others to Him, saying "We have found Him," and "come and see". Thus he gathered out a people ready for the Lord. This company with others added, afterwards assembled at Pentecost, were baptized with the Holy Ghost, and with fire, baptized by one Spirit into one body. Very similar, yet with some difference will be the ministry of Elijah the prophet. (Mal. iv. 5, 6.) John's ministry was to effect a turning of the hearts of parents to children, and children to their parents, and *make ready a people for the Lord*, while that of Elijah will be the turning of the hearts of the parents to the children, and children to the fathers, *lest Jehovah come*

and smite the earth with a curse. John's testimony leading on to Christ and the body, Elijah's to the millennial kingdom.

To John's character, manner of life, and honourable position, Christ bore testimony on the occasion of John's messengers coming to Him, as already referred to, with the inquiry, "Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" When the Lord had wrought miracles before those messengers, and sent them back to report, in order that John might compare with prophecy and be reassured, he proceeded to place John in an honourable point of view before the people. This He did by asking three questions respecting him. "What went ye out into the wilderness to see, a reed shaken with the wind?" Not so; albeit John's question would represent him as such; it was not his character, but the exception. The Holy Ghost does not determine nor describe a saint's character by a single frame or action, but by the tenor of his life.

Again, "What went ye out for to see, a man clothed in soft raiment, living delicately?" Nay, the very opposite.

"But what went ye out for to see, a prophet?" Yea, and much more than a prophet. The greatest prophet born of woman, for he saw, heard, and baptized Him of whom others, the greatest, only spoke and wrote. Yet John was not the life-long companion of Christ, nor witness of His death; he was not baptized into the one body, nor with the Holy Ghost and fire of Pentecost. The veriest babe of Christ indwelt by the Spirit of Sonship, of light, and of power, crying "Abba, Father" was then, and is now, privileged far beyond John. "He that is least in the Kingdom of God [now in mystery] is greater than he."

When the kingdom he preached shall be manifestly set up, John will have a place, his own honourable place, in it; but it was not found in the body. Another testimony borne by Christ to John teaches his relation to Christ. Speaking of him to the Jews He said, "He was a burning and a shining light" (Luknòs), kindled and bright, but not (Phōs) what Christ was; therefore, as is Luknòs to Phōs, so was John to Christ; and not only this, but when that same blessed one described His disciples, He said, "Ye are the light (tó Phōs) of the world," and from this the term *lights* (Phōsteeres), used in Phil. ii. 15, is derived. And, beloved, so it is; for what is a believer's light here? It is Christ exhibited by him, the moral glory

of Christ reflected. While, therefore, we love John as saved, and honour him as the greatest of prophets, we would not exchange places, or privileges with him or his, but desire grace to fulfil our greater responsibilities.

Once more, let us now notice Paul's explanation of John's ministry in relation to Christ. From the account given in Acts xviii. 24, we gather that Apollos preceded Paul at Ephesus—eloquent in the Scriptures, but knowing only the baptism of John. Paul followed, and found what I think was the fruit of Apollos' ministry, certain disciples. To those disciples he put the question, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed?" They replied, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost".

"To what were ye baptized," said he? They replied, unto John's baptism. Paul then proceeded to shew that John baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who should come after, *i.e.*, on Christ Jesus. Righteousness John pressed; he preached repentance, but forgiveness came by Him, Christ Jesus. Hearing this they believed it, for they were *re-baptized*, baptized into the name of the Lord Jesus; and the Holy Ghost, with miraculous powers sealed them, according to Ephesians i. 12, 13, 14. John preached repentance with reference to the kingdom; Paul preached faith in Christ, for union in the body as gifted and endowed by the risen and exalted Head and Lord. John's ministry led to him by whom truth and grace came. His baptism was not Christian baptism, but that of repentance in order to remission.

Elijah's mission will be to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the children to the fathers, but it will be the sight of Messiah that will make them mourn, and be in bitterness as one in bitterness and mourning for his first-born and only son. Then will they come to the knowledge of forgiveness—pass on into the kingdom be blessed and made a channel of blessing to the nations.

H. H.

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED CORRESPONDENCE.

CARRIGALINE, 27th September, 1865.

MY DEAREST B.,—Many thanks for your loving welcome letter. We were much struck with your description of "Catharine Adorna". The idea of any-

one "perfectly holy," except Jesus, seems very foreign to scripture, which in these days of increasing darkness it is so important to cling to. "Cling, cling fast to His word." Satan seems to be trying to set up perfection in the flesh now. Is it her own testimony that she was so perfect? I never knew anyone live so near the Lord as — and —, I am sure they think themselves dreadfully wayward and stiff-necked children—that is, whenever they think of themselves at all, which they don't like to do. It is a blind and deluding thing to look at an eminent saint so as to strive to attain to that—it throws the eyes constantly on self unavoidably, but, looking off unto Jesus, my eye cannot see anything else, and we *beholding are changed* into the same image. This is practical holiness, and nothing but this.

I suppose you refer in your letter to John xv., speaking of "Men gather them". The question is one altogether of fruit-bearing and service, not union as to salvation, that is not glanced at. I may abide in Jesus, or I may not; my service and fruitfulness will be just in proportion; if I do not I shall be a withered sapless branch without fruit; a withered sapless branch is good for nothing, so he adds, (parenthetically I think) "*Men gather them,*" etc. In 1 Cor. iii., there is a word which throws light on it. Wood, hay, stubble, cannot stand fire; gold, silver, and precious stones can. "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is; if any man's work be burned, he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire," etc., so in Heb. vi. 7, 8. It is important to know the subject treated of in order to the right understanding of a passage.

We feel increasingly that we are in perilous times, and not the least danger is from the tendency of the age to underrate THE WORD substituting practically man's books for its pure teachings. Study in communion with our dear Saviour the section of Psalm cxix., beginning at verse 97. How like to John xiv., 23, xv., etc.

Ever your most loving,

C.

RIVERVIEW, November, 1865.

MY DEAREST B.—I suppose you are expecting the arrival of "Catherine Adorna," and I am nearly through it, having enjoyed it exceedingly, one thing I

don't think it made plain, viz., the difference between being a christian and being *consecrated*, I mean practically consecrated (of course, judicially we are set apart), this is a most important distinction. Oh! how I feel its value when clouds and darkness envelop my soul, and the old nature carries everything its own way with little or no opposition to its mad current, a dark picture, darker still because so often true. What a mercy I am not a Methodist, but have long since read, my title *clear*. In the darkest day I have ever known, *that* has never been obscured.

Your most loving,

C. S. B.

RIVERVIEW, November 27, 1865.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—* * * I am unused to controversy on the subject, but when I do think of it, it always strikes me that the "administration of the holy communion" is a strange *innovation* and *alteration* of the Spirit's directions as given in 1 Cor. xi., xii., xiv., &c.; I have no authority from my Lord and Master to mix myself with what I cannot see in His own book of directions. On the contrary I am told to come out from among them, and be *separate* from evil, and in Rev. xviii. 4, "Come out" of Babylon "my people" is His command. But you will be asked—is the Church of England Babylon? Not *exclusively*—all churches that are confessedly allied *with the world* (James iv. 4.) are mystic Babylon (or confusion). But are there not numbers of the children of God in it? Certainly, and to *them* is the command given in Rev. xviii. 4.

Dear Brother,—*they* are the innovators and not *we* who in weakness and feebleness, endeavour to obey His word, and meet together—as believers around the Lord Jesus, "Jesus only". It is a weary subject to dwell on; the evil that is around; but where do you find in the New Testament one man presiding over others to administer the Sacrament?—the gifts of Pastor, Overseer, &c., are beautiful (when *real* not sham), but nowhere are they less seen or wanted than at the Table of the Lord, when we all meet on the same level, children of the one family. Go into a Church (so called) where "divine service" is being "performed" "decently and in order," you will be told, and what may you find? A child of the Devil may be conducting the worship and leading the praises of other children of

the Devil! Is this overdrawn or uncommon? In the congregation there *may* be many devoted and gifted servants of God, filled with the Spirit, ready to overflow to the blessing and edification of others, but their ministry would be *contrary to the law*, and would violate the precept, "let all things be done decently and in order"!

Now don't you see the difference between fleshly carnal order, which in the mind of God is the wildest confusion, and the order of the Spirit? If we wait on Him, depending on His guidance—He will not, does not fail us, and there will be no outward confusion; but such a course is trying to the flesh, (for if we wish to be led by the Spirit it needs that the flesh be mortified) and the Devil hates it much on this account. Besides, it is very inconvenient. If an unconverted man wishes to break bread, it is not pleasant to tell him that it is not his place. It is much pleasanter to have some machinery that will go on equally well, if half or all present, are dead in sins, which does not involve the mortification of the flesh at all; when in fact every one may go on religiously and respectably without being converted at all. Baptismal regeneration which makes a man a child of God from the cradle, obviates the disagreeable necessity of being born again! and so on.

I fear I have relapsed into the old vein of satire: 'tis hard to help it—these pretensions are so barefaced.

Do not suppose I cannot recognize the fact that there are many and *dear* Saints in this system; many, whom I can never hope to imitate, but separation from *things* is not separation from *persons*, they are *entirely distinct*.

In the hope of His return,

Yours very truly,

C. S. B.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS.

By R. J. MAHONEY, Esq., AT DUBLIN, AUG., 8 1877.

"**G**RACE be to you, and peace from God the Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." (Gal. i. 3, 4.)

There is an expression in the fourth verse of which I propose to give you the literal and accurate meaning. In the writing of the New Testament, God chose a language capable of greater accuracy than ours, and some expressions which in the original are specially

accurate, are occasionally passed over in our version without the real meaning being expressed, although in the main our translation is marvellously correct.

The expression I refer to is "that He might deliver us from this present evil world," the more exact and literal rendering of which would be, "that He might deliver us from the evil age which has set in".

Now that is not exactly the thought that is most generally received as to the character of this age. It is called "the Christian era"; a remarkable expression indeed to occur at such a time as this.

It might naturally have been supposed that after the Son of God had come, a wonderful time of blessing and glory would have set in for this earth. But this is not the age which the Son of God inaugurated. In the Acts of the Apostles we read that at Pentecost they spake with tongues, and wonders were wrought—in reference to which Joel is quoted—wonders of power and blessing which amazed the world, and caused the ungodly to stand aloof in fear. How comes it that in a few years the Apostle speaks of "the evil age which has set in"?

The sixth chapter of Hebrews is addressed to a people who witnessed the inauguration of the age at Pentecost. They had seen a specimen so to speak of "the powers of the age to come". That was the coming age which had opened upon them, and they had seen for a short time its display of power and glory; but that age which opened so brightly was interrupted, it was broken off suddenly, so that only an example of it was given.

This is not an "abstruse statement"—the age of glory and power came to a short end by interruption, and instead thereof an evil age set in.

We may judge of the character of this age by the character of Him who is the Prince of it, and the god of it, *i.e.*, Satan.

In John xii. 32. The Lord Jesus was looking at the cross. There the world, Jew and Gentile, rulers and people, condemned Him and cast Him out for His righteousness. But while He suffered for righteousness' sake at the hands of man, He was at the same time bruised by the Father for sin, and therefore, looking beyond the cross and forward to the time when He shall "overturn, overturn, overturn," and take His rightful power and reign, He could say, "Now shall the prince of this world be cast out". But Satan is not only its prince, he is also "the god of this age".

(2 Cor. iv. 3.) Look at the world from God's standpoint and you will see that "the whole world lieth in the wicked one". (1 John v. 19.)

At Pentecost, God had made preparation to do wonders, to establish material glory; but a mighty flood of unbelief arose against God's proposal of blessing, and every platform whereon He could work and every material out of which He could have constructed an age of glory was swept away, and not a fragment left.

What, then, must God do? He now reveals His purpose in vision to Peter. Before him is, as it were, a sheet let down out of the opened heaven. It is knit together at the four corners, indicating the security of all that it contained. Peter looked at its contents and found there everything that, according to nature and Levitical precept, was hateful and abominable. Then came the voice, saying, "What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common".

This was shown to Peter because God was going to take out of the Gentiles a people for His name. But had it to do with earth? It never touched the earth. It was bound and let down, but not to earth, and drawn up again into heaven. Surely this was something altogether new, but what? Do we recognise ourselves there? Hateful and abominable, but those whom God has been pleased to cleanse.

God here shows something that has nought to do with this world. It is altogether of God. The machinery of earth and man has no part in it. Shall we take up this that is so entirely of God, and treat it according to our own ideas. As well might we attempt to dress an angel, were such to come down from heaven, in the rags from the property-chest of a theatre. The church is of God, and all we learn of it we must learn from God, and all He has to teach about it He has revealed in His own Book.

In Numbers xxi. 21, we read, "And Israel sent messengers unto Sihon king of the Amorites, saying, Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the field, or into the vineyards: we will not drink of the waters of the well; but we will go by the king's highway until we be past thy borders".

The land of the Amorites was the world to them, just as this present evil age is to us. Close on the king's highway they passed—not straggling into fields and vineyards, but as embattled hosts totally different in dress and manners and speech from the countries through which they passed.

I say deliberately there is not in the New Testament a blessing assured to children of Christian parents because their parents are Christians; but there is something much grander. There is the command, "Bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. vi. 4), and if this be obeyed, God will certainly bless and cause those children to follow in the faith and testimony of their parents. There is no limit to faith except the limit of obedience. Act in obedience and act in faith, and God will bless and own faith up to the measure of obedience.

Bring up your children in the way in which God would have them go, teach them no compromise with the ways of the world.

Christendom undertook to christianise the world, but the world has secularised Christendom. In the First Epistle of John, no kind of compromise is found. There is no grey, all is either black or white. It is light and darkness; the Father, the World; truth and error; Christ and Anti-Christ; all is contrast and absolute contrast, as far as midnight can pass out mid-day into bold relief; and this is what God would have in our hearts.

"THIS DO IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME."

WE will remember Thee, O Lord,
In pour'd-out wine and broken bread:
Thy dying love, and suffering hours,
Thy bleeding wounds and thorn-crown'd Head.

But the fond memory learns to dwell
Not on Thy precious death alone,
It loves to trace Thy stedfast course
Down from the glories of Thy Throne.

Oh! in that wondrous life of Thine
What wisdom, grace, and power were seen,
What heavenly ways of holiness
Adorned this stricken earthly scene!

Thy proved perfection, spotless Lamb,
Reveals the value of Thy blood
And to adoring hearts unfolds
The glory of the Son of God.

M. W.

By faith I can say I am not only dead, and have passed the judgment, so that there can be nought against me, for who shall punish a dead man who has been fully judged already: the justice of God—justice due to Christ who died for me is my safety—but I am alive again for evermore in a life which death cannot touch, which knows no grave, and is beyond judgment; yea, in which judgment is turned to victory.

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SHADOWS OF CHRIST.

PART XI.

MOSES—(*Continued*).

BEING called of God to be the deliverer of His people, Moses is not sent to them without being duly invested with his credentials as Jehovah's servant.

Three signs are given, each expressive of divine power. The first, viz., the casting down of the rod and its becoming a serpent, and again the taking of it up and its becoming a rod—indicating, it may be, power over Satan; the second, the healing of the leprous hand—indicating, it may be, power over sin and its loathsome effects; the third probably indicating judgment—the turning of water into blood, being one of the ten plagues wherewith Egypt was smitten, as well as one of the many plagues yet to be poured out upon this guilty world. (See Rev. xvi.)

So our great Deliverer came, not only pointed to by every line of prophecy—not only heralded by the star from the East, and by the ministry of John the Baptist, but accredited by the power of God in such a way as none had ever been before—"Jesus of Nazareth, a man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs which God did by Him, in the midst of you." (Acts ii. 22.)

These "miracles," as they are called, were not merely superhuman works to be marvelled at—they were the divine credentials of the Lord Jesus appealing to the senses of the natural man, fitted to commend Him even to those who had not the power to discern His moral virtues and glories.

They were not acts of judgment, as many of the miracles of Moses, Elijah, and others had been, the only one approximating to such being the blasting of the fig tree—an exception that goes to prove the rule. As it has been often and well observed, when an example of His power in judgment *must* be given, it is a tree that is smitten, and not a man. So also when the multitude came forth with swords and staves to apprehend Him. For a moment it seems as if something of His divine majesty flashed forth, and they fell backward to the ground; but it was only for a moment. It does not appear that they were even hurt, for they arose, and, undeterred by what had happened, pursued their hellish purpose.

But whilst these solitary acts witnessed to His power to execute judgment, far otherwise were all the other miracles He wrought.

As in the first credentials of Moses, power over Satan, and power over the effects of sin in nature and man are indicated, so the wonderful works of our Lord abundantly showed forth the same. He came into the strong man's house the stronger one than he, able to cast him forth and deliver the prey. Thus it was that by His word He cast out devils from those possessed, even "a legion," being powerless to offer resistance to His command. Thus He rebuked the wind, which doubtless had been raised, as the whirlwind of old (see Job i. 19) by Satan's power, and there was a great calm. Thus on the Sabbath-day He healed the woman of the infirmity wherewith for 18 years Satan had bowed her down (Luke xiii. 16), and not only so, but even forth from the death chamber, the bier, and the sepulchre, as though storming the very citadel of

Satan's power, He brought the captives of death and corruption.

And yet more triumphant was His victory when rising the third day Himself from the grave, He "spoiled principalities and powers, and made a show of them openly"—purchasing in His death the right, and giving in His resurrection the pledge, that the bruising of the serpent's head would shortly follow. (Rom. xvi. 20.)

Very blessed is it for those who have known something both of the greatness of Satan's power and the subtlety of his wiles, to be assured thus that He who has undertaken to deliver is both able and willing to do so. "Able to keep us from falling," "able to save unto the uttermost".

Others of the Lord's miracles show forth more prominently His power to deliver from the effects of sin, such as the cleansing of the lepers—leprosy invariably representing sin in the flesh in its hideous and incurable loathsomeness. The healing of the sick of the palsy, which miracle is specially connected with forgiveness of sins (Luke v. 24), showing that the same grace that brought pardon to the guilty brought power to those who were "without strength".

The giving of sight to the blind, showing power to open the eyes of the understanding, for men by nature "have the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts". (Eph. iv. 18.)

Thus Paul was sent unto the Gentiles "to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they might receive forgiveness of sins," &c. (Acts xxvi. 18.)

And death having come by sin (Rom. v. 12), it follows that these instances recorded of His raising the dead to life not only demonstrate His power over Satan, but also His power to deliver ultimately and eternally from the bitter fruits of sin.

Indeed, there can be no doubt that the signs and wonders wrought by the Lord Jesus were each intended to convey some special instruction concerning His great redemption work. Looked at thus, they acquire a fresh grandeur and a new value. They are not only the credentials of the sent one of God, but specimens of the divine grace and power that have undertaken to

meet the infinitely deep and varied need of lost and ruined humanity.

The ten plagues upon Egypt having been executed and the Passover kept, the people who had been sheltered by blood were to be delivered by power. The whole nation of Israel was committed to the leadership of the one man whom God had called thus to serve Him. One of themselves by birth, he identified himself with them unreservedly. Whatever their dangers or their provocations, the shepherd-heart of Moses was ever loyal to its purpose.

Not long had they departed from Egypt, when Pharaoh and his hosts pursued. Helpless in themselves, and foolish as a flock of sheep, they were soon hemmed in with the armed hosts of Pharaoh behind and the Red Sea before. Escape seemed impossible. The enemy that hated them was behind, and death was before. Forgetting the wonders that God had already wrought for them, they murmured against Moses and provoked the Lord.

But Moses meets their unbelieving complaint with the gracious "Fear not"—salvation was at hand; the salvation of the Lord, in which Israel had nought to do. "The Lord shall fight for you and ye shall hold your peace."

Before the uplifted rod of Moses the sea went back, and a path through the deep was prepared, over which Israel passed as on dry land. The cloud of the Divine Presence passed over them, and took its place behind them to shield them from the Egyptians, whilst the waters were a wall on either side, and Moses their leader went before. Thus "were they all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Cor. x. 2), passing with him, their leader and deliverer, in a figure, from death to life.

Even the beautiful New Testament symbol of immersion in water does not show forth so graphically as this magnificent scene at the Red Sea, the truth of the believer's death and resurrection with Christ, and consequent deliverance from the power of darkness.

The plan is divine, the salvation is wholly of God. There stands the awakened sinner with death before him and Satan's power pursuing him. He looks back and he sees a life of sin and a world lying in wickedness, and the fearful bondage of his service who is its prince and god.

He looks forward, and death like another sea stretches across his path. Whence is his deliverance

to arise? He groans in despair and wishes he had never been born; when lo! the hand of One who is mighty to save is lifted up, a path is opened through death, the Lord Himself has opened it, has trod it every step; and all who hear His Word and believe in Him pass by that wondrous way from death to life. Like Israel of old who thus in a figure passed from death to life, and stood in resurrection with Moses their deliverer; so the believer in Jesus is "risen with Christ". He has everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life. (John v. 24.)

Israel never returned to bondage in Egypt. They could not if they would. The sea that had separated them from the land of promise now rolled between them and the land of bondage.

So it is with the believer now. By the cross of Christ the world is crucified to Him and He to the world. Risen with Christ, his inheritance is not on earth, but in heaven; and now in company with Him who is his life, he journeys through the wilderness—seeking those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. (Col. iii.)

WE BEHELD HIS GLORY.

JOHN i. 14.

WHEN the Apostle John, moved by the Holy Ghost, wrote his Gospel, he declared at the outset the eternity and divinity of Him of whom he spake. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And then, after further wonderful announcements of His eternal power and God-head, he reached the grand climax of the 14th verse: "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth". Our translators insert intervening words as a parenthesis, and rightly so—"And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father". They embody a fresh thought, and contain the personal testimony of John, as in the power of the Spirit, his memory retraced the life of that glorious Lord with whom he had once walked on earth.

We hear of splendid poems, and of the magnificent eloquence in which human language has expressed the highest thoughts of the most gifted men on things which the natural mind can conceive; but the whole range of literature may be searched to find any

passage worthy to be compared with these sublime and majestic, but simple sentences in the opening of this precious Gospel. We feel as we read them that we are on holy ground, and are called to contemplate Him who was the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His Person. But then the introduction of the Apostle's own remembrance of his days of fellowship with this Holy One in the days of His flesh, seems at once to tell us that infinite and wonderful as He is, He may still be known, and that we too may have fellowship with Him.

There was not a word written in this Gospel which was not God-inspired, and yet the mind and memory of John reached at liberty to the whole period of his converse with Jesus, and it was because his own heart and soul were so fully occupied with Him, that He was so fit a vessel for the communications of the Holy Spirit. We trace the workings of his memory, and his view of the transcendent importance and divine character of all the wonderful works he had witnessed, and all the life-giving words he had heard, when we find him saying—"Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of His disciples which are not written in this book. But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through His name" (xx. 30, 31); and again, "there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written". He could recall nothing that was insignificant, nothing unworthy to be recorded in all that ever he knew of the ways and sayings of Jesus. All was alike worthy of "the only begotten of the Father".

It was probably at the end of many years after John had seen the Lord ascend up whither He was before, that he wrote these words, "We beheld His glory!" What a remembrance to dwell in any heart! It was not like the impression made on Paul, by that dazzling and overpowering vision on the way to Damascus. That was indeed indelibly fixed in his soul, and was continually exerting a quenchless power and influence in his life. It was the grand turning point in his history, and involved in its circumstances a fulness of meaning, which future revelations only served to illustrate and confirm. But John looked back on the placid joys of more than three years of friendship with the Word made flesh, and found in the recollec-

tion of the path He trode, superabounding evidences of His true glory. For that glory on which John dwelt was not a thing of earth. The Lord had come to His own, and His own received Him not. There was no beauty that they should desire Him, no kingly pomp, and no worldly splendour. The glory was altogether different in its character—a glory inconceivable if it had not been revealed—"the glory as of the only begotten of the Father". The moment we write or utter these words all human imaginations are abashed. It is impossible for us to prescribe what should be the characteristics on earth of the Son of God, and all we possibly can know must be presented to us in the evidence of what He actually was.

It was a great infidel writer who said that a greater miracle than the actual life of the Lord would have been the human mind which could have conceived such a picture. That the Son of the Highest, that He who made the worlds, the delight from everlasting of the ever blessed God, should really come to a little corner of His mighty universe, is a thought which revelation alone has given to man; and had we known this and known no more, we should have dreamed at once of an advent worthy in the eyes of men of such a being. But God would stain the pride of all human glory, and so when His beloved Son came, it was with no retinue of stars, no rocks and stones made vocal to declare His praise, but as a poor and friendless child. And yet there was a throng of worshippers to celebrate that hour, though no eyes, save those of shepherds' watching over their flocks by night, witnessed that heavenly scene.

And as in His coming, so in His life. There was the hiding of His power, while never for a moment in His condition of humility did He lose His essential inherent dignity, or lessen the infinite distance between Himself and the poor creatures of a day by whom He was surrounded. Earthly glory is capable of being described, it has its limits and its imperfections, but the glory as of the only begotten of the Father speaks of a height which (like the ways and thoughts of God, above the ways and thoughts of men), is as high as the heaven is high above the earth. Whether we look around, or look back on history, we have seen an end of all perfection, and in the book of nature, as our Lord has taught us, we may see in the lily that which casts into the shade even Solomon in all his glory. But there was in the glory of the only begotten of the

Father the perfect blending of every grace, springing from the power of an endless life. As John contemplated Him, and remembered the untainted purity and complete sanctity of His ways, he fed on Him as that meat-offering which spoke of Him to Israel; and in the rich nourishment thus afforded to his soul, God's promise was fulfilled in his experience, "He would have fed them with the finest of the wheat, and with honey out of the rock should I have satisfied thee". (Ps. lxxxi.)

We are not left without abundant light on that glory of which John spoke. We open the pages of His Gospel, and there from line to line read of Him into whose lips grace was poured, and who spake as never man spake. The depth of wisdom in His simplest words, and the unspeakable benignity of His condescending love, reveal to us the Teacher sent from God. What floods of light shone into the soul of Nicodemus, from that interview which he sought by night, as he heard of the new creation, and understood for the first time the meaning of the serpent which Moses lifted up in the wilderness. He learned at once earthly and heavenly things, and was brought into a new world of thought and feeling. And then the contrast between the picture of the weary stranger sitting on the wall of Sychar, and asking for a cup of water, and the power of those streams of living water which flowed into the soul of the poor sinful woman there, as He opened His mouth and taught! These were but specimens of His daily intercourse, in which light and love shone forth from Him who was the truth. But there was a time above all others which John could remember and record when the hour had come, and the Lord in the midst of His disciples opened to them such treasures of heavenly wisdom as ear had never heard—His own coming again! The coming of the comforter! Union with Himself the living vine, and the pleadings of His heart for their divine keeping here, and their glorification with Himself hereafter in the glory which He had with the father before the world began! Every word was graven on John's heart, as if graven with a diamond on a rock for ever. And as He beheld Him in the prospect of the last hour and power of darkness, thus loving his own to the death, and cheering their hearts with hope; and then followed Him to the palace of the High Priest and the Judgment-hall, and heard His good confession there, and heard Him again amidst the

agonies of the cross speak His last fond words of tender care for His mother, his heart was filled with adoring love and wonder at grace so matchless and divine. The bride in the Song of Solomon says to her beloved, "Thy lips are like lilies dropping sweet smelling myrrh," and the multitudes who heard Jesus, verified that praise, as they wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. To John and all who like him heard the Lord day by day, the rich supply of instruction was inexhaustible—the true "well-spring of wisdom as a flowing brook" (Prov. xviii.

4). It was the heaven-sent scribe bringing forth from the good treasures of His heart things new and old. The echoes of His words must have lived in the soul of every loving one who heard His parables, and His invitation to the weary and heavy laden to come unto Him and rest; and His loud cry on that last great day of the feast! If any man thirst let him come unto me and drink!

But He was mighty in deed as well as in word, and John had been with Him when He raised the daughter of Jairus from death; and when He was irradiated with glory on the mount, and the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could white them. And he was with Him when He agonized in the garden of Gethsemane. John saw the beginning of miracles at Cana of Galilee, and followed Him as He went about doing good, and healing all who had need of healing. There was no disease beyond the skill of this great Physician, and no suffering one was denied His effectual aid. He saw this meek and lowly One daily ministering in patient grace, and manifesting His power to the afflicted and the poor. He beheld Him taking little children in His arms to bless them, weeping at the grave of Lazarus, and led as a lamb to the slaughter; but he also saw Him cleansing the Temple, silencing the Pharisees and Scribes, giving eternal life to the dying thief, revealing Himself as risen from the dead, and finally ascending in a triumph which owed nothing to the acclamations of men to the right hand of His Father, there to wait till His enemies are made His footstool. The names of the highest conquerors of the world are written in the earth, and are soon forgotten; and the actions of men which in their time are most extolled, are often found to have been conceived in the pride of folly, and to have been fraught with misery to nations.

Posterity commonly reverses the judgment of contemporaries, and writes failure on the schemes which once seemed to promise lasting blessings. But when our Lord ascended, there was the beginning of a full discovery of the infinite wisdom of all His ways; and as the promised Holy Spirit brought to the remembrance of the Apostle all he had heard and seen in the Lord's days on earth, he learned to estimate all afresh, and to discern in a measure the unfathomable depths of the wisdom which lay hidden in His simplest forms of speech, and in actions which once passed without special notice. He began to understand all that Moses in the law, and all that the prophets had written, and to value aright the ineffable grace which had permitted him to lie in the bosom of this glorious One, who had come forth from the bosom of His Father. There had been a time when he heard but did not understand, and was slow of heart to believe. He then could not endure the thought that shame, and spitting, and death awaited Him to whom he looked for redemption in Israel, and by whose will he had expected shortly to sit on an earthly throne. And when at length he saw the cross, and Jesus left there without relief from God, suffering more than mortal agony, rejected and despised of men, his hopes fled even while his love survived. But when by the heavenly sanction he understood the meaning of the cross, and the words—"It is finished," when he recalled the scene—the centurion himself constrained to say, "Truly this was the son of God," the earthquake, the darkness, and the opened graves, he knew that he had seen the judgment of this world, and an incomparable glory, of which the essence was humility and love. When we read John's Epistles, and consider what he says of the power of the blood, of the record which God has given of His Son, of the supreme manifestation of grace in His laying down His life for us, of the purifying power of hope in His return, and of final conformity to Him; as thus we see Him unfolding to us all that the Spirit had conveyed to him of the fulness which is in Christ, we begin to discover the limitless glory of which His Gospel speaks, and in the remembrance of which he lived.

For we must not think that this glory is any wise hidden from us. We cannot see the Lord of life and glory walking in our streets, or hear Him speak as He once spoke on earth; but faith has a power of vision which sees Him in the Word as vividly as if

He were here. We all with open face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord; but it is now in a practical power, which His nearest disciples did not know. They might see heaven opened, and might hear a voice from the excellent glory attesting Him as the beloved Son; they might be conscious that none taught like Him; they might be often filled with silent wonder; but as we read of those who saw Him on the Mount, soon disputing who should be the greatest, and John calling down fire from heaven, and all the disciples fighting against the thought that He must die, we see how, till the coming of the Holy Ghost the impression on their souls was indistinct, and that Jesus was still unknown to them in His true character of glory. But now there are opened to us all the hidden treasures of wisdom and knowledge. We see the accomplished results of that mighty work which was a mystery to His disciples; and with the completed Word before us, we are rich in an intelligence which none could have till that Word was finished, and the enlightening Spirit of God shone upon its page. And as age after age has more and more illustrated His grace and proved Him mighty to save, and proved too the power of His Gospel to subdue imaginations, and to bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; as we have seen, moreover, that same mighty gospel animating successive generations in a new pursuit of holiness; we have gained fresh thoughts of the glory which the Lord exhibited on earth, and we thirst for the time when we shall see Him as He is, and know even as we are known. While our minds are occupied with earthly things, they are unfitted to receive the full impression which a contemplation of Him should produce. But when we behold with the more steadfast gaze of a mind which is filled with heavenly desires, we are changed into His likeness from glory to glory by the Spirit of the Lord. In proportion as our minds have already dwelt on the view which the Word has given us, we can say with John, "We have beheld His glory". And truly it is this which most fittingly prepares us for the open vision of His person. Then we shall learn with enlarged intelligence that the utmost stretch of our former conceptions has fallen far short of the reality, and we shall confess like the Queen of Sheba, "The half has not been told". For we must all be conscious as we read the Word from year to year, how the vast horizon of light has

widened before us, and we have felt like children on the shore of a great ocean of truth. Thankful as we may be for any fresh glimpses of the boundless prospect which reveals itself to faith, yet such discoveries seem only to teach us how wide is the expanse through which the liberated soul will hereafter range, in the contemplation of redeeming love. We shall see how God has been infinitely glorified, and how misery and truth, and righteousness and peace, are all combined in the ways of that everlasting light which shines around the throne. And then the thought that He on whom we look with such adoring wonder, whom we see in the splendour of His glory, once made Himself of no reputation, took on Him the form of a servant, and humbled Himself to death, even the death of the cross—the thought of *Him* once stooping down to meet us in our low estate, and to seek and to save the lost—this will make us ashamed of all the knowledge which perhaps in our earthly life had exalted us above our fellows. Such poor knowledge will vanish away as the stars are paled before the sun.

Paul described to his beloved Philippians the ardent desire of his soul (much as he had already seen and tasted of the grace of the Lord) in the well-known words—"I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus, my Lord, . . . that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto His death; if by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. . . Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended". And this would be the condition of our souls, having a definite object before them, and animated by it in the current of our lives. It was there Abraham lived. He looked for a city that had foundations, and those who followed him, because they embraced the promises and were persuaded of them—were willing to confess themselves strangers and pilgrims on the earth. So with Moses. It was because he had respect to the recompense of the reward that he despised the treasures of Egypt. It was not a question of time, for the object in view might be very far distant. But that object was so realised, the hope of it was so distinct and vivid, that it gave a character and colour to their lives. So it was with Paul. He knew that when he put off this tabernacle he had a building of God, a house not made

with hands eternal in the heavens, and he lived not only in joyful readiness for the exchange, but also in the view of the Judgment Seat of Christ, where he should give account of himself to God. And so he laboured, that whether present or absent, he might be accepted of Him. There was a power in that which he saw before him to give direction to his course, as the goal before the racer both guides and animates him in the struggle for the prize. Above all, it was so with our blessed Lord Himself. He, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the Cross, despising the shame; and He is now set down at the right hand of the Throne of God. These are the lessons for us. That which we here behold of the glory of the Only Begotten of the Father tells us something of the vision which soon will burst upon us, and then we shall be satisfied as we awake up in His likeness. Christ is now in us the Hope of Glory. He Himself by His Spirit is in us, filling us with desires and affections, which can only find their full scope and end in deliverance from all which now clouds the coming glory. And by that same Spirit He presents Himself to us in His appearing as "Jesus Christ which is our Hope," the blessed hope of our souls. As such desires and affections grow, and the hope becomes more real, earthly things sink into their proper nothingness, and we are delivered from the love of this present evil world. We have already, in a manner, beheld His glory, and we know not when it will be revealed to us in its fulness; but the desire for that time, and affection to Him, are fed by the thoughts and joys which flow from the living contemplation of His life. Meanwhile, that same view of Him in His earthly course teaches us to walk even as He walked, in the path of holy and patient service, apart from a noisy world, separate from sinners, in fellowship with God, seeking no place of honour here or the praise of men, but presenting our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to God as our reasonable service. It is a daily life, in which the soul desires, seeks, and does one thing only, and, living in an atmosphere of worship, prepares for participation in that full chorus of praise, in which the saints will celebrate for ever the glories of God and of the Lamb. But never shall we forget the path once trodden by Him who lived as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, nor cease to search into the glory of that life which manifested the wonders of His love, and the endless, boundless

graces of His perfection. Here on earth it is impossible for us to comprehend the fulness which then we shall be enabled to explore. It is high, and we cannot attain to it; but we can have foretastes of future blessings, and in giving love to Him, by whom and in whom we live, we can say—"Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth whom I desire besides Thee".

M. W.

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED CORRESPONDENCE.

I GOT a happy thought lately on Ps. xliii. 3—"O, send out Thy light and Thy truth"—the Urim and the Thummim. (Neh. vii. 65.) Such a one has been sent forth, and where does *He* lead us? Right up to the "holy hill," and to His tabernacle. But how can a sinner be there, in the hill of God's holiness? Because there is an *altar* there, and I go straight to that where mercy and truth meet together. "There will I go unto the altar of *God*." It is *God's* altar, not mine, and now God Himself is my exceeding joy. First, I know His *grace*, then His *will*, then Himself. (Col. i. 6, 9, 10.)

Don't you think that the tender words in Matt. xxvi. 45—"Sleep on now and take *your* rest"—were uttered by the Lord as He gazed on His *sleeping* disciples? His toil, His travail were winning *rest* for them—no rest for Him. Then He wakens them, "Rise up," &c.

Ask for me that I may have a spirit of prayer. I sometimes tremble going to prayer, and come away with a heavy heart, my thoughts all turned in upon self; but when I go to the Word, I find Himself, and I am happy, happy *listening to Him*.

Is not Saul a type of the religious natural man, the miserable haste and uneasiness of his way, as in 1 Sam. x. 8, xiii. 8, and the efforts to *do for himself* on all occasions, putting his armour on David, and seeking afterwards to rid himself of the object of his jealousy, &c.—all seems such a contrast to the calmness of the one "after God's own heart," who was satisfied to let God take care of him, and how God did make all things work together for his good. If Saul's hatred banishes him from his presence, making him a captain, it is but the working out of God's purpose to bring

him the more before the people, that their hearts might be won. (xviii. 13-16.)

Don't you think that the grace, and beauty, and wisdom in David (xvi. 18), and the prowess of David (xvii. 34), were the *result* of the Spirit having come upon him, as it does not say what time elapsed between his anointing and his public life? What a thought it gives as to the *effect* of the anointing oil that has been poured upon our heads (lepers, priests, and kings)! What a glory lay under the *Shepherd* of Bethlehem! But did not He walk in the dignity and consciousness of it at all times, even when no one knew the secret?

Genesis xlix. brings out the history of the nation so simply and beautifully, Sir Edward Denny speaks of it—

1. Reuben, Simeon, and Levi—Apostate Israel before Christ.
2. Judah—Christ.
3. Zebulun and Issachar—dispersed nation now.
4. { Dan—Antichrist.
- { Remnant waiting for salvation.
5. Remaining five tribes millennial.

Have you seen this? We were looking at it just now in contrast to Deut. xxxiii., where, indeed, the precious stones shine on the *Breast-plate*.

MOUNT RIVERS, Feb. 11, 1868.

VERY pleasant to me was your long kind letter from —, with its burden of precious thoughts. His wisdom and grace gave you the right word at the right time. I needed more at that time the lesson from Uziah than when I asked the question about leprosy, though truly I don't know when a piercing and dividing word would be out of season to such a soul as mine. Oh! will this heart ever be broken at His feet!

How very precious the lessons of grace furnished by Leviticus xiv. One is reminded of that word of Mr. Bellett's, "Whatever of sorrow or of trial the entrance of sin may have caused us, or may have still to cause us, yet without it we could not have our God as we now have Him—opening His own bosom, the treasure-house of Love, and from thence giving forth his Son".

C. S. B.

DEVONSHIRE BUILDINGS,
BATH, February 18, 1869.

THE — are characterised by a violent dislike of exclusivism, and, I am sorry to say, of *exclusives*. I was grieved by the remarks, and could only say that the Lord may have permitted this trial to test the reality of your love for the members—for love for a member of Christ, *as such*, can never be quenched, any more than love for kindred, by *anything* in them, as brethren, or saints, or servants of God, or any other character—we may surely love variously; but love for one another *as members of the body*, is a far deeper thing. I don't love my hand because of its usefulness, nor do I love it a bit better than any other member.

How is the wonderful sensitive living pulsation through all alike. How rare this love for *the members*. I sometimes think I feel it, and again find it is more *the honey of nature* than the love of the Spirit.

MOUNT RIVERS, 27th Jan., 1870.

DARLING B—,—Thanks for your gift. May you have a simple and single minded joy in giving it to Jesus. It is a very rare and pure joy—very rare, because of the scarcity of a simple believing love for Him. Oh, dear! that He should so love us, and long for us, and seek an understanding and sympathetic mind in us, and yet be so shunned, and shirked, and misunderstood! Very nice to see that "understanding God" and "seeking God" are synonymous. "God looked down to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God."

- (1) Thou art my hiding-place. (Ps. xxxii.)
- (2) Thou shalt preserve me from trouble.
- (3) Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. (Compare Zeph. iii. 17) "Be ye not as the horse or as the mule, which have no understanding, whose mouth must be *held in* with bit and bridle because they will not come near unto thee". I am greatly enjoying my old Bible, with long-forgotten references. I hope you like the other as well. Do you get anything from the Scrap-book?

Your fond Sis.,
C. S. B.

TO MISS K—, BATH.
KILKEE, 25th Feb., 1871.

MY DEAR LITTLE SISTER,—How lovingly you remembered my birthday. Your letter was the only one I

received. Indeed, we forget "times and seasons" very much in this country. Thank you so much for the pretty scarf—just what I like—your own letter, and the precious verses sweetest of all, because it came as *His* wish of love as well as yours, and it is enough to melt a colder heart than mine, if such *could* be found (and it could not) to hear *His* voice actually wishing to have *me* near Him, and close to Him, and loving him! Oh! we are rich in being loved by *such* a Lover, for He knows us so perfectly, and yet is *not* estranged! Whom He loves "He loves unto the END".

I don't know what to write to you about. My head is empty of all but sin. Oh! how much of our life is spent in longing after what we might be delighting in; but sometimes we do forget our poverty, and remember our misery no more.

Last evening we had such a nice little meeting—the number varies from ten to fifteen. The Lord so loves to make us happy—*with Himself*. The elder son wished to make merry with his friends. He thought not of making merry with *his father*. "Thou never gavest me a kid." "*All that I have is thine*," said the father. It is strange, we had also Ezekiel xvi. and Luke xv. on Wednesday night—"Thou becamest *mine*, then washed I thee with water". I remember seeing this truth so plainly when my brother took a house near Glasgow. The masons had not long left it, and it was very dirty; but we did not do anything to it till it was *ours*, signed and sealed. Then the cleaning began. First it was emptied of *all* defilement, then washed, then furnished, then ornamented, then enjoyed and rested in. Just so with us, beloved. But how long it takes to *empty* us, and how many think that by working hard to *clean* the house they may in that way gradually get it transferred from one master to another—cease to belong to Satan, and become God's! Truly, as Mr. T—— says, were we guilty of the ignorances, and blunders, and gross stupidity in temporal things that we daily discover in spiritual things, we should be rightly pronounced *idiots*.

I am glad you are getting on so happily at ———. Prayer must be the secret oil that keeps so much machinery in smooth working order. Away from Him, we soon get rusty and crusty. Soon, soon shall we be with Him. May He be more the *companion*,

the bosom friend of our daily life. "Communion with Him is the beginning of Heaven; enjoyment without Him is the beginning of Hell." (Hewitson! Have you read his memoir? Do, if you have not.) Loving remembrances to the dear ones I know.

Your very affectionate

C. S. B.

JESUS IN THE MIDST.

PART I.

MATTHEW XVI.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

(Verses 1-4.)

"CAN ye not discern," says Jesus, "the signs of the times?" Had the rulers and people of Israel in the days of Christ discerned the signs of the times, would they have crucified the Lord of glory? (1 Cor. ii. 8.) And at the period of the Reformation, how many true believers, had they discerned the signs of *that* time, would have taken their place with the noble army of the Reformers, instead of swelling the ranks of the opposers of God's work!

And so in these days, how many of the excellent of the earth are speaking evil of that which they understand not, or keeping aloof from the present work of God, simply because they do not discern this time, nor perceive what God is doing! (See Acts v. 33 to end.)

What if God is bringing back His people in these last days, to His own original principles—principles on which the Church of God was founded at the first, but which have been gradually more and more lost sight of, and departed from, as century after century rolled on?

What if God is putting His hand a second time to the work, in completing that which was left imperfect at the Reformation? The whole analogy of Scripture history, which shows a partial restoration at the close of each dispensation, and the express intimation of the inspired word—yes, and the signs of the times, too—lead to the conclusion that God *is* thus acting.

One thing, however, is of the utmost importance; that is, to distinguish between the steady, wise, and perfect work and principles of God, and the mistakes and imperfections of the instruments employed.

In the "mystery" (Rev. i. 20), or deep and hidden

truth conveyed by the epistles to the Seven Churches in Asia (Rev. ii., iii.), the church in Sardis represents the human results of the Reformation in Protestantism : and the estimate of the Lord is given in those words (Rev. iii. 2), "I have not found thy works perfect before God."

And, in Rev. iii. 7—13, in the mystery of the church in Philadelphia, we have the prophetic foreshadowing of the operation of God at the present time. God by His grace enabling some to seek so to acknowledge individually and associately the holiness, truth, and Lordship of Jesus, as that Christ Himself may say of them, "Thou hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name".

The Reformation was a mighty and blessed work. The foundations of the Christian's faith in the matter of salvation were then cleared from the accumulated errors of ages. But the Reformation added no new light on the subject of what the *Church of God* really is, according to the word, nor on the subject of the person, place, and authority of Christ in connection with it; nor yet of the personal presence of the Holy Ghost the Comforter in and with the Church. These are the truths for the present times—truths not newly revealed, but brought forth afresh from the exhaustless treasury of God's word.

THE LEAVEN OF THE PHARISEES AND OF THE SADDUCEES.

(Verses 6—12.)

"Beware," continues the Lord Jesus, "of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees".

The same leaven which was working then, is working now. The leaven of the Pharisees, which is ceremonialism, self-righteousness, and hypocrisy, as seen in Popery, Puseyism, &c., and the leaven of the Sadducees, which is human reasoning in matters of religion, leading to scepticism and infidelity, as seen in "Essays and Reviews," the writings of the Neologians, of the Bishop of Natal, and others. Surely if there was ever a period when this warning was necessary, it is the present.

THE PROFESSION OF CHRIST.

(Verses 13, 14)

"When Jesus came into the coasts of Casarea Philippi He asked His disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of Man am?"

This was not simply asking what was their profession of *religion*, but what they said about *Him*. "Whom do men say that *I the Son of Man am?*" And the same question may be asked with respect to those who make a profession of Christianity at the present time.

Not, What do they *think* about Me? He asked the Pharisees that question Himself, "What think ye of Christ? Whose Son is He?" (Matt. xxii. 42.) And vitally important that question is. Not, Do they believe in Me; though eternal life or eternal death hinges on the answer to that question. (John iii. 36.) The question of the Lord here relates not to *right thoughts* or to *saving faith*, but to **PROFESSION**—"Whom do men say that *I the Son of Man am?*"

THE CONFESSION OF CHRIST.

(Verse 15.)

"He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?" There is a difference between profession and confession. *Profession* is an outward thing, and may be either true or false. *Confession* is the outward expression of that which is inwardly true. One man may *profess* to have the faith of Jesus, and yet be wholly destitute of its power. Another may be truly converted, and yet backward in the *confession* of Christ. So in the time of the Lord, "among the chief rulers also many *believed* on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not *confess* Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John xii. 42, 43.) How true also of many at the present time!

Profession may be founded on the opinion and teaching of men. Confession on the revelation and teaching of God.

"But whom *say ye* that I am?"

The Lord now calls for the confession of Himself by His own disciples. He does not ask what they say *about* Him. It is the confession of His *person* which He calls for. "Whom say ye that I am?" And this is in contradistinction to the vague and erroneous opinions of men. "But whom *say ye* that I am?"

This was the first time in the history of the world that this outward confession of the name of Jesus was called for, *as connected with a distinct position in separation to Christ*. It marks an era in God's dispensational dealings with men.

The acknowledgment of the only true God had been

called for from the earliest times; and Abraham and his posterity were especially separated to this confession.

Moses "counted the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt;" but he was not required to separate from the mass of Israel, whether they had the same precious faith or not.

David foretold the sufferings and death of the Son of God; but he had no authority to form a church in the name of the Messiah in separation from *the unbelievers of the nation of Israel*.

In the time of Abraham the people of God were a *family*, called out to the confession of the Almighty God.

In the time of Moses they were a *people*, typically redeemed out of Egypt, and "dwelling alone".

In the time of David they were a *kingdom*, under the Lord's anointed.

All this was according to God's order in its season; and separation from either would have been schism and rebellion.

But at the time when Jesus spake these words, there was a new confession called for with regard to himself, as the Son of God, and an entirely new order of things about to be founded on this confession, namely, that of the Church.

PETER'S CONFESSION OF CHRIST.

(Verse 16.)

"And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."

In Mark the Holy Ghost notices the confession, "Thou art the Christ," and in Luke, "The Christ of God," that is, God's Messiah. And the disciples were charged no longer to bear witness to him *simply* as such "Then charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ." (Matt. xvi. 20; Mark viii 29, 30; Luke ix. 20—22.) For Jesus having come as the Messiah, and King of Israel, and having been rejected by them, testimony was henceforth to be borne to Him, as the crucified and glorified one

But in Matthew, the Holy Spirit notices the full confession, and the whole truth comes out, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God".

Not only, "Thou art the Christ," or the Messiah, but the Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of the living God. The Son of him who was acting in living

energy, the source and giver of eternal life to those who believe in Jesus. (1 John v. 11, 12.)

THE BLESSING PRONOUNCED ON THIS CONFESSION

(Verse 17.)

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona; for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven."

To *know* Christ as the sent one of the Father is eternal life. (John xvii. 3.) To *believe* in Him is salvation. (Mark xvi. 16.) To *confess* Him, like Peter, is to inherit blessing. This blessing is twofold. Peter was blessed in receiving the revelation of the Son from the Father. "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." And this ready confession of the name of Christ, as thus revealed, was the occasion of the Lord's pronouncing upon him this distinct blessing.

This Revelation of Christ comes from God. Flesh and blood can never reveal, and reason often stumbles at revelation. GOD REVEALS, and FAITH RECEIVES. And hence these things are frequently hidden from the wise and prudent, and revealed unto babes; for so it seems good in God's sight.

CHRIST'S CONFESSION OF PETER.

"And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter."

Jesus had just called him by his natural name, Simon Bar-jona, and He now acknowledges him by his new name, given to him at his first coming to and believing in Jesus. (John i. 42.) Cephas and Peter both meaning a *stone*.

There are two Greek words used by the Lord in this connection, Petros and petra—"I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (Petros and upon this rock" petra)—which, though both from the same root, are of distinct meanings: Petros, or Peter signifying a *stone*, or fragment of rock, and petra, a *rock*. And there is no example in good Greek authors of the word "Petros," in the signification of "petra," being used for a single stone.*

It is on the confusion of these words that the church of Rome was founded. Thus, while the church of God is built on a divine person, and on the revealed

* See Liddell and Scott's Greek Lexicon. University Press, Oxford, 1845.

truth of God respecting Him: the foundations of the Church of Rome are laid on a mere man, and the erroneous interpretation of His name.

"Thou art Peter," a stone. But Peter had received the revelation of the Son from the *living* God, and to know Him thus is eternal life (John xvii. 3); he was therefore a *living* stone. Of such lively or living stones God's spiritual house was to be built, and Peter was one of them. "Ye also as lively stones are built up a spiritual house." (1 Peter ii. 5.)

CHRIST'S REVELATION OF THE CHURCH.

"And upon this rock I will build my church." The Father had revealed the Son to Peter and Peter had confessed Him; Christ had confessed Peter and pronounced him blessed; and now Christ begins to reveal the mystery which had been hid from ages and from generations, the mystery of the church; "that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world". (Matt xiii. 35.)

The time indeed had not yet arrived for the full unfolding of this mystery; for the Comforter was yet to come, and Paul was to be raised up, to whom the dispensation of the mystery was to be given: namely, that the Jew and the Gentile, incorporated into one by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, were to form, in union with the risen Head in glory, the BODY AND THE BRIDE OF CHRIST. (Eph. ii. iii.) But this is the first mention contained in Scripture of Christ's church, the church of the living God.

The assembly of Israelites in the wilderness is styled by Stephen, in Acts vii: 38, "the church in the wilderness;" for they were "a people dwelling alone, and not numbering among the nations". And in Acts xix., the Greek word for church ("ecclesia") is used three times—First, in verse 32, for the silversmiths gathered together by Demetrius, and the worshippers of Diana in the theatre; "for the assembly (ecclesia) was confused". Secondly, in verse 39—"If ye require any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly" (ecclesia). And thirdly, in verse 41—"And when he had thus spoken he dismissed the assembly" (ecclesia). But in neither of these cases is the word used in the sense in which the Lord uses it here, and in which it is used in all the

other cases in the New Testament, for the assembly or Church of God.

With types and shadows of the Church Scripture abounds, going back even to the garden of Eden, where Adam and Eve, as the apostle informs us, foreshadowed this great mystery—Christ and the Church. (Eph. v. 25—33.) And Isaac and Rebecca, Joseph and Asenath in Egypt, Moses and Zipporah in Midian, and a number of other types, all tell the same sweet and wondrous tale. But all these were shadows of good things yet to come, to be testified of in due time.

The words of the Lord Jesus are very explicit here—"Upon this rock I WILL BUILD my Church."

He does not say, I have been building, nor I am building; but, I WILL build. Not Abraham, nor Moses, nor David built; but, I will build. Not thou Peter, nor *ye* disciples, nor those who may come after; but, I will build.

The title most frequently given to the Church in Scripture is, "The Church of God;" and the Church may either be regarded as the Church of God—the object of His divine foreknowledge and electing love, and God's testimony in the world to the name and honour of His Son—or the Church of Christ, the purchase of His blood, and as gathered and associated by Himself around His person, and to the confession of His name.

THE CHURCH A BUILDING.

It was to be a building—"I will *build*."

Not a material building of course. Nor on the other hand, a number of living stones left amidst a mass of lifeless rubbish. Not living stones scattered abroad or thrown on a heap; but "living stones built up." (1 Pet. ii. 5.) Not a "few names," with "undefiled garments," remaining amidst a number of persons having a name to live while spiritually dead, and professedly worshipping together in a "worldly sanctuary;" but "living stones, built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ". (1 Pet. ii. 5.) Or, as Paul expresses it in writing to the Ephesians, "In whom (Christ) ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii. 22.)

And on this Church, composed of living stones, separated from the world, and associated with himself, Christ writes His name, and calls it His own—"My

CHURCH". Not the Church of a nation, of a person, of an ordinance, of a doctrine, or of a creed; but that which Christ could own as His, peculiarly, entirely, and truly His—"My Church".

THE FOUNDATION.

"Upon this rock I will build my Church".

In the matter of salvation all Christians are agreed, that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. iii. 11.) And from the time of the fall there had been no other name under heaven given among men for the soul's salvation, although the coming of Christ and the accomplishment of redemption, were yet future.

Faith in the woman's promised seed was the salvation of our first parents. But the time would fail me to tell of Abel, and the long list of believing ones, who all died in this faith, in the hope of a glorious resurrection.

But in the portion of Scripture before us, it is not a question of salvation simply, but of *church building*, and at that time an entirely future thing. "Upon this rock I *will* build my Church." "Upon this rock"—ON CHRIST, the Son of the living God, REVEALED by the Father, and CONFESSED as the result of this revelation.

Wherever there is this revelation of the Son by the Father through the Spirit, the person receiving it becomes a living stone; and of such lively or living stones the spiritual Church is composed.

But there is something more than this implied and taught here. There is not only this REVELATION by the Father, and consequent saving knowledge of Christ, but also the CONFESSIO of his name. Not only the Church of Christ in spirit, but THE CHURCH IN MANIFESTATION.

CHRIST HIMSELF IS THE ROCK. But here it is not simply Christ the foundation of the soul's security—it is CHRIST the Son of God, REVEALED by the Father through the Spirit—CHRIST KNOWN in the soul as the result of this divine teaching—CHRIST CONFESSED by the disciples, and GATHERED TO, as God's elect and only centre.

It is on this Rock—Christ revealed, known, and confessed—that the Church here spoken of is founded, and Christ is the builder. A Church composed of living stones—faithful witnesses, associated around

the Son of God, and united together in testimony for him.

United in the confession of the Christ of God, and the truth of God concerning Him, they necessarily become separated, by their very union together, from all that is not Christ, from all that owns not Him, and from all that Christ disowns; and thus they constitute Christ's Church, the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth. This is what the Church was at first.

Christ is sole Lord over His own house. (Heb. iii. 6.) The recognition of any other authority but His, or that which comes from Him, is setting Him aside. In this matter, "*He that is not with Christ is against him*". (Luke xi. 23.)

Christ gathers to Himself. To gather disciples of Christ, around any other centre is to divide them. "*He that gathereth not with me,*" says Jesus, "*scattereth.*" (Luke xi. 23.) Sectarian church membership is a denial of the unity of the Body.

But when Christ gathers to Himself, the more His divine glories are revealed, and the attractions of His person and of His love are felt, the more firmly will those so gathered be united together.

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IMPREGNABLE.

"And the gates of hades shall not prevail against it."

All the powers of the unseen world are powerless against the Church of the living God, thus founded, and thus constituted. Its strength consists not in its materials, but in the foundation on which it rests, and in the divine and almighty power by which it is guarded.

Christ has the keys of hades and of death, and He will bring forth those who have belonged to His Church and have slept in Him, to the first resurrection. In no sense can the gates of hades prevail against it.

THE TIME OF BUILDING THE CHURCH, AND THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM.

From whence are we to date the commencement of this building?

FROM PENTECOST. And then also the Lord's word to Peter (Matt. xvi. 19) began to be fulfilled: "And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth

shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven". These are not the keys of the *Church*, but of the *kingdom*.

And Peter on the day of Pentecost, with the power of the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, opened the gates of the kingdom to the *Jew*—that is, to the repenting and believing remnant, who separated themselves from the guilty nation that had rejected and crucified their own Messiah. And afterwards, in the case of the household of Cornelius, God made choice amongst the apostles, that the *Gentiles*, by Peter's mouth, should hear the word of the gospel, and believe. (Acts. xv. 7.) And in either case, Peter's action on earth was ratified with God's seal from heaven. But while Peter was thus used and owned in the matter of the *kingdom*, the Lord Jesus reserved to Himself the building of His own *Church*. (Acts ii. 47.) "And the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." Or, more literally, "But the Lord added the saved ones daily to the Church". And *this is the first mention contained in Scripture of the Church's actual establishment*.

In fact, the Church owes its very constitution to the presence of the Holy Ghost sent down on Pentecost. For what is the Church? *It is the Body of Christ*. (Eph i. 23.) How constituted? "By one spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles." "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ." (1 Cor. xii. 12, 13.) "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v. 30.) And this could not be true, until the Lord Jesus, having suffered, and in His raised and glorified body having taken His seat at the right hand of His Father, and having received of Him the promise of the Spirit, had sent down on Pentecost the Holy Ghost—the baptism of the Spirit—to baptize believers in Him into this one Body, thus uniting them with the head in glory. Until the Head was glorified, the Holy Ghost the Comforter was not sent down. (John vii. 37—39.) "The Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified." Before the Comforter was given, believers were not baptized into one Body. And without the body there was no Church. But now God has given Christ to be the Head over all things to *the Church*, *which is His Body*, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all. (Eph. i. 22, 23.)

And the visible Church of Christ, spoken of in Matt. xvi., is composed of those members of an ascended Saviour, who are gathered around His person, and united in the confession of His name.

THE PRESENT WORK OF GOD.

It is to this, the only true Church ground, that God is bringing back in these last days the twos or threes in various parts of the world; that is, to meet together in the alone name of Jesus, as believers in Him, in the maintenance of the holiness and truth which become His name, and in the confession of His Lordship; His Word the sole authority for faith and practice, and love to Christ and to one another the cementing bond. Not to reconstruct a fallen Church. Not as claiming to be *the Church*. Not as disowning in any sense true believers in every and in all denominations. Not as presuming to be anything—nor assuming superior sanctity. But in lowly confession of past failures, and in the present consciousness of entire weakness and nothingness, desiring in simplicity and faith to walk in the pathway of obedience to Christ; gathering in His name alone, around Himself, to meet on God's principles, and to seek to maintain God's order in His own House, "which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth".

Every real believer in Ephesus or Corinth, in the apostles' times, belonged to the Church of God.

So every true believer now in any given city, town, village, or district, belongs to the Church of God.

But in Ephesus or Corinth all believers were also associated together in the confession of the name of Jesus, and formed the one Church of God there—one in spirit, and one in manifestation. They were associated in separation from the unbelieving world, from Judaism, and from heathenism, and sects among themselves were then unknown.

The question which God by His Spirit is now pressing on true hearts and tender consciences is this, ought not all believers now, in each locality, seeing that they are one in spirit, to associate together around their common Saviour, in separation from evil, moral and doctrinal, as His Word directs, and in the acknowledgement of His supreme authority?

When this is truly done, there is a rallying point for every simple believing soul that desires fellowship with true believers for every one that loves holiness,

and hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and is anxious to enjoy the communion of saints "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart".

A rallying point for every one that values the truth of Christ and desires to guard it, in association with those that "love each other in the truth, for the truth's sake". And for every one whose heart is true to Christ, and who desires to pay to Him the honour and subjection which is due to Him alone, in separation from the usurped authority of man, and in combination with those that own His Lordship, and desire to obey Him.

T. N.

Thou art Truth ! all else a lie !
From myself to Thee I fly :
To Thy wounded side I go
From this world, its joy and woe.

Thou the Rock of Ages art,
Refuge of my shattered heart :
In Thy wondrous cleft I hide,
Jesus ! Lord ! the crucified !

Fainting, Thou dost lift me up :
Thy most sweet thanksgiving cup
Moves me (cordial rich) to sing,
In Thy true love triumphing.

True Bread is Thy Flesh to me,
Jesus, let me feast on Thee :
Strengthened in Thy Spirit so,
Teach me all Thy praise to show.

Soon awake and satisfied
With Thy Face, no more I'll hide,
But in strength immortal stand
With Thee in the promised land.

R. S. W.

TRACTS IN LETTERS.

MANY people ridicule the practice of enclosing tracts in letters. They say that it does no good, that they are seldom read ; the custom, though well meant, often does harm, and is injudicious, &c., &c. The following may prove a plea for it.

A short time ago—some months—I had occasion to write to a lady, a stranger to me personally, on the Lord's business, and enclosed a leaflet—"Commit thy way unto the Lord". When replying to my letter, she thanked me for sending it, as it was the very word of help she needed. Some time passed, during which I often thought of this lady, believing

her to be in some trouble, and asking the Lord to use me to her comfort again. Once more I was obliged to write to her on business. This time I could select no tract which I thought suitable, so I copied out an extract from my Common-place Book. Again she wrote to thank me. On the day she received my letter containing the extract, she was obliged to make up her mind to take, or not take, a step which would influence all her future. The Lord used the extract to strengthen her to do right at a great personal sacrifice. Further correspondence passed between us. She confided to me the story of her difficulties, and I was able to give her some practical advice, which she followed, and is now quite satisfied that the Lord led her in a "plain path" by the hand of a stranger.

Within the last month I enclosed a little tract on "Consecration". A few days ago I heard from the recipient, who sent me a letter to read. It was to her, from a lady to whom she had lent the tract, saying it had helped more than herself. Her husband had read it aloud at a little prayer meeting, and within a few days after *three* of those present had testified to receiving blessing through its means. Thus a little tract, put with prayer into a friendly letter, reached, and was used by the Lord to *five* people of whom I had never even heard !

These may appear trivial facts, but if my telling them induces any reader to begin enclosing tracts, with prayer, in letters—business or social—my object will be gained, and God will surely glorify Himself for "His own sake".

S. G. L.

"WE WALK BY FAITH."

Nor by sight, and sense, and feeling,
But by simple faith I live :
Though Thou'rt long Thyself concealing,
Nor one smallest sign dost give,
Yet I know Thee all my own,
Still I trust in Thee alone.

Lord, I never saw Thy glory,
Nor Thy voice of mercy heard :
Yet my heart receives Thy story,
Rests my spirit in Thy word :
Through the night I trust in Thee,
Waiting till the darkness flee.

R. S. W.

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M. C. M.

31

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AND THE TWELVE APOSTLES

WITH HIM.

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NORTHERN



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"For by the Works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."—GAL. ii. 16.

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London: J. E. HAWKINS, 36 Baker St., W.; and 12 Paternoster Square, E.C. . NOVEMBER, 1877.

Glasgow: City Bible House, 40 Sauchiehall St.
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NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

BY W. LINCOLN.

PART II.

DIALOGUE I.—From Ch. ii. 8, to iii. 5.

HERE* we have the Bride's account of the Bridegroom's approach, of His first invitation to her regarded as saved, of the inducements with which He presses that invitation, and of her hesitancy in complying with His wish, of her temporary loss thereby of the enjoyment of His presence, of her delight in His presence restored, and lastly of the Bridegroom's charge as to how long she without distraction may experience the light of His countenance on her soul.

* Having been informed that since January last, the number of readers of this periodical has considerably increased, I had better here throw into a note, what in that month's number I stated to be in my opinion the general arrangement of this book, the Song of Solomon. I then said and now repeat that "the simplest, surest way to trace out its subdivisions is to observe carefully each line when a single dialogue between the Bride and Bridegroom is completed. This will keep us from all the many and contradictory guesses of commentators as to its component parts, some of these finding in it seven songs, some twelve, some fourteen, some more, some less. The reader if he will mark this song, will himself easily certify himself that there are eight dialogues in all, extending down to ch. viii. 4. The last ten verses of ch. viii. form two appendices to the book, as we shall see in due time. And with the exception of these closing verses, the entire song consists of two parts very unequal in length. For down to ch. ii. 7 there will be found, if the language of the Bride be carefully sorted from that uttered directly by the Bridegroom, four distinct utterances by each of these. Now these four colloquies, concluding I say at ii. 7,

"The voice of my Beloved"—this may be heard as in the distance throughout the Old Testament, but in the New, He has arrived. In the Old, He is heard as the "I AM"; in the New, He Himself in divers ways expands this word in grace from "I am that Bread of life" unto "I am the Bright and the Morning Star". Then the Bride calls rapt attention to the great event itself: "Behold He cometh".† The gradual manner of

"may be summarised for brevity's sake, as more intensely *doctrinal*. And here, by the bye, I had better at once remark, "that the expression thrice occurring in the Song, 'stir not up nor awake my love till *He* please,' should be read 'till *she* please' in ii. 7; iii. 5; viii. 4. It is important at once to "make this correction, as otherwise it will be much more difficult for the reader to ascertain when it is the Bride and when it is the Bridegroom who is the speaker and when each have "once more ended, when, in other words, a complete dialogue "we have listened to. But then from ch. ii. 8, to ch. viii. 4, "there will be found upon examination only four more *such* "dialogues. Then in each of these latter four dialogues, we "shall find an invitation or call on the part of the Bridegroom "to the Bride. So that to put it plainly, the first and much "briefer part of the Song, and containing four dialogues which "close at ii. 7, form the foundation of the argument on which "the other larger part of the Song, to wit, the other four dialogues, each having one grand and gracious invitation, proceeds. It had been better for clearness sake if ch. i. had "been continued up to ii. 7 inclusive. For then the first chapter "would contain the basis on which all the rest of the Song is "founded."

† I refuse here to distinguish between His first and His second advent. For though God, in the deep counsels of His grace, had seen to our special blessing as that which was to ensue immediately consequent upon His rejection at His first coming; yet was it man's hatred of the Lord that had to do with the division into a first and second coming. The pro-

His approach to our actual condition is most strikingly suggested, by five words found here, successively, diminishing in thought as to the greatness of the distance between that Holy One and ourselves. These five words are placed in this order in the text: "mountains," "hills," "wall," "windows," "lattice". Our iniquities had separated between us and our God. Wholly impossible it had been for us ever to get back to God. As well might we have tried to have fixed a ladder to yon empyrean and to have climbed up to heaven thereby. But if we had neither will nor power to return to Him, nothing could hinder Him from coming after us, from coming down unto us, from dying for us, and so reaching us in our lost condition, removing all out of His way that His love and grace might have free scope towards us. His coming began when He came forth from the Father and stood in the world that He had made. But much further than this must He descend, otherwise a vast gulf had remained between Him and us. For He is the Holy One and "we were sinners". But His blood put away once and for ever all our sins, and in His resurrection He gives us eternal life flowing now "abundantly" from Him risen. The Corn of heavenly wheat had died and thus was much fruit brought forth. The various words used here descriptive of the manner of the Bridegroom's approach disclose how all devolved on Him alone. "HE" leaped on the mountains; "HE" skipped on the hills; "HE" stood behind our wall (mark the wall is of "our" erection) and at length could show or reveal "HIMSELF". This beautiful style of ascribing all our salvation unto Him we have already noted in Dialogue 4, ch. ii. 4. Here the Bride again anticipates the one theme of heaven, the new Song.

But now she proceeds to inform us as to His holy call to her when He thus has saved her and put the new Song into her mouth. In brief, this is his first word to the saint, "come out" to ME. (Heb. xiii.) To the sinner it is "come"; to the believer it is "out".

phacies of the Old Testament ever combine these two. See, for instance, Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, and note how much of this only Christ quoted in Luke iv. The chain of PROPHECY (mark, not of blessing) was snapped by the cross. It will be rivetted again at His appearing. For prophecy eyes the world and Israel. But in between the link snapped then and the link reunited when He appears a second time, God has inserted the church call and the association with the Lord Jesus in heaven of those who believe on Him whilst yet He is absent;—of those who have not seen yet have believed.

Like Lazarus she must rise up, knowing whose voice it is that calls, and so come forth. Likewise the Light ("it," not "He" as in the translation) says, Awake sleeper, get up from the company of the dead ones, whom when asleep one so much resembles, and Christ shall shine upon thee. (See Eph. v.) For if the Light does not wake a man and cause him to arise, it is because that one is dead.

Then after having recalled to her recollection some encouragements to enable her to obey, He repeats His injunction, "Come away," or "out". The repetition denotes that He perceived unreadiness. And who of us cannot look back to times in our experience, when the pain of separation from that which was evil caused us somehow to tarry. But what are these encouragements divested of their symbolic aspect, which He in His grace reminds us of. For however we parley or linger, God cannot abate His claims on us, or modify His call—in mercy and in infinite love He cannot. "For lo," says He, "the winter" of our unregeneracy is past, His love we have tasted and enjoyed. "The rain" or storm is over, and gone all of it. It took another direction, it was expended, was all the wrath of God against our sins upon the head of His beloved Son. If the cross is God's lesson book specially for sinners, surely the Resurrection and the sight of Christ sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, is God's second lesson to us when we have somewhat listened to the good news of the first. But Christ there enthroned tells not only of sins all put away, but of access immediate to God vouchsafed. But this is not all that we have here. God never stops in blessing. The flowers appear parallel with the adornments of grace to be beheld in every Christian. The time of the singing (not "of birds" as in the translation) but of believers is come. We must sing, we cannot help it. It is a natural, or rather supernatural effect of God's love enjoyed. The feet on the rock and the song from the mouth are concomitants. The voice of the turtle dove is heard. The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God. He Himself leads us to call God our heavenly Father. Fruit we now bear, as we read in Gal. v. Israel had been often compared to those two fragile yet fruitful trees, the fig and the vine. Hence the particular allusion here. Only alas, so much of our fruit is unripe. So much of that which is of the flesh may appear or be mixed up with that which is of the Spirit. But He who has accepted us

is well pleased also through Christ with our fruit bearing, such as it is. I say such as it is, for verily the figs are still "green" and "the vines with the tender grape" only "give a good smell". This is not what God can finally effect in us. But He who looked out on the first day's creation and beheld it good, also looks with favour on the feeble love of a new born soul, and knows that when it is grown it will both know His own love better and love in return the more. Would that all His saints imitated Him in this respect.

Consequent upon her delay as to obedience, He exhorts her to seek strength from Him (v. 14) and to beware of sins great and sins "little," which indispose us to heed His word and interfere with our following Him fully. And the language here, as in verses 11 and 12, is striking and exquisitely beautiful. To enter into the holiest, to draw nigh to God, we should remember that already grace hath hid us securely in the Rock of ages cleft for us, even in its most secret penetralia. For we are members of his body, being taken out of His flesh and out of His bones. Therefore, even ere we invoke His aid, we should let Him see our countenance. For such is the delightful order that obtains here. First "let me see thy countenance"; then next "let me hear thy voice." How often believers reverse in their experience this way of our God and seek to approach Him by toilsome effort and by uphill work, instead of beginning with the perception that grace has already put us in His presence and we have only in filial confidence to look up to Him. Yet this is the mode as is here expressly signified in which we should pour out our hearts unto Him. Then as to the foxes lurking even under the very vines themselves, He bids us take them and slay them on the ground that the vines have tender grapes. So very little will mar or interfere with our communion in His love. We ourselves are to take them and to slay them. We have the power, therefore let us use it. It is in His own interest and in ours, that we put off all that checks prayer in His presence.

(To be continued.)

DEMOCRACY is a great effort on Satan's part, through the agency of man, to bring all down to his own level; thus he would bring down the highest to the place of the lowest, even his own outer darkness. Divine equality must be in the risen Christ, He seeks to bring the lowest up to the highest place, even into His own presence and His own glory; His redeemed are His agency in this work. "We then as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (2 Cor. vi. 1).—J. A. B.

SHADOWS OF CHRIST.

PART XII.

MOSES—(Continued.)

THE triumph of Jehovah over the enemies of Israel at the Red Sea awakes the deepest joy of the heart of Moses.

He sings a song of praise unto the Lord—a song of triumphant faith; and with him as partakers of his joy the Children of Israel also sing.

And is not this a Shadow of the triumphant joy of our Lord Jesus as He rose from the dead, victorious over all the power of the enemy and ascended to the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, there to wield all power in heaven and on earth, on behalf of those whom the Father hath given Him?

In Psalm xxii., the sorrows of our Lord Jesus on the Cross are minutely described, and the breathings of an intercourse with God are heard of which the historic narrative of the Gospels gives no account.

There amidst the sufferings and the forsaking, the pains of death and the sorrows of hell, the final request groaned out from the depths of His soul is for the deliverance of His "darling" from "the power of the dog." Having loved His own . . . He loved them *to the end.*

But immediately upon the utterance of this prayer, the scene is changed. The darkness seems to vanish, and resurrection glory bursts upon our view.

Again the Holy One is seen; no longer the groaning, pleading, dying sufferer, but now His prayer being answered He stands with the loved and purchased and liberated congregation gathered around Him and like Moses in the midst of Israel He leads the song of victory.

The triumph is His and ours in Him, therefore in Him we joy, and with Him we yet shall sing.

Well may it be called "precious faith" which has linked us in life eternal to our triumphant Head.

Cursed be the unbelief that would drag us down to murmur amidst our wilderness circumstances when we ought to be celebrating the praises of Him who has "triumphed gloriously" and by faith anticipating the inheritance.

In Rev. xv. we find another and a future victory song. It is called "the song of Moses the servant of God and the song of the Lamb." The allusion is doubtless to the Passover Lamb and to the song of Moses at the Red Sea. These two aspects of redemption

are combined—Redemption by *purchase* or atonement—and redemption by *power* or deliverance. The one is Ex. xii. the other is Ex. xv.

Both are ours. The one is accomplished, finished, never to be repeated or added to. The other although surely pledged to us in the resurrection of Christ is yet future. We wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body (Rom. viii. 23) we are sealed by the Holy Spirit of God until the REDEMPTION of the PURCHASED possession (Eph. i. 14.)

The path of Israel from the Red Sea was through a wilderness. The wilderness is the place of trial. The Lord Jesus, the Son whom God had called out of Egypt—rising from the waters of baptism in Jordan and being full of the Holy Ghost—was thither led to be tempted of the devil.

But Satan's wiles found no response in the Holy One of God; and wilderness circumstances however trying—the hunger and the wild beast, drew forth no murmur from Him.

Jesus stood where Israel fell.

The very first lesson of the wilderness—a three days journey without water—tested the feeble roots of Israel's faith.

Unbelief with its inevitable issue of murmuring against God took the place of faith and hope with their never failing song of praise.

And whether we look at that part of their journey which preceded Sinai—during which God dealt with them in pure grace—or at that which followed Sinai during which for similar provocations God dealt with them in judgment so that the entire generation which came out of Egypt was consumed; we see as far as Israel is concerned only the prolonged corroboration of God's verdict upon what is in man by nature "The heart is deceitful above above all things and desperately wicked" "In me, that is my flesh, dwelleth no good thing."

But it is in the whole course of God's unique dealings with Israel as His people during these forty years of provocation that chiefly outshines the typical character of Moses as the Mediator.

The man who had looked on their burdens; who had identified himself with their afflictions; who had faced for them the enemy, and had gone down with them into the depths, is the man whom God selected and appointed to be the Mediator.

And does not this tell us of the testing and the proved faithfulness of Him who is "the Mediator of the new Covenant"?

Truly it was necessary that He who undertook the office of Mediator should be both "merciful and faithful". Faithful to God, and merciful to the ignorant and erring.

"Thus we find Moses "faithful in all his house." (Heb. iii. 5.) Never did he keep back from the people one word of God's commands. "And Moses came and told the people *all* the words of the Lord, and *all* the judgments." (Ex. xxiv. 3.) They trembled and quaked at the voice of God—for "they could not endure that which was commanded". (Heb. xii. 20.) And, even when Moses, filled with mediatorial grace, came forth from communion with God, his face reflecting divine glory, they were afraid to come nigh unto him. But he called unto them, and first the rulers came nigh; afterwards all the children of Israel came nigh; they found their fears were groundless—they found that in the Mediator the glory that shone so brightly had no terrors for them. To calm their fears he veiled his face, for he must have them at perfect rest in his presence, but when he communed with God it was with unvailed face. But before he was thus honoured in the eyes of Israel it is remarkable how in Chap. xxxii., he stands before God pleading for them as sinners. The Lord had said "Now therefore let Me alone that My wrath may wax hot against them". (Ver. 10.) "But Moses besought the Lord his God"—and thus it is written "The Lord repented of the evil which He thought to do unto His people". (Ver. 11-14.) Thus Moses His servant stood in the breach. Again he pleads, "Oh this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold: yet, now, if Thou wilt forgive their sin:—and if not, blot me, I pray Thee out of Thy Book which Thou hast written". Mystery of faithful, unchangeable love to the people whose cause he had espoused. Type of Him who "suffered for sins, the just for the unjust," who was "made a curse for us"—who "delivered us from the wrath to come".

Again in Chap. xxxiii. and xxxiv., he pleads for the presence of God to go amongst them. Nothing short of this could satisfy the heart of Moses. The Lord had tested Moses—He had said "I will make of thee a great nation". (Chap. xxxii. 10.) Again, (xxxiv. 14.) "My presence shall go with thee and I will give thee rest;" but the true-hearted mediator was not thus to be severed from the people; the very idea of the nation being cut off and his being blessed he resents.

If they are to perish, he will perish with them—if they are to be blessed, he will be blessed with them—if they are to wander 40 years in the wilderness, he will wander with them. And, in all this, was he not a figure of the “One Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all”. (1 Tim. ii. 5, 6.)

Nay, were not these supernatural ways of faithful love but broken reflections of the mind and Spirit of Christ? If the “shadow” were so lovely, so true, so immoveable, in his attachment to the chosen people—what must the substance be?

When they were “almost ready to stone him” (Ex. xvii. 4), he cried to the Lord on their behalf. When Aaron and Miriam spake against him, he made effectual intercession for Miriam’s healing. (Num. xii. 13.) When the people murmured against Moses and against Aaron, and said, “Let us appoint us a Captain and let us return into Egypt”—and so provoked the Lord that again He said, “I will smite them with pestilence and disinherit them, and make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they”. Still with argument upon argument the mediator pleads with Jehovah—until the response is given, “I have pardoned according to thy word”. (Num. xiv. 2, 4, 12, 20.)

Again the people murmured against them in Num. xx. 5, and also in xxi. 5; but never is his patience exhausted—as often as their unbelief turned their necessities into a complaint, instead of a prayer, so often did Moses come in for them to God with his unfailing mediation.

Such are the ways of grace—such the charity that “never faileth”. And after this pattern, but surpassing it as far as the infinite surpasses the finite—are the thoughts and ways of Him who is the Mediator between God and men, the Advocate for the erring children. Well is it that “having loved His own He loves them to the end”. Were it not that His “love is stronger than death”—how could it continue unwavering as it does towards those who in so many ways deny Him and forsake Him—judge His providence and murmur against His discipline.

May our meditation upon the shadow lead us to a deeper understanding of Him who is the Substance—Who loved us and gave Himself for us; in whose face we behold without a veil the glory of God; whose will is our law—whose presence is salvation—and under whose triumphant guidance we are not only led forth from Egypt and its doom, but assured of the everlasting inheritance.

J. R. C.

JESUS IN THE MIDST.

PART II.

MATTHEW XVIII.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

THE first subject mentioned in this chapter is the kingdom of heaven, and greatness in the kingdom; the Lord distinctly stating that there was no entrance *really*, but by conversion, and that in the kingdom child-like humility was true greatness.

In verses 7, 8, 9, the world is warned because of offences: woe is pronounced on the offender: and offences are warned against.

From verses 10 to 14 the Lord speaks of those “little ones which believe in him”. (v. 6.) They are not to be despised. Angels minister to them, Though once lost, the Son of man came to save such, and it is not the Father’s will that one of *them* should perish.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE.

Then, from verses 15 to 20, we have “the church”: “Moreover, if thy brother trespass against thee,” and Brotherhood is here especially connected with the Church. It is the brotherhood of the family of God.

The trespass spoken of is apparently a personal thing; and the directions given apply *literally* to personal offences, that is, if we go by the received text. But the *Codex Sinaiticus*, and other MSS., omit “against thee,” both here and in the parallel passage in Luke xvii. 3: “If thy brother trespass, rebuke him;” and this, if correct, is important. In this case verse (15) will read, “Moreover, if thy brother trespass (or sin), go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone”. Compare Leviticus xix. 17, “Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him”. This is *general*; and the inquiry and reply, in reference to *personal* offences, follows in verse 21 to end—“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how often shall my brother sin *against me*, and I forgive him?” And so in Luke xvii. 4, “And if he trespass *against thee*”. In either case the principles are of divine value and importance, and are universally applicable; they are, in fact, the fundamental principles of all church discipline.

The First Step.

“Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone.”

Oh, the divine wisdom of these words! "between thee and him alone". Thus the citadel may be taken at the outset.

"If he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother." Otherwise all the sweets and benefits of brotherly communion are lost: but thus the bond of brotherhood is preserved unbroken.

The Second Step.

"But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of one or two witnesses every word may be established."

Thus the benefits of church fellowship widen. And the desire to preserve intact the sweet bond of holy love constrains the offended, or the one who has a conscience about sin, with fellowship with God, and love to his brother, to go and tell the offender; and then if individual effort fail, he can call in the aid of one or two more. But if there is *no separation of believers from the world, and no association together in the name of Jesus*, where will he find the one or two more who will be prepared to share in the unwelcome task? But where there is *scriptural Church fellowship*, when the facts of the case are made known, the "one or two" others have the same sweet inducement to endeavour to preserve the unbroken bond,—they, too, have a brother to retain or to gain.

The Third Step.

"And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church."

What Church? The Church first mentioned in chapter xvi. 18, which Christ was about to build; the assembly of those who, having received of the Father the revelation of the Son, are associated together in the confession of the name of Jesus.

Not to any particular class of persons, nor to Churches founded on human or sectarian principles; much less to any human tribunal, formed on the principles of the world. "Dare any of *you*," says the Apostle, "having a matter against another, go to law before the unjust, and not before the saints?" (I Cor. vi. 1-11.) And the insufficiency of these human tribunals to maintain scriptural discipline, and even to guard the fundamental truths of Christianity, has been remarkably shown of late. "Tell it unto the Church."

The Last Step.

"But if he *also* neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican."

The word *also*, which has been omitted by the translators, is important here, as connecting this 17th verse with what has gone before.

The Lord does not say, "If he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as a heathen man," as though he would imply that the Church had authority to teach, and that its teaching was to be received as authoritative: but if "he *also* neglect to hear the Church". He is not here speaking of *doctrine*; but of *discipline*.

The brother trespassed against, or the one taking part with God, as to trespass against him, had spoken to his offending brother; one or two more had in vain endeavoured to gain him: their united testimony had been received by the assembly; and the voice of the assembly had *also* been disregarded: the Lord then Himself pronounces the sentence, "Let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican".

At first it was an individual matter, then a matter of one or two more, but now it has become a matter of Church responsibility. And the person who prefers to retain his sin, or his self-will, or anything else in preference to the holy and scriptural communion of saints, is to be regarded as one of the world; to be treated, indeed, with the civility and consideration which is due between man and man, but he has forfeited his claim to be regarded as a brother in Christ, in the possession and enjoyment of the privileges of the communion of saints.

THE DIVINE SANCTION OF THE CHURCH'S DISCIPLINE.

"Verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." This is no official power conferred on a person or set of persons. It is spoken of the united act of the assembly in carrying out the command of their Lord. "If he *also* neglect to hear the church."

"Whatsoever ye shall bind or loose." This binding or loosing is the act of the assembly of believers to whom the case has been related, and whose voice has been either regarded or disregarded—an assembly acting in the presence of God, in obedience to the word of the Lord Jesus, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

So in John xx. 19-23: "When the disciples were assembled . . . Jesus came and stood in the midst . . . and breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosoever sins ye remit,

they are remitted unto them; whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained”.

These words were spoken to the assembled disciples, with Jesus in their midst—disciples authorised by Him to act in the power of the Holy Ghost—the Spirit received from a risen Christ.

THE EXAMPLE.

The example in point we have in 1 Cor. v. and 2 Cor. ii. 5-11.

This was a personal offence, as well as a sin against God. “Wherefore though I wrote to you,” says Paul, “I did it not for his cause that had *done the wrong*, nor for his cause that had *suffered wrong*, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.” (2 Cor. vii. 12.)

In dealing with this case, the Holy Ghost by the Apostle Paul gives directions similar to those of the Lord Jesus, although the offence being so grave, the discipline is proportionate. The preliminary steps having been taken, and the case being no longer merely a matter of common report, the apostle proceeds to say, “In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus”. (1 Cor. v. 4, 5.) Thus we see that the object of discipline is the breaking down of the flesh and its end salvation, and not perdition.

Here is the *church “binding”*; and in 2 Cor. ii. 5-11 (the discipline having, through divine grace, accomplished its object), we have the *church “loosing”*. “Sufficient to such a man,” says the Apostle, “is the punishment which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to *forgive him*, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow.” (2 Cor. ii. 6, 7.)

Then in ver. 10, the Apostle, as inspired of God, gives the assurance of the *divine sanction* of the Church’s act. “To whom ye forgive anything, I forgive also; for if I forgave anything, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes forgave I it *in the person of Christ*.”

And thus, the conscience of the Church in Corinth having been brought into healthy activity, the result was both individual restoration and collective blessing. Evil was overcome with good; and Satan’s object frustrated.

Whether it be receiving into communion, putting out of communion, or restoring again, the act, to be valid, must be the act of the *whole assembly*, and opportunity should be given for the assembly to express its judgment, or by its silence signify assent.

“Wherefore receive ye one another,” says the Apostle. (Rom. xv. 7.) He does not say, “*let your elders receive for you*,” but “receive ye one another”: it is a collective act.

“As Christ also received us.” Only such as Christ receives, we are to receive—none but true believers. But all that Christ has received are to be received by us, unless there be scriptural reason to the contrary. Hence it is added, “to the glory of God”.

It is not for God’s glory to receive into the number of those accredited before the world as corporate witnesses for Christ, such as are walking unworthy of Him, or who hold doctrines which dishonour Him, or who refuse subjection to His authority. But it is for the glory of God that every true believer, walking consistently, holding the truth of Christ, and submissive to His Lordship, should assemble with and be received by, those who meet in His name.

“When Saul was come to Jerusalem, he assayed to join himself to the disciples.” (Acts ix.) He was desirous of being received by them. “But they were all afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple.” They all needed to be satisfied about him. “But Barnabas took him, and brought him to the apostles.” Not before the whole church, in the first instance, but before the apostles. “And declared unto them how he had seen the Lord in the way, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus, in the name of Jesus.” Barnabas having given the needed information to the apostles, and the apostles having satisfied the disciples, the result was his full and cordial reception. “And he was with them, coming in and going out, at Jerusalem.”

UNITED PRAYER.

(Verse 19.)

“Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.” Here is the encouragement to fellowship in prayer. For not only is closet communion with God a first essential, but to united supplication there is made this especial promise.

THE GREAT AND DISTINCTIVE ASSURANCE CONNECTED WITH
GATHERING IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."

Immediately after the Lord had foretold the building of His Church in Matt. xvi. 18, He informed His disciples of His approaching death and resurrection (ver. 21); and in chap. xvii. we have the vision of His glory on the mount of transfiguration. All this is the intimation to us by the Spirit, that it is as the one who was to be *crucified, raised, and glorified*, the Lord Jesus gives this assurance.

It is around a once crucified, but now risen and glorified Christ, His disciples are to gather. In the name of Him to whom all authority in heaven and earth is given, we are to meet. And it is by the Holy Ghost sent down from this glorified one, that we are united together in fellowship, guided in discipline, and qualified for worship.

GATHERING.

"Where two or three are gathered together in my name."

This implies a drawing and a uniting together—the drawing of *faith*, and the uniting of *love*. And a supreme regard to Him in whose name they are gathered.

Faith, love, and obedience to the Lord Jesus; gathered as believers, and together in love. Faith in the name of Jesus the warrant and ground of assembling; His love constraining to implicit obedience, and, moreover, united together to walk in the path, to do the work, and to join in testimony of their one Lord.

Not accidentally met, but gathered for a purpose, and around the person of Christ, in the obedience of love to Him who died for them, and is risen again.

Not merely thronging and pressing with the multitude, but like one aforetime, drawing our virtue from Him, and having fellowship one with another in the enjoyment of a common blessing. (Mark v. 30.)

Jude once asked the question, "Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?" And the answer was, "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." (John xiv. 22, 23.)

Obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ is the secret, not only of individual blessing, but of the collective enjoyment of His manifested presence.

GATHERING IN THE NAME OF JESUS.

To be thus gathered, the truth of the person of Jesus must be held and guarded.

The Christ of God is God's centre of gathering—the Christ whom God has revealed in His word, and Whom the Father reveals in the soul. He that is holy, He that is true, He that hath the key of David—the holy and the true Christ, and the sovereign and only Lord.

It is only when the Lord Jesus can say of the testimony borne to Him, and the character ascribed to Him, "It is no denial of my name," that He can own those gathered to the confession of Him as His Church. (Rev. iii. 7-9.)

The confession of the true Christ, the holiness of character and walk which becomes this confession, and subjection to the supreme Lordship of Jesus—all this is included in the *reality* of gathering in His name. It is not simply *in* (εν) but *unto* (εις) the name of Jesus. Not only around Him, but in the apprehension, recognition, and acknowledgment of His character and titles. Coming together to realise what He is, and to render to Him the honour, the homage, and the obedience due to His precious name.

In order, however, to enter into the force and fullness of these most precious words, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," we must connect with them the subjects we have been considering, as to *church gathering, discipline, and worship*.

First as to Church Gathering. Matt. xvi. 15-18.

God's centre and gathering-point is Christ. The Father reveals Him, leads the soul to know, the heart to love, and the spirit to obey Him; and for those who are associated together to the confession of His name, the true motto is, "**JESUS IN THE MIDST.**" The secret of their union, their blessing, and their joy, they find in Him, and the glory of their association and of their assembly is this, "The Lord is there."

And can we wonder at the *Church's impregnable strength*, since Christ Himself builds it, since he Himself is present with it on the earth, as the "chief corner stone," and appears on its behalf at the right hand of God above, as the "head stone of the corner?" (1 Pet. ii. 6, 7); and the Holy Ghost Himself cements the whole together! Can all the powers of the unseen world prevail against it? Surely not; "For where

two or three are gathered together in His name, there is Jesus in their midst." And can there be any limit to the *blessing*, when He, in whom all fulness dwells, is present to replenish and supply, according to His riches in glory? Assuredly not.

Then as to Church discipline.

When the assembled saints, met in the presence of God and in the name of Jesus, in dependence on the promised aid and guidance of the Spirit of God, and with the power of the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Cor. v. 4), bind or loose, what is thus done by them on earth in accordance with His mind, and in obedience to His word, is ratified in heaven; for they have Jesus with them.

And as to the Church's united prayer and worship.

Where the name of Jesus is alone made mention of, and souls draw nigh to God in the faith of that name—where his presence is recognised, and His supreme authority owned, so that no forms of man, or human control, and much less the unchecked liberty of the human will is tolerated or connived at—where the solemnity of the Divine presence is felt, and present dependence on the leading and guidance of the Spirit is exercised—where the Holy Spirit of God is ungrieved in individual souls, and unquenched in the assembly of saints, what limits shall be put to the prevalence of *prayer*?

And when Jesus Himself, thus present in their midst, is their High Priest, entered into the holiest, ever living to make intercession, through whom the sacrifice of praise is offered, surely such *worship* must be accepted; for where two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus, there He is in the midst of them.

JESUS IN THE MIDST.

In the depth of humiliation, on the centre cross at Calvary, numbered with transgressors, taking the place of the chief of sinners, we have seen that blessed One, and two malefactors with Him, "on either side one, and Jesus in the midst." (John xix. 18.)

When we who are alive and remain, and the dead in Christ who rise first, are caught up together, it will be to *meet the Lord* in the air. In that happy gathering of the holy and the blessed, it will still be, "Jesus in the midst".

In the highest height of glory, encircled by the living creatures, the elders, and the innumerable company

of angels, John saw in the apocalyptic vision, and "Lo, *in the midst of the throne*, a Lamb as it had been slain." (Rev. v.)

In the dispensation of the fulness of times, the purpose of God is, that He might "*gather together in one all things in Christ*, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." Then Jesus will be the centre and mainstay of creation, and of all creation blessing. (Eph. i.) And throughout all eternity, yea, from everlasting to everlasting, the one centre of all God's counsels, purposes, and plans has been, and will be, the Lord Jesus Christ.

And if Jesus be worthy to fill this central place in all these important spheres of interest, glory, majesty, and power, why seek another centre of gathering for the Church on earth?

Why form so-called churches in the name of nations, countries, persons, or creeds?

Why should not Christians meet in Jesus' name alone? Does not God know best what is most for His own glory, and for our good? Is not Jesus worthy of this central place in His own Church? Can man improve on God's most perfect scheme? Why not meet as Christians, content with God's own Bible, the perfect rule of doctrine and of practice, with "Jesus in the midst?"

Will a Patriarch or the Pope better fill this seat of authority and of attraction? Will an Archbishop do as well? Can any of the Potentates or Princes of earth, honoured and useful though they be in their own proper sphere, can any of these with greater fitness be the Church's head? Or can the people or communicants, if they elect their own pastor, choose a better? Why may we not be satisfied with God's own choice? And if we want evangelists, or pastors, or teachers, is not Jesus the Lord of the harvest, and may we not pray Him to send them, and receive whom He has sent, content with His appointment? And if we would not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, why not meet on God's own principles, in dependence on the Holy Spirit, around the person of God's beloved Son?

CONCLUSION AND APPLICATION.

Thus, whether it be Church *fellowship*, or *discipline*, or *worship*, God's centre is Christ—a once incarnate and crucified, but now risen and glorified Christ.

And unity and stability in *Church fellowship*, authority in *discipline*, prevalence in *prayer*, and acceptance in *worship*, are indissolubly connected with this assur-

ance—"Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them".

The very simplicity of all this is its perfection. The absence of the human element, and the prevalence of the Divine, is its glory; every departure from this simplicity is a loss of power and forfeiture of blessing. All introduction of mere human influence, authority, or order, unauthorised by the Word of God, is practically a shutting out of God, a setting aside of Christ, and a quenching of His Spirit, accompanied with a corresponding loss of that which is divinely valuable.

God's centre of union is the same now as it was at first. The Father still reveals the Son. The Son of God still calls for the confession of His Name. And those who thus confess Him, Christ will still recognise. And amidst the two or three thus gathered in His Name, His presence, protection, and blessing may still be realised. The maintenance of the bond of the brotherhood of saints is as important now as ever. The preservation of the holiness of the house of God is as essential now as at the first. The truth of the person of Christ still needs to be collectively testified to, and guarded. The promised Comforter is come, and remains with us. The presence and sanction of the Lord Jesus may be as confidently reckoned on, in connection with discipline, in these last days as at the beginning; for He changes not. And even now, the worship of the saints on earth may be a little anticipation of that around the throne of God and of the Lamb above, *if the place assigned to the Lord Jesus by God Himself be reserved for Him, and given to Him, and the free acting of the Spirit of God be not interfered with*; for the promise is still left us, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them".

The only question which remains is, Who is prepared to forsake all and follow Jesus? Who is prepared to act upon His precepts, and to lay hold on His promises? Who is on the Lord's side? Who? Are you, dear reader? If you are a believer in the Lord Jesus, are you no longer content to put up with some one of the various inventions or expedients of men, but desirous of meeting on the principles of God's Word, around the Lord Jesus Christ, in faith, love, holiness, truth, and subjection to His authority, "with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart"? If so, God speed. The blessing of Almighty God be upon you.

LIGHT IN DARKNESS.

"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."—PSALM cxix, 105.

OH! Light of lights, dark, dark is earth's rough way,
Cloud upon cloud looms o'er the path I stray;
Far off and dim the Heavenly Land appears,
Seen through these mists of fleshly cares and fears!
Helpless, I seek Thy Word, and hear Thy Voice,
That bids me "always in the Lord rejoice"
Pointing from doubts within, and this world's wile
To peace and victory in "a little while!"

Oh! Saviour, Friend! hard, hard is earth's drear path,
And pain and sorrow haunt this Vale of Death;
Subtle the way, beset with many a snare,
And hidden dangers lurking everywhere.
But in this Light that shows Thy love, I see
This road Thou'st trod, borne all these cares for me!
"Fear not!" I hear, in tones of tenderest love,
"'Tis in thy weakness that My strength I prove!"

This World's temptations rage on earth's wild sea,
Drifting the fragile barque I steer to Thee;
Yet, Lord, amid the rocks and angry waves
I feel Thy mighty Arm, that shields and saves!
But still above the winds' and waters' roar,
A "still small voice" comes from the other shore
"Cast all your care undoubtingly on Me,
Fully and freely, for I care for thee!"

When twilight's shades fall round me, grim and grey,
And those I love the most are far away;
I look to Thee and dry my wilful tears—
With love like Thine, I dread no lonely years!
If 'tis Thy will, let bitter parting come!
Sweet shall our meeting be in yonder Home;
While here I have Thy love it cannot die,
And could I feel alone while Thou art nigh?
Still watching, waiting, for Thy promised rest—
Dismayed by grief, by earthly pain distressed,
"Oh! let Thy kingdom come!" I pray, "that I
May join the glad "new song" they sing on High!
Then Thy sweet words bring patience—"I prepare
For thee an Heavenly mansion, changeless, fair,
That where I am thou may'st with Me abide,
Tasting joy's richest fullness by my side."

I bless Thee, Saviour, for this Word of Life—
This Light that guides me safe through every strife;
This Lantern on my pathway, shining clear,
To show me danger, and the Helper near.
I love to see it beaming, day by day,
Thine own bright smile that lights the gloomy way;
"Led by Thy Counsel" Oh! what joy to be
"Received in glory," Lord, at last, by Thee!

MINNIE BEARE.

ON ROMANS V. AND VI.

THE lively and energetic style of the Apostle in these chapters is very striking. He treats sin as a person—as a king. He shows that he entered this world through the door of man's disobedience, and as soon as he entered, he took the seat of government, and death became the power of his kingdom, as well as its character. For man's departure from God let sin, the very opposite of God, who is the *holy* God, in, and sin brought death with it, being also the opposite of God, who is the *living* God. And this is the character of this present evil world. It is the place, or scene, of the reign of sin and death; and nothing in it is left untouched by the influence of it—it pervades all. But there is another scene, of which the grace of God is the source, as the disobedience of man has been the source of this; and this grace has prepared the way for Christ—as disobedience prepared the way for sin—and Christ brings with Him righteousness and life, as Adam, through disobedience, opened the door to sin and death. Thus, Adam is the figure of Christ, of "Him who was to come" after. But righteousness enters the scene with a "much more"—because grace is the source of it—and it was due to God's glory to bear this witness to that which had its source in Him. And having entered, it accordingly does "more" than merely measure the power of sin; for sin came in upon one offence or disobedience of Adam, but righteousness comes in and sweeps away from the scene thousands of offences which followed in the train of that one. And righteousness, accordingly, has now its kingdom here, as well as sin—life has its scene as well as death. But it is not visible as yet, like the other. The reign of sin is felt; the power of death is seen, all abroad; the reign of righteousness, which brings life with it, is only known to faith now.

And how has the *Law* entered, and what has it done in this scene of these contending kingdoms? It has only magnified the offence of the disobedience of man, which let sin and death in. For it was holy, just, and good, and served to expose the entire departure of man from God, the author of the law. But still grace was triumphant. It had brought in a gift—a righteousness which could, through Jesus, assert itself, and be supreme over all this aggravated power of sin and death? But how was this? How could grace take its way? How could love enter to operate in a scene where

sin was reigning unto death, and had *title* thus to reign? By PROVIDING a VICTIM. Sin reigned unto death. Sin had title to exercise its power even to death—for death was the wages it paid—the result of any man of the mere tribe of Adam entering its territory. And Jesus, the Son of the *living* God, entered its territory and received its wages; but having life in Himself—life untouched by Adam's disobedience—He survived the stroke; and thus really destroyed him that had the power of death and asserted a kingdom of righteousness and life, in which not only He reigns, but all those reign with Him who believe in Him—who rejoice with Him in His victory, and have no confidence in anything else. Thus sin, as a tyrant, is overthrown. The Son of the living God has asserted His supremacy in the very region of the power of sin. Sin has paid its wages; sin reigned, it is true, unto death, even the death of Jesus on the Cross; but sin then was entitled to do no more. "He died unto sin." All that sin could demand—that is, death—it got; it exacted death; it rewarded its servants, its subjects, with death, and Jesus "died unto sin". His death owned the title of sin; but then He carried a life with Him that remained untouched by all this; and in that life, and the righteousness of God, in which it has its source, He and His saints for ever reign together.

But if the Son of God thus "died unto sin"—that is, owned the demands or rights of sin by His death—it was God that He owned in His resurrection. For if He "died unto sin", it is equally true that "He liveth unto God"; so that His saints cannot continue in sin, for they have union with Him. If in death, so in resurrection; and as this union with Him in the one has delivered them from the tyranny or supremacy of sin, so their union with Him in the other has made them alive unto God. And however sin may still have to do with them, as it still dwells in their flesh, yet they should assert their place in the risen Son of God, and know that they have nothing to do with sin; they should count themselves dead to it; the connection between them and it is gone by the death and resurrection of Jesus, who has taken them rather into connection with Himself. *Grace* is the source of that kingdom in which they now move—it is not that other kingdom where law has aggravated, as we saw, the power of sin. (vi. 14.)

We have to see sin as an unclean creature now, that has sunk in its own element, the flesh, there to perish,

while we ourselves are risen with Christ. It was once a king, but is now bound in the dungeon of the flesh. The judgment unto condemnation came upon one offence, but the justification unto life came upon, or after, many offences. Death entered on the eating of the fruit of the tree; life is secured after sin, trespass, transgression, and offences had been multiplied, by the application of the law, again and again. Sin has reigned *unto death*—that is, death is the final stroke of the power of sin, the last exercise of his dominion over us, (the judgment that follows being God's, not sin's nor Satan's action), so grace has reigned unto eternal life, *i.e.*, eternal life will be the ever fresh, unfading witness of grace—the budding rod of its kingly power. Sin has exercised the final stroke of his power by putting Jesus to death, so that if, by faith, we plead the death of Jesus, or are united to Him in his death, we are freed from sin, or discharged from His service or bondage, and consequently from His wages. For “he that is dead is freed from sin”. This is glorious triumph for the sinner. God said to Adam, If thou dost sin, thou shalt die. Adam did sin, but CHRIST HAS DIED.

J. G. B.

EFFECTUAL WORKING.

EPH. iii. 7; iv. 16.

IN the Epistle to the Ephesians, where we learn the mind of God concerning the Church's place and calling, we find those significant words used, first in relation to the grace given, and then in relation to the grace exercised toward one another. It is deeply solemn for us to consider how much of the work of the Holy Ghost in us is wrought out effectually in our lives. Our Father loves us too well to be satisfied that we should be saved from wrath only. He would have us to be heirs to fulness of blessing in the Son of His love. The redemption of the cross is Christ's work for us, and being finished apart from us it is perfect; but the hourly salvation from the power of evil within and the powers of darkness without; the fitting of the vessel for special need or service, being a work carried on in the soul of the believer, must be ever more or less effectual just as the Holy Ghost, and He alone, is the worker there. Christ has not delivered His people from hell only, but is become the author of eternal salvation to all that obey Him: the one on the ground of our ruin and helplessness, the other on the ground of

life and discipleship. Not only is the blood by which He entered, having purged our sins, our title and claim to be even now where He is (Eph. ii. 6), but the power that raised Him far above all heavens, and that only, is the limit of our power for fruit bearing and service. (Eph. i. 19, 20.) He suffered once on the cross as the substitute for our sin; He also suffered being tempted that He might be able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by Him. His death has given us life, but as babes in the household of faith we need to learn and to grow; as soldiers of the cross we have to fight and to conquer; to labour to enter into the rest—the deep and blessed rest of yielding ourselves to another to will and to work in us. God has therefore given to us the spirit of power and love, and on the throne in the heavens the priesthood of Christ as our provision for the warfare and the triumphs of the way. We may never know in our own experience the mighty energies of His working, because just as the power of the flesh is suffered, the power of the Spirit in the new nature is hindered. God might indeed work in His almightiness apart from all hindrances, but in this it is His good pleasure to wait on us, that by-and-by He might give us the reward of what He has wrought in the yielded soul. Everything of nature has been condemned at the cross, and every energy of mind and will is bought with the price of blood, therefore the A B C of redemption is that we are not our own. Shall we go on rejoicing in our deliverance, and forget God's portion in us? He wanted sons to serve Him for ever, vessels of mercy prepared unto glory. Have we yielded our hearts and lives to His purpose? Have we presented our bodies a living sacrifice, not that we might give to Him something that is not His own, but that we might render our reasonable service? Beloved fellow-saints, His glory and our blessing never can be separated. If He wants vessels to display His grace here, it is that they may be filled with His fulness for ever. Step by step as we yield ourselves to Him, He fills our cup with blessing. Heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, our gain and loss are bound up with His eternally; and yet the riches of His grace will be magnified even in the failure of His saints. But He would not thus be glorified in us. He longs to lift us into closer, nearer fellowship than we have ever known before; to will and work in us that we may be conscious of no other life but His, save as we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us, reckoning ourselves dead

indeed unto sin but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord; living by the faith of the Son of God, even as He lived by the Father. (John vi. 57.) If we can say with Paul, "Not I, but Christ liveth in me," the very life given to us is victory. It was in the power of the resurrection which led captivity captive that He quickened His saints. To be in Christ, and Christ in us, is to be more than conquerors. A conqueror has victory; we have victory and Christ. Only let us yield ourselves to His love and power, borne onward from grace to grace, and strength to strength, until we lose ourselves for ever in his presence, reflecting in our glorified bodies the measure of likeness to our Lord that has been gained in the sufferings and conflicts of our pilgrim journey here. (2 Cor. iii. 18; iv. 17.)

A. E. W.

THE BIBLE AS A CHILD'S OWN BOOK.

ONE bright morning last winter, while seated in my own room reading a portion of the blessed Word, the door softly opened, and the darling of our home, a little black-eyed girl of four years, quietly entered. I was reading the seventh chapter of Luke audibly, and continued without speaking to little Carrie, indeed scarcely thinking of her.

As I finished the touching story of the woman "who washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head," a dimpled arm stole round my neck, a curly head rested on my shoulder, and a baby voice whispered, "Mamma, that is such a *sweet* story; please read it again." Equally pleased and surprised, I said, "There are two other pretty stories in this chapter; shall I read it all, pet?" An eager "O yes, mamma," and a spring to my lap were the answer, and I slowly began the story of the centurion's servant. Interrupted by questions and explanations, we finished this and read of the widow of Nain. Here the quick sympathy of childhood found vent in tears and smiles for the stricken mother's woe and rejoicing; and then we came again to the story of the woman who "loved much". This was the little one's favourite, and her comment was, "Don't you wish, mamma, that the dear Saviour was here now, so that *we* could do something for Him when He was *so* tired?"

No mother would lose such a God-given opportunity to tell how we may every day do something for the

Master; and then we knelt to ask for help to serve Him aright. At night when I went to her little crib to give the good night kiss, she said, "Please, mamma, read me once more about the good woman who washed Jesus' feet," and the little one entered dream-land before it was finished.

Since then I have never been alone in my morning hour. When I take the book from its place, her toy or doll is instantly laid aside, the tiny chair drawn close beside me, and large listening eyes are fixed in expectancy.

We continued regularly through the records of the "beloved physician" and the disciple who "leaned on Jesus' breast"; Jesus sleeping in the storm at sea; the ruler pleading for his only daughter, who lay dying; the good Samaritan; the little household of Bethany whom Jesus loved; the repentant son and his welcome home; the rich man and Lazarus; the widow's mite; the good shepherd who "giveth his life for the sheep"—all these are *real people* and *places* to little Carrie, almost as much so as her home and the dear ones in it.

When we came to the last scenes of that saddest and yet most glorious tragedy of earth, she listened with great tears dropping on her folded hands. The desertion of Christ by the disciples, and His betrayal and denial, roused all her childish sense of shame and indignation. When He made Himself known to Mary and the others after the resurrection, the joy of the child was the same in kind, if not in degree, with those who had lost and found their living Lord.

No reward of her little efforts to "help mamma" is half so dear as the promise to "read about Peter, who said he did not know the dear Saviour, and then was *so* sorry, and the Saviour forgave him, and told him, feed my lambs," the very sin and weakness of poor Peter having apparently inclined her tender heart to him.

If I had doubted the Spirit's power to interpret God's word in its deepest and truest meaning to the heart of a child, these readings have convinced me.

Mothers, Christian mothers, our little one is just like yours, a tiny, bright, every-day girl of four years not wonderful or precocious. As far as instruction in the Scriptures is concerned, we buy no more "simplified Bible stories"; we just feed our darling with the pure milk of the word unadulterated. "God is His own interpreter, and He does make it plain." You may do it with like results to yourselves and your little ones.

Read daily until Christ and the twelve become *real, living* people to them, and then the story of the cross and redeeming love will be simple, plain, and precious. God alone can tell what shall be the fruit of lives thus begun—hearts loving the Bible first and best, and stored with its divine precepts and examples.

SUGGESTIONS AS TO DISCIPLINE.

1. **L**ET it be specially remembered that our God is “The God of *all* grace.” (1 Peter v. 10.) This is the character of the One with Whom we have to do and for Whom we seek to act in discipline.

2. Those who are called upon to exercise discipline are themselves liable at any moment to be turned aside either by the flesh acting from within or by Satan’s power from without. And they would then need the loving care of fellow-saints manifested towards themselves.

3. Also bear in mind that the one who has sinned has come under Satan’s power, and specially needs to be tenderly dealt with, and that much love should be shown in the midst of faithful action.

4. Let each mourn the sin, and see how the erring one might have been kept from going so far, if others had been carefully watching over him.

5. When a brother is charged with sin let full inquiry be made by those who are spiritual (Gal. vi. 1), and do not let any meanwhile bring it before the whole assembly.

6. Whilst inquiry is being made, and spiritual ones are seeking the restoration of the sinning one, let none act hastily, nor let any sit back from the Lord’s Table because of such a one, for in so doing they would *judge themselves* as unworthy of being there, for it is the Lord’s Table, and our communion ought not to be interrupted even though the one whose case is being investigated were to come in and sit down.

7. If on inquiry it be found that there is only one witness and the one charged denies it, let there be patient waiting on God to manifest. (Deut. xix. 15-17.) One witness was not sufficient under the law. Two were needed. So 1 Tim. v. 19 and Matt. xviii. 16.

8. Never let it be forgotten that all the Lord’s dealings with His people are for blessing even though it be to “the destruction of the flesh.” (1 Cor. v. 5.) Therefore restoration of the sinning one is to be sought

after, and all ought to be humbled if discipline had failed to effect this.

9. Therefore if it is judged by all that there has been repentance and confession there is no need for putting away, only let there not be healing of the wound slightly; and ere the profession of repentance be accepted let opportunity be given for all to be satisfied as to its genuineness, or fellowship would be marred. For sometimes a profession of repentance has been made at the last in order to avoid being put away whilst godly sorrow has been lacking.

10. If one has been “overtaken in a fault,” and it be known only to a few, and they having at once sought his restoration, believe him to be really humbled and restored, there would then be no need to inform the Assembly. The sin having been confessed in the circle in which it was known, according to the principles contained in Matt. xviii. 15, “Go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone, if he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother.”

11. Remember that the Assembly is not to put away one guilty of grievous sin in order to clear itself with the world. “Putting away,” as commanded in 1 Cor. v., is that restoration may be accomplished and then the brother received back, which was the case at Corinth. (See 2 Cor. ii.)

12. But if the Assembly in carrying out the Word of God has been obliged to put one away, let all sorrowfully but firmly act upon 1 Cor. v. 4-13, and let no one hinder the restoration of such a one by having fellowship with him in private thus helping him to make light of his sin, and themselves practically judging the Assembly wrong in having put him away. Such action has hindered the restoration sought for.

True love would seek after the sinning one to lead him to repentance, and meeting one for such a purpose would not be, having fellowship with his sin; but even then surely those who have rule are specially marked out for that work.

13. If one has been put away, let it be remembered that it may be necessary to inform other Assemblies in the immediate neighbourhood, especially if there has been constant intercommunion, for then often no letter is asked for as most of those in fellowship have become known to those who rule in each Assembly.

14. Also note the importance of acting in fellowship with other Assemblies, and if one has been put away by one Assembly let not another take him in.

But if they judge him to have been put away unscripturally let them urge that Assembly to restore him first, and then they can happily receive him without causing a breach.

Thus Paul acted. Saints at Corinth were slow to put away until commanded to do so, and then they were slow to receive back. But Paul, whilst he urges on them to restore (see 2 Cor. ii.), waits for them to do so before he will, "Lest Satan should get an advantage," and surely Satan never succeeds better than when he alienates two Assemblies by hasty action on the part of either.

15. Not that infallibility is to be claimed or the thought allowed that an Assembly *cannot* act wrongly in this.

Yet remember that none can know or enter into all the details and surroundings of a case which has called for "putting" away in the same way as those in fellowship. But when it is thoroughly clear that wrong action has been taken, let abundant opportunity be given to the Assembly to retrace its steps and receive back.

16. Remember above all that God's Word is an all-sufficient guide in every case; therefore each case as it arises calls for waiting upon God and guiding from His Word as to how to act. No line of action in one case can guide in another. Each differs. There is therefore continual need for each Assembly and each Believer in it to be cast upon the Lord.

ON LEVITICUS VIII. AND IX.

THE beauty and value of Leviticus viii. and ix. are striking; they present the preparing of Aaron for the priesthood, and then his acting in the priesthood, chap. viii. giving us the first; chap. ix. the second of these. And our Lord Jesus will be seen in them both. At the beginning of this action the congregation are called to the door of the tabernacle that they may be witnesses of it (viii. 3). And so it is the comfort of us sinners that we can in the New Testament see the whole process by which Jesus has been prepared for, and established in the priesthood for us. When led of the Spirit and taught to understand the Gospel, it is this we see. And, in looking on, the congregation first saw Aaron *washed* and *garmented*; so we, in tracing Jesus from the manger to the cross, see this also; every step of the journey was proving these two

things—His own personal purity, and His love and sufficiency of merit for the church—the washing of Aaron typified the one, and the garments the other. He carried the tribes both on His shoulders and on His heart; that is, He gave them both His strength and affection; and the golden mitre on His forehead showed that He had the constant merit of His holiness before the throne for all their defilements. Jesus proved all this in His life and sorrows here. As to personal purity, the prince of this world came and found nothing in Him; thus was He worthy for God's altar as the Unblemished Lamb, and for God's sanctuary as the Holy Priest. And as to His love and sufficiency for the church. He is the *tried stone*—His love was found to be stronger than death—it survived every trial, whether from the hand of God Himself—from the desertion of His own, or from the resistance of the world. He was found to be one who could give the church both His strength and affection—He gave all that He was or had to her—and being thus proved, God anoints Him to the priesthood by raising Him from the dead on the eighth day (ix. 1). The Epistle to the Hebrews tells us that the life of Jesus was His preparation for the priesthood. God would have one to take charge of the church, as her priest or advocate, who was fully proved, this shows the love of God to the church. He would not entrust her to an unproved heart or hand. The owner of the flock would not put them under the care of an untried Shepherd. All this tells us of the careful love of the Father towards us. He must see the breastplate, the shoulder-pieces, and the mitre, on the priest before He would put him into office. And as to the sacrifices that Aaron offered—his sin-offering, his burnt-offering, and his ram of consecration were all needed—for God must have *full* pleasure in the priest—He loved the church too well to commit her to any in whom His own soul did not delight. And all this is in our Lord Jesus. He has met the Father's perfect complacency—and the resurrection asserts this to us—verifies God's full favour in Christ, and gives Him His priesthood for us. In chap. ix. we have the *risen* Jesus (the priest), on the eighth day doing the service of the priesthood, and *doing it so effectually* that *fire* came forth to accept the sacrifice, and the congregation who had from the beginning been looking on, are satisfied that their interests are fully secured. They shout and worship—they rejoice and are thankful—and so is the sinner to rejoice and be thankful; who finds peace in the work of Jesus, and who sees the love of God, who provided and has accepted Jesus for him.

J. G. B.

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WITNESS.

"For by the Works of the Law shall no flesh be justified."—GAL. II. 16.

"For by Grace are ye saved through Faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God."—EPH. II. 8.

London: J. E. HAWKINS, 36 Baker St., W.; DECEMBER, 1877.
and 12 Paternoster Square, E.C.

Glasgow: City Bible House, 40 Sauchiehall St.
Aberdeen: Miss KEMP, 25 St. Andrew Street.

TEACHING: ITS PLACE AND VALUE.

THE written teachings of men ought to be put on the same footing with those which are spoken.

There are some whose teachings "cause to err from the words of knowledge". Such ought not to be listened to (see Prov. xix. 27), and in like manner their writings ought not to be read. Believers cannot with impunity run counter to this, any more than to any other plain instructions of God's word.

But if a teacher be one of Christ's gifts (see Eph. iv. 11) for the edifying of the Church, then his words ought to be heard, and so ought his writings to be read.

The danger lies in allowing the teachings of men to draw us away from, or occupy us more than, the Word of God.

Kept in their own place as helps to the understanding of the Scriptures, or as exhortations to obeying the Scriptures, the teachings of divinely gifted men, whether spoken or written, are no more to be despised than "prophecyings" of old. (1 Thess. v. 20). But as soon as the instruction is given, "despise not prophecyings," the further counsel is added, "prove all things, hold fast that which is good" (ver. 21).

There is a constant liability to receive—without duly testing it by the Word—what is taught by man. The more gifted the man—the more honourable and influential his position among the saints, the greater the danger.

We are indeed delivered from bondage to the doctrines and commandments of men, but those who teach the mind of God from His own word are to be honoured (1 Tim. v. 17), helped (Gal. vi. 6), and submitted to (1 Cor. xvi. 15, 16).

It is often very blessed, around the Lord's table, to have the mind and heart directed, through suitable teaching and exhortation, to the love and glory, to the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and also to the practical godliness that such grace lays claim to in the lives of the children of God; and surely it commends itself to the spiritual judgment of all that what of ministry *precedes* the "breaking of bread," should be in the way of concentrating the attention upon the Lord Jesus Himself and His great redemption work. Other teachings, useful and necessary in their own place, might at such a time be an intrusion and a positive hindrance to spiritual worship.

Afterwards would seem to be the time for the practical. Such are the xiv., xv., and xvi. chapters of John, and also the dealing of the Lord with the *conscience* of Peter, which was not until after they had dined.

The danger here is in allowing teaching to usurp the place of worship, whilst some, alive to this danger, have recoiled to the opposite extreme, excluding from the assembly around the Lord's table this most blessed ministry of the Holy Spirit, and confining it to other occasions.

The saints ought indeed ever to be in fit condition to worship. But are they so? Do not many come and surround the Lord's table weary, careworn, burdened, vexed with wandering thoughts, and finding themselves often incapable of rising above *themselves* and their circumstances.

To such, what a blessing to hear the bridegroom's voice, to have the words of life poured into their thirsty souls, and thus, through breathing the pure atmosphere of heavenly grace, to be caused to overflow with gratitude and praise.

Divine ministry will ever stoop to the real condition of saints. True service will deal with things as they are, however far that is from what they ought to be.

J. R. C.

THE BELIEVER'S MISSION.

"As thou hast sent me into the world even so have I also sent them into the world."—John xvii. 18.

WE do well to remember that God has an object in leaving us in the world after our conversion. It is not to perfect our title to heaven and glory, nor is it to render our standing more complete or steadfast, but for education and to fulfil a mission.

Every believer is a sent one; a sent one is a missionary, therefore *every* saint is a missionary.

The entire Church has a mission, and so has each member of that Church.

The Head Himself was a missionary, one sent by the Father, and here presents Himself as the pattern missionary. In this light the Holy Ghost points Him to us in Heb. iii. 1, "Consider the Apostle (*Ton Apóstolon*), the sent one of our profession, Christ Jesus."

This being true it will be instructive and healthful to consider how He was sent into the world, and thus ascertain how we are sent into it.

Of course, we remember His personal dignity and official pre-eminence. He is the Father's equal, and anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. We as believers *are one* with Him, yet not His equals. We delight to give Him the pre-eminence; we worship and adore Him.

Remembering this we proceed to consider His words—"As Thou hast sent me into the world." He afterwards told His disciples this—"As my Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

1. He was sent from heaven and from the Father. Not as Gabriel from before the throne, but from the Father, from the bosom of the Father. He was sent into the world therefore as not of it. "I am not of this world." He entered it by incarnation, and left it by the way of the cross. He was from above, the Great Apostle, who saw the face of Him who *sent* Him, and received His commission from His mouth. But why was He sent? or, in other words, what was His mission?

(1.) To represent the Father and so reflect His moral glory.

(2.) To reveal, as The Word, His counsels and will.

(3.) To do that will.

1. He represented the Father. He was "the brightness of His glory and the express image of His

person". "The image of the invisible God." His only similitude. In His being, speaking, acting, and suffering, He revealed the glory of the Father, and could say, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." This will be true to eternity.

2. He, as the Word uttered in His teaching the mind of God, the otherwise unknown counsels of the Father's love and grace. He said, "My doctrine is not mine but His that sent me." Again, "I have given them the words which Thou gavest me, I have declared unto them Thy name." With reference to His will He said, "This is the Father's will." (See John vi. 39-40).

3. He came to do the Father's will and to finish His work. Indeed one word covers His entire life and work here—*obedience*. Hear Him! "I came down from heaven not to do mine own will but the will of Him who sent me." The Holy Ghost in the Heb., chap. x. 7, represents Him saying as He came into the world, "Lo! I come to do Thy will, O God;" and to His wondering disciples could say, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me." By which will fulfilled in the offering of His body once for all we are both sanctified and perfected. (Heb. x. 7, 10-14.)

He was sent into the world; He has fulfilled His mission and returned to the Father who sent Him.

In all this we rejoice, and now ask, How and for what purpose are we sent into the world? How can we be said to be sent into it? I might, if necessary and if space allowed, enlarge on the purposes of God and His promise given us in Christ before the ordering of the ages; suffice it to say that when He gave us our first birth it was in order to the second, and when our existence here began He saw the end; but with us the question is not one of locality, but of condition of soul. If we are to be sent into the world we must first be taken out of it, separated from it, which we were when regenerated by the Holy Ghost. The Apostles were locally in the world when the Father gave them to Christ out of it Who sent them into it for a purpose. By regeneration, then, we were taken out of the world, we are not of it but left in it for a purpose, to fulfil a mission.

Beloved fellow-believer, we do well to consider the dignity of our mission and the value of our presence in and to the Church and the world.

We also are called, and that as our first and highest business, to represent Christ who represented the Father; we are to reflect the moral glory of God, to be

His imitators, a manifestation of the Lord Jesus and of that God "whom no man hath seen at any time" (1 John iv. 11, 12), in spirit, word, and deed to exhibit Christ. "Be ye imitators of God as dear children, and walk in love as Christ also loved us." (Eph. v. 1, 2).

Again, what is the real value of all ministry and Christian intercourse? Is it not the communication of truth the one to the other as God gives ability, and what our value to the world, but as being the pungent salt of the earth, and bright shining light of the world?

And this, beloved, is the will of God which we are sent into the world to do.

1. So to walk as that if we said nothing we should reflect the glory of Christ, and so be His representatives.

2. By all our communications as Christians, private or in assembly, to enlarge each other's knowledge of God, and so increase our mutual glory.

3. To testify of God's full and free salvation, and Christ's perfect work to the poor world outside, giving weight to what we say by that which we practically are.

These few and simple suggestions I commend to you in His name.

H. H.

NOTES ON THE SONG OF SOLOMON.

BY W. LINCOLN.

PART II.

DIALOGUE I.—From Ch. ii. 8, to iii. 5—*Continued from p. 163.*

BUT now she addresses Himself. By the most tender appeals, He had invited her to come out to Him. This she had not yet commenced to do. So He had directed her to seek strength from Himself, and to be ware of so-called little sins, which nip in the bud our obedience to His call. And this other word of His, to let Him hear her voice appealing for His aid to do as He bade her, she finds easier than the obedience demanded itself. For separation unto Him involves painful effort. It is a common device of our sinful flesh to substitute spirituality for irksome obedience. This we can everywhere behold from the cases of men evidently godly, who yet allow themselves in what a child could see was wrong. So the bride here now breaks out in joyful strain: "My beloved is mine, and I am His; He feedeth among the lilies."

In these words of hers, though there is no hint of an exercised conscience, no supplication for to be strengthened with might by His Spirit to heed His invitation in verses 10 and 13, yet her language is most delightful. Clearly she had not been in His presence, she had not tasted of His love without profit. In Him appears to be all her joy. In the first four words, by a piece of the most exquisite tautology, she twice calls the Beloved of her soul hers, as if she were well aware how feeding on His love and appropriating it delighted Him. Likewise, we hence should learn to take heed, that whenever we addressed Him, however few our words may be, never to omit that great, little, big word, "My". Nor does even this expression of her joy in Him content her. She also exults that she belongs to Him*. It is her conscience which compels her to add: "He feedeth among the lilies." He delights Himself in the midst of His saints pure in heart, and clean in their walk. That is to say, the secret of this clause added by her is that she would fain persuade herself that she was fully complying with all He had enjoined on her. So do unwise believers try and ignore certain precepts, whilst all they get by so doing, is to mar their joy in God. For in their heart of hearts there remains a consciousness that they are not as obedient as they say, or sing, that they are; as if the expression of the wish to be fully obedient were an equivalent for the obedience itself† (c.f. John xiv. 23), and so the seventeenth verse of ch. ii. may

* This verse 16 is found again in vi. 3, and the first two clauses thereof in vii. 10. But these two other verses mark the growth of the soul in the knowledge of Him. Thus, in vi. 3, the clause, "I am my Beloved's," precedes "My Beloved is mine," as if she had meanwhile learned that it was more delightful as well to Him as to her, to belong to Him, than He to belong to her. In the one self is less lost sight of than in the other. Then in vii. 4 she entirely omits the less grand clause, "My Beloved is mine," being engrossed with the fact of her belonging to Him. She modestly and humbly contents herself with saying instead thereof: "His desire is towards me". Nor is there here aught about His feeding among the lilies. For now there is no attempt, as there need be none, to silence the voice of conscience.

† Compare with the above, that suggestive verse at the end of the Epistle to the Ephesians, not as it is incorrectly rendered in our translation, but as it ought to be. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in incorruption."

well prepare us for her description as to her state at the commencement of ch. iii. It is a great pity that in the very midst of the recital of her experience at this critical time when she is hesitating as to her obedience, the subject is abruptly broken off by the careless insertion of the words "ch. iii.". Far better for the sense, had the break been made where the dialogue closes, at the end of verse 5. Now in this seventeenth verse she has to speak of "shadows"—an ugly word, when it refers to the condition of the soul! And these shadows do and will get on the soul, and between us and Him, if we fail to regard His words. The sun may be, as we well know it is, still shining the same as before, but the mist and the chill are facts in our experience at these times. Hence, she implores Him to turn towards her, as if, forsooth, He had turned away from her, when rather it was she who had turned a deaf ear to Him. She implores Him to be like a roe, or a young hart, and to hasten His return unto her, on the mountains of Bether or separation, as if aught could separate Him from her. This cannot be, not even during this weary, long night, not even for a moment before the break of day. But He will, nevertheless, by his attitude towards us let us know that it is an evil and bitter thing to sin against One who loves us as He does. He will separate the sin He hates, whatever it be, from the soul He loves. She may, through heart consciousness of this, exclaim at any moment, "My Beloved is mine": but this will not alter the manner or the measure of His discipline, consequent on disobedience. She may forget this; not He: He loves us too well. Hence, in the opening verses of ch. iii., follow a time of heart anguish through the consciousness of suspended communion with Him. For verse 1 reveals a period of spiritual sloth and inertia. The word rendered "bed" here is not the same as in i. 16 of Divine rest, nor is it akin to the word in iii. 7, of which we will speak in its place. Rather the word selected by the Spirit here and put in the original in the most prominent place in the verse, as if it were the key-word to the sentiment conveyed, is to be interpreted in the light of such a passage as Amos vi. 1-4. And as verse 17 of ch. ii. may have prepared us for her tone of anguish here, accordingly we read: "On my bed, by night, I sought Him whom my soul loveth; I sought Him, but I found Him not." Backsliding in heart is easy, when it is consequent upon light resisted, upon His call neglected to come out to Him, consequently she seeks Him thrice ere He

accords her again the joy of His restored presence. He can be grieved by our negligences or by our forwardness; and if He is grieved He will, by His Spirit, let us know it.

So first she seeks Him listlessly and amid much self-indulgence. No wonder that she has to record, "I found Him not". She knew too much of Him to be happy away from Him. She knew too little, promptly to obey His call, and to know that His smile would more than recompense even her for any painful consequences involved in so doing. See Matt. xix. 29.

A second search she makes, for now she begins to shake off her spiritual stupor. She looks for Him in the streets and in the broad ways. But "in the streets" (Luke xiii. 26) and in the "broad way" (Matt. vii. 13) are all the unconverted professors found. Their end is only destruction. Not likely, therefore, that her following of Him, and her obedience unto Him, if it reaches no further than to be in the fashionable way of the religious world, that such still negligent disregard of His call on her part, will obtain her that which she has lost, the joy of His presence. No call of His is plainer, or more peremptory, in the New Testament, than to be separated from ungodly professors, than that we must not be conformed to the world, or to its fleshly pious ways. Hence, a third time she institutes a search; and here from the beginning of verse 4 we learn she was beginning to act more wisely. She applies to the watchmen*, the under-shepherds who watch for souls as they who must give account to the Chief Shepherd of their treatment of His sheep. In an earlier dialogue, He Himself had pointed her eye in this direction. It is possible to make too little, as well as too much, of pastors, and of the help they can render. In many places where "the one man minister" has been seen to be an institution certainly not of God's, the rebound has been either to neglect the ministry of the word altogether, or else, what is quite as bad, to make silly sheep esteem themselves to be shepherds, and thus to

* The reader will observe that here, as everywhere else, without a single exception in the word, pastors are spoken of in the plural number. Let the ministry be open, as God directs us, then it will be manifest who they are. "The angel" in Rev. ii. and iii. gives no countenance, if rightly understood, to the one man pastor. Likewise, the words of the Lord in Matt. xxiv. 45. and repeated in Luke xii. 42, are used *abstractedly*, not of any one in a particular assembly.

introduce into the assembly leanness and soul starvation. No ! shepherds are not made ; they are, with other gifts from an ascended, glorified Christ, "given" to His saints.

These watchmen, to whom she in her grief of soul applies, speak through the ministry of the word, to her case. They find her. Their heart-searching testimonies bare her heart in the presence of God ; whilst, faithful servants as they evidently from the context are, they direct her eye away from themselves. She, abased and humbled as she recognises how, from disobedience and resisting light, she had got further and further from communion with the Lord, even to the length of seeking again ease and pleasure in this world, now, at last, as the watchmen had bidden her, looks a little further than the means ministered by them, to her own patient and forgiving Lord, and at once, without delay, she again finds Him. Then having had private, blessed, and fully restored communion with Him herself, she brings Him in her soul to the place or to the assembly where first she had heard the gospel of her own salvation and believed. Ah ! why souls are sometimes heard to complain of the meeting which they frequent being cold, and the ministration without power, may probably, in many cases, be attributed in truth to those souls themselves. They did not take care, ere they came to the assembly, to pour out their hearts in secret into His ear, to have contact with Himself. They did not, in the joy of His love, attend the public gathering, and their souls unready, or even full of care, did not relish what others with more appetite and spirituality did.

Anyhow, the bride here acts otherwise. So both in private and in the assembly she is full of joy and peace again, and glowing with the blessed hope of the gospel. Then follows her Lord's word of injunction, which already we have heard once before in ii. 7, and there explained, and which requires not now, therefore, any further remark. Suffice it only to say, that His express will is that she is not to be defrauded of aught of her joy in Him, nor her ardent delight in Himself damped.

KEEP no secrets from God. Confession of sin to Him in all detail will greatly help us in the subduing it.

The speediest confession is the easiest and the best.

THE sinful thought of the heart is, in the sight of God, the act ; evils in life always proceed from evils nourished in the heart.

SERVICE I.

THE angel in announcing the birth of John the Baptist, said of him, "He shall be great in the sight of the Lord," "and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb," (Luke i. 15), "and many of the children of Israel shall be turned to the Lord their God". We see here that for special service there is a special preparation needed and given ; if we are called of the Lord He will prepare us by His Spirit, and use us for His glory. John was a burning and a shining light for the Lord, and as such shining in the darkness, he was opposed and met with prison and death for the Lord's sake ; if we let our light shine we must also expect persecution ; let us seek to be prepared for the worst that man can do to us, and thus we will be more able to bear our cross daily, and follow *esus*.

W. G. S.

SERVICE II.

AT the rebuilding of the wall after the Babylonian captivity, we find the adversaries of Judah trying to hinder the work ; but the people *had a mind to work*, and so they prospered (Neh. iv. 6), but they also *prayed*, and set a *watch* against them day and night ; and he who wrought had his *sword* by his side or in his hand, and was thus prepared for the attack of the enemy. Let us who have come out from Babylonian captivity, spiritually, learn from this what need we have to watch, and pray, and work, having the word of God which is the sword of the Spirit always at hand, and thus shall we get courage to work for the Lord, and get victory over our spiritual foes ; as they got the wall finished in due time to their joy, and the casting down of their foes. (Neh. vi. 15, 16).

W. G. S.

SERVICE III.

IN John vi. 5-12, we get Jesus by a miracle feeding about 5,000 from the five loaves and two fishes : we see in this the lesson that spiritually Jesus can give much blessing and increase in our efforts to serve Him, although our gifts may be very small, and we also see that although he could easily have fed the multitude apart from the few loaves and fishes, yet He was pleased to use them. So let us put our little, all that we are, and have, into His hands, and we shall see others blessed by Him, through us as vessels *meet* for

His use. We also see how careful we ought to be to waste nothing that the Lord is pleased to bestow upon us; Jesus said, "gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost". After a time of blessing we are apt to be forgetful and unwatchful, and thus to give place to Satan to rob us of our fellowship, and thus to hinder us from being vessels meet for the Master's use, whereas if we were careful over what the Lord in grace bestows upon us, and were careful to redeem more fully the fragments of our time and opportunities of serving Him, we would enjoy more full blessing in our own souls, and also see more fully His hand working with us in our service for Him: "He also that is slothful in his work, is brother to him that is a great waster." (Prov. xviii. 9). It is by using well for the Lord what he has given us, that we can in faith look to Him to give us more, "whosoever hath to Him shall be given". (Matt. xiii. 12.) W. G. S.

HOW TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD.

IT has been well said, that the Bible is a book of principles rather than of rules. And the principles which God has there disclosed for our guidance, are developed in the history of His dealings with nations and with individuals, as well as conveyed in definite precepts and commandments.

Thus the Bible is not to be regarded as a manual of legal enactments, which is to be only consulted as the occasion may demand—as one would go, without exercise of heart or conscience, to get a receipt for something when required. It is the great repository of Divine instruction, by which faith is to be fed, and the man of God thoroughly furnished. (2 Tim. iii. 15-17.) Christianity imparts new life to the soul; and the instincts and understanding of the soul, thus renewed, are to be trained and cultivated by all the varied instruction of the written Word, under the tuition of the Spirit of God.

The Bible is a revelation from God to man. It has been communicated by His inspired messengers "at sundry times and in divers manners"; and in cultivating an intimate and accurate knowledge of that revelation, the Spirit-taught soul learns the ways, and character, and mind of God.

Without this knowledge, the Christian will continually find himself at a loss. He will not be ready for the occasion, when he is called to act. He will go

astray, and suffer for it. "The simple pass on and are punished." (Prov. xxii. 3).

He will be like a child who has little regard for his father, and who does not trouble himself to know his mind and will. It is easy to foresee that such a one, when a difficulty presents itself, will not be in a condition to understand what pleases his parent. If, on the contrary, he had habituated himself to watch his father's ways, and to know his will, there would not probably be a moment's hesitation in knowing what would be agreeable to his father, even where he had given no positive expression of his mind.

In seeking to know the will of God as to a certain course of action, we are liable to make great mistakes. We are often of too much importance in our own eyes; and, imagining that we are called into some public service, we look, under such circumstances, for the manifestation of the will of God. God, perhaps, has nothing to tell us in such a case, it being rather His will that we should quietly take an inconspicuous place.

Thus we seek to know God's will as to how we should act in circumstances in which it is not His will that we should be found at all. It is our own will that has placed us there; and if conscience were really in healthy activity, its first effect would be to make us quit them. It is in vain to look for the comfort of God's direction in a path which we have chosen for ourselves, and not He for us.

Of one thing let us be assured, that if we live near to God, in the mortification of self-will, and in habitual communion with Him, we need not be at a loss to know His will. God may not always reveal it to us at once, thereby trying our faith, and causing us to feel our dependence upon Him. It is thus especially that he deals with us when we are inclined to act according to our own will. But for the comfort of faith, God has given us this blessed assurance—"If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." (Matt. vi. 22.) If this light, then, is not enjoyed, it is certain that the eye is not single. The words of the Saviour—"He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life," contain a blessed truth, as applicable to the saint in his progress from one degree of holy attainment to another, as to the sinner when he takes his first step in the way of salvation. "If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not." (John xi. 9).

We cannot, without danger and detriment, withdraw ourselves from the great moral law of Christianity—that

we are called to follow Christ, and to walk with God. "Walking worthy of the Lord" is intimately and immediately connected, by the apostle, with the "being filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding," "and increasing in the knowledge of God." (Col. i. 9.) The mutual connection of these things is of immense importance to the soul. To know the Lord intimately, we must walk in a way worthy of Him; and in seeking to walk worthy of Him, and in that way alone, shall we grow in the knowledge of His will. "If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine." (John vii. 17.)

Our ability to apprehend the will of God depends on the condition of our souls. When darkness clouds our path, and we see no light, we should suspect that God is chastening us in discipline. God would have us to keep close to Him; and it would not be in accordance with His goodness to permit us to discover His will, whilst careless about walking in holy and happy fellowship with Himself. It might, indeed, be convenient to have recourse to a directory of conscience, but we should thus lose the discovery of our true moral condition.

How often do we see one Christian in doubt and perplexity, whilst another, more spiritual, sees as clear as day! One walks in the light, whilst the other is "in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth". (John xii. 35.) After enumerating the various moral qualities which the Christian is to cultivate, Peter adds, "He that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off". (2 Pet. i. 9.)

As regards circumstances, Scripture indicates that we are at times guided by them. We may be "held in by bit and bridle." We may find ourselves checked in a course of self-will by circumstances which cross our path. It is merciful on God's part so to act, but it argues a low condition of soul. We are warned not to be as the horse or the mule, which have no understanding of the will, thoughts, or desires of their master—whose headstrong course must be kept in by bit and bridle. (Psalm xxxii. 9.) This, doubtless, is better than to stumble and fall, or to dash ourselves against barriers that should be avoided. And this is to be guided by circumstances. Whereas the promise and privilege of him who walks with God is, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go: I will guide thee with Mine eye." Blessed promise! happy privilege! to walk so closely, so intimately with

God our Father, that we shall know His mind by a glance of the eye!

Had Moses been guided by circumstances, he would doubtless have remained in Pharaoh's palace, seeking to use the power and influence of the position in which Providence had placed him, to relieve the sufferings and ameliorate the condition of his own countrymen, but "by faith he forsook Egypt." He was not guided by circumstances; but he acted "as seeing Him who is invisible."

We should, however, draw a distinction between judging what we ought to do in certain circumstances, and being guided by them. He who allows himself to be guided by them, is in the dark as to certain knowledge of the will of God. There is absolutely nothing moral in his movements. He is dragged along by an external force. Now, it is possible we may have no judgment beforehand as to what we ought to do. We know not what circumstances may arise, and consequently we can form no decision; but as soon as the circumstances have taken place, we should be able to form an apprehension of the Lord's will. But to do so, we must be spiritual. True spirituality is not directed by circumstances, but by God in circumstances.

As to mental impressions, God can suggest them, and does suggest them; but in this case, the propriety of the thing, and its moral character will be clear. Christ's sheep hear His voice, and they also know it (John x. 4, 27).

The soul of the saint is subject to influences from the Spirit and from the flesh. "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh." (Gal. v. 17.) We are instructed to seek and cherish the one, and are warned against yielding to the other. God can, in answer to prayer, remove from our hearts certain carnal influences, that their place may be succeeded by the power and teachings of the Spirit. It is thus that He makes us to feel the importance of some duty which we have overlooked, the obligation to which had been, perhaps, entirely obscured by the heart's pre-occupation with some object unduly loved or desired. Here Christians may be very helpful to each other. One person may not have spiritual discernment enough to discover what is good; but the moment another shows it to him, he understands that it is the right thing. All are not engineers, but a simple waggoner knows a good road when it is made.

The life of the Christian should be regulated by the

will of the Lord. We call Jesus "Master and Lord," and we say well, for so he is. (John xiii. 13.) But if he be our "Master and Lord," it follows, as a consequence, that we have no right, even in the most trifling matters, to act independently of him. We have no right in anything just to please ourselves. "*What is my master's will?*" is the consideration which becomes *the servant*. To know it and to do it, is his positive duty. This same inquiry—"What is my Master's will?" should be the oft-recurring thought. And, surely, if our love to Him who has redeemed us from the bondage of Satan, at the price of his own precious blood, has not waxed cold, it is a thought to which we shall with delight continually and instinctively recur.

We should never act without reference to the will of God. When we know not that will, we should pause. When we act in ignorance of it, we are at the mercy of circumstances.

When we are moving onward in the peaceful certainty of knowing the Lord's mind, obstacles will be no more than trials of our faith—they will not stop us. When they do stop us, it is an indication that we want faith to accomplish what we have faith to discern. When the eye is turned to circumstances, instead of being fixed on God, Satan finds us an easy prey. When, on the contrary, faith in God is simple, the very obstacles which otherwise would harm us, tend only to strengthen that faith, and to make us more watchful.

The rule, that we should act as the Lord Jesus would have done, is excellent, where and when it can be applied. But are we often in the circumstances in which the Lord was found?

When considering the course to be pursued, it is often useful to ask ourselves, Whence comes such a desire, or such a thought, of doing this or that? Is it of the Lord? or is it from the workings of the carnal mind? Would not this consideration, faithfully applied, clear away half the embarrassments in which Christians are involved? And are not the greater part of those which remain, the result of our haste and of our former sins? If a thought comes from God, and not from the carnal mind, then we have only to wait on God as to the manner and the means of executing it and we shall soon be directed. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

If we would walk "in the light of the Lord," there are three conditions to be observed:—Let us watch against the workings of self; let us seek to have the

mind illuminated by all the instruction of the written Word; and let the heart be open to the gentle influences of the Spirit. If our own will is not in activity, and we are longing after a closer walk with God, He will not allow us to go far astray. "The meek will he guide in judgment: and the meek will he teach his way." (Ps. xxv. 9.)

THE children of God in the furnace without a good store of scripture in their hearts are always impatient, struggling in self-will for deliverance, and thereby do but add fuel to the fire.—R. C. C.

THE JOY OF GIVING.—Of the many sayings which our Lord must have uttered besides those recorded in the four Gospels, the only certainly authentic one which has come down to us is this: "It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts xx. 35.) "He that sheweth mercy," says the apostle Paul, "let him do it with *cheerfulness*." (Rom. xii. 8.) And in another place he tells us that "God loveth a *cheerful* giver." (2 Cor. ix. 7.) It is noticeable that neither of these words, "cheerful" and "cheerfulness" is anywhere else found in the New Testament. And what is true in this respect of the English words is equally true of the Greek words answering to them. These original words are, in fact, even more expressive than the English ones. For while with us the words cheerful and cheerfulness are now almost synonymous, in such connections, with willing and willingness (though according to their derivation, and strict propriety of speech, they have a much more positive and emphatic meaning), the original Greek words express much more than bare willingness in distinction from reluctance; they express a positive joy and *exhilaration* in giving. That latter word has, in fact, the same origin with the Greek word which the apostle uses. If we wished to preserve as nearly as possible the form of the original words in our own tongue, without regard to purity or elegance, we might render the passage thus: "Let him that sheweth mercy do it with *hilarity*:" "for God loveth a *hilarious* giver." Giving, then, according to the apostle's view, should be an *exhilarating recreation* to the Christian. He should give not only without grudging, but *cheerily*, with zest and delight. He should count it as his liveliest joy, his merriest pastime. They who have, by experience, "learned the luxury of doing good," will not wonder that the apostle used such expressive and lively words in recommending this duty.

NAAMAN.

2 KINGS V.

IN this history we have, perhaps, all the leading truths of the mystery of grace simply, yet strikingly illustrated. It is, indeed, a parable conveying very important instruction. In the person of Naaman we get man in his best estate. He must have been the world's envy—the great favourite of the day. Everything favoured him with the king and the nation. The Lord too, in endowments and providences, had greatly signalled him—"but he was a leper". There was a stain on all his human glory, which no hand but God's could remove; and let the world flatter him as it might, it was a witness, a constant witness to himself that all was not right. And such, indeed, is man—let him be advantaged as he may in circumstances, there is still a witness against him.

In the *little captive* whom we next see, we get just the opposite of Naaman: all was against her, in circumstances. She had been dragged from friends and home, and was a bondswoman in a stranger's house and land. But she carried a secret, the very opposite of Naaman's secret—she had the witness of God *for* her, as he had His witness *against* him. She knew the *healings*, whilst he felt the *sore*. This was a mighty difference, yea all the difference, if God be considered. To have Him *for* and not *against* us is surely the great circumstance after all, and so was it here, and so it is with every true Israelite like her. In the knowledge of the same secret—in the knowledge of the *healings* of God, they can say, "If God be for us, who can be against us"?

These are valuable lessons given us in this parable; but we have others. The King of Syria is next introduced to notice in it, and he quite represents man, in his loftiness of thought and self-esteem, even in religion. He judges, to be sure, that nothing can be done for the divine healing of his favourite captain, but through him and his resources. He therefore prepares his silver and gold, and his raiment, and writes a letter, with his own hand, on this business, to the King of Israel, a king to a king. Nothing less than such patronage can give fair promise of blessing. All this is worldly religion, men's thoughts about God's ways. But there is nothing which the King of Syria does that is not labour lost. His own personal patronage and gifts, and the countenance he sought from a brother

king—all is only religious vanity, and the King of Israel, who had the advantage of God's revelation in his country, is enabled to refuse taking a part in this grand purpose and thought of the King of Syria. There is one higher than the King in all this, though the Syrian knows nothing of him.

Elisha had, of course, passed the notice of this great man of the earth. But Elisha is his only hope in this day of his leprosy, and Elisha, as conscious that the power of God was with him, makes no stir or difficulty, as the King had done. He has not, like One afterwards, the authority of his own word to cleanse away this stain, but he is in the secret of God's ordained remedy, and he can with authority preach that to the leper.

And here, I may just notice how Jesus shines above all. When the leper comes to Him it is not as with the King—"Am I God that I should heal a man of his leprosy?" nor is it as with the prophet—"Go wash in Jordan and be clean"—but He reveals Himself at once in the place and power of God—"I will, be thou clean". Elisha was but a preacher of Jesus to Naaman, Jesus was the health-giving, the cleansing, healing God, as John, or the highest of them, is but the bridegroom's friend, Jesus the only bridegroom.

And in the distance of the picture we see another object of the deepest interest to us—I mean the *poor, converted* leper, healed through his cleansing. At first nature is strong in him—he refuses to use the remedy which grace had provided—a remedy most simple, but most humbling—so simple that there was no mistaking it—no difficulty in applying it, save that difficulty which man's pride and previous thoughts had opposed to it.

But grace can plead with a proud, reluctant heart, as well as provide for a leprous body. Grace can *use* a ministry, as well as open a fountain for sinners, and that ministry, like the remedy, is simple, and as such is fitted to its end. Naaman's servants in this way met the risings of nature in their master, and their word or ministry is blessed to him. The proffered fountain is tried—its virtues are proved, and the flesh that was leprous becomes like that of a little child. It is more than mere restoration—it is resurrection. The dipping in the river Jordan was a true baptism to the Syrian—"He *dies* and *lives again*". He is buried and *ris*es again—not as a healed creature merely, but as a *new* creature.

And what is the fruit of this new condition, in which

he finds himself? Here we have the parable still, and get the great principle of God's way still illustrated. He stands before Elisha with all his company. He is not now the proud, but the humble Naaman. Sweet proof this of the new man which Naaman had become. He is humble because he is washed. He makes a goodly confession to the name of the one, only God. He takes Him for his God. He had learned Him through the health and salvation which He had given him; and this is the way the new creature ever learns Him, the only way in which He can be learned or known in this world.

He pressed the gifts, whatever he had, on the prophet—not now as the King, his master, thought to *purchase* the healing, but *because* of the healing. He had been forgiven, and therefore he loved.

He will henceforth know no other God, and in order to do that, he seeks materials to raise Him an altar. God must be his God, even in the midst of infidel Syria, to which he is returning. Him and Him only will he worship.

And lastly, he gets a renewed conscience—quick and sensitive of the least, even apparent departure from the God who had so blessed him. He dreads the appearance of evil. He would not have it thought that any attendance of his on his master was a return to the principles he had formerly acted on, or an association in the worship of an idol, in the house of Rimmon. He had left them, and left them for ever, and would have it known that he had done so—entering protest at the outset against anything that might look otherwise.

J. G. B.

“Is it not a great relief that grace does not DEMAND anything from pauperised sinners? It gives. ‘The rich are sent empty away’—only they.”

“DON'T you think where there is much care and business we get shut up in that engrossing circle of interests, and our God is known to us more as *the servant of our necessities* than in Himself?”

“Do you ever wonder at the patient grace of the indwelling Spirit—how His holy character must be grieved—His longings to reveal Jesus to us kept back? and yet true to His promise, He abides with us FOR EVER, and again and again restores our souls, and gives us fresh views of Jesus.”

C. S. B.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS BY MR. HENRY DYER,

AT GLASGOW, 25TH OCT., 1877.

ISAIAH xl. 1-8.

THE first eight verses of this chapter form a preface to the other part of the chapter, and also to the entire remainder of the book of Isaiah.

Up to chap. xxxv. is occupied with burden after burden upon Israel and many Gentile nations.

Chapters xxxvi. to xxxix. show us what the flesh is. First in Sennacherib what the flesh is untamed, and then in Hezekiah what the flesh is in you and me.

Then flows the unchecked stream of triumphant grace from chap. xl. to the end.

When all has failed then God from the throne of His grace can pour out unrestrained His mighty love.

So different are the latter chapters of Isaiah from the former part that speculative theologians have said it could not have been written by Isaiah at all. The very Hebrew is different. But those who speak thus know not the contrasts that are found in the heart of a saint.

In these first eight verses there are three mighty cries.

1. The cry of triumphant grace.
2. The coming glory.
3. What we have to learn in the meantime, viz., the worthlessness of the flesh and the value of the Word of God.

If only in your heart and mine that threefold cry be heard it will be what you and I most require.

But you cannot enter into the third cry till the first two are known. If you realise the first two you will gladly accept the third. You must first enjoy the mighty song of triumphant grace, and the glory soon to be revealed be shining in at your eyes, before you will be prepared to say with Paul, “Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God.”

Now let us look at the first cry. “Comfort ye comfort ye, my people, saith your God, speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem [the margin is right, ‘speak to her heart’], and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sin.”

A perfect fullness of judgment she has received.

Dear fellow-saints, what a precious voice of mighty, mighty comfort! It is not that her iniquity has been slid over. Far from it; all has been perfectly judged by Jehovah's hand. That hand which laid

upon His Son the iniquities of us all. She hath received of Jehovah's hand double for all her sins. She received it in the person of her own Messiah. But "He died not for that nation only." We have heard that voice, to which meantime the nation of Israel is deaf.

We receive double comfort because of double judgment. Speak to her heart, because into the heart of the Shepherd entered the piercing sword. The smitten rock sent forth the stream that availed for Israel all the wilderness journey through.

Double for ALL her sin. Precious word all.

Here we rest in wonder viewing
All our sins on Jesus laid,
And a full redemption flowing
From the sacrifice He made.

"The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

His heart was broken that nothing but joy might flow through all our gladdened hearts.

Thanks be to God for grace, triumphant grace, and thank God for putting this cry first.

The 3rd, 4th, and 5th verses contain the cry of coming glory. Mark the place whence it comes—"The Wilderness." We had nothing to do in the first cry; nothing to do with the fountain, it was all Jehovah's work, but here now is something for the happy saints to do. "Prepare ye the way of Jehovah." Grace is yet to be crowned with glory; meantime our place is in the wilderness. We are redeemed out of the filth of man's religion, out of the filth of man's money-getting world, out of the filth of man's wisdom, that we should go outside the city bearing the reproach of Christ.

Who heard the voice in the day of John the Baptist? None in Jerusalem; none who tarried in the city of man's religion, and still I find not the hope of coming glory shining in any hearts but those who are separate from man's religion and in spirit where John the Baptist was—in the wilderness.

Ask beloved John, the writer of the glorious visions of the Book of Revelation, where he caught the glory of that blessed hope which gleamed in his eyes, and he will answer, "in the lonely Patmos; they sent me to Patmos, they hunted me out of my bishopric—the best thing that ever happened to me, for there in Patmos I saw the glory." Thus we get ready in spirit for the coming glory. Not ready by title—our title is

complete, and that is the blood—but ready in the spirit of our minds.

John the Baptist was a priest, both his father and mother were of the house of Aaron. His place was to go in and out of the holy place, to offer the morning and evening sacrifice, and to burn incense upon the altar. But he left it all behind; he saw it to be a mass of iniquity—he left it for the wilderness, where in separation from it all he beheld the heavenly Lamb and waited for the coming glory.

Now we come to the third cry. And the prophet seems surprised at the voice which says, "Cry!" as much as to say—"What! is there anything else to cry? What more can I cry?" Yes, cry "All flesh is grass!" &c.

We had double comfort, because of double judgment, and now we have double withering of the flesh. This is the intermediate lesson we have to learn until that glory comes. All things below are but as withering grass. A bitter lesson to nature but a welcome lesson to faith. The world has to learn it in a way. Yonder in that Blantyre catastrophe, where many a stalwart form lies buried and mangled in death, or abroad amid the horrors of war, the world is learning the vanity of all the power and glory of man; but here the saints are called to learn it in another way. Not because death comes like a scythe and sweeps it off the field, but by the Word of God and the inward teaching of the Spirit. "The body is dead because of sin; the spirit is life because of righteousness." How good thus to have the sentence of death in ourselves every hour we live. Thanks to our God for this third heavenly cry. That we lean not on anything in ourselves but on the Lord alone, and on His word which endureth for ever. The cry of the cross is past; the cry of the glory tells us we shall soon be there. Meantime, young fellow-saints, may you know the withering of your fleshly power by the blessed Holy Ghost blowing upon it.

If it be asked, What is the proof that we digest our spiritual food? That our knowledge of God's truth turns to growth in grace? The answer is—Does it lead us into communion with God, and submission to His will? Among the marks of true communion with God, two of the plainest are a spirit of thanksgiving and a spirit of confession.

ENTANGLEMENTS.

2 Timothy xi. 4.

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. Our time here is short. Hour by hour, life's brief opportunities are hastening by; hour by hour, our untiring enemy is laying his subtle snares for one great end—to take the eye of the believer off Christ. It may be lawful labour, it may be so-called “innocent” amusement—Satan cares not about the means, if only the end be gained. It is this one thing—the eye of the believer filled with Christ—that is so precious to His heart. As we read in the song, “Thou hast ravished my heart with one of thine eyes, with one chain of thy neck”. Therefore, if Satan can but loosen those precious chains with which His love hath bound us, his purpose is accomplished.

Let us notice the force of the word “entangleth himself”. The danger lies not so much in our needful calling, as in the toils we voluntarily suffer to be woven around us. The circumstances in which we are placed by God never can necessitate our entanglement. Let us beware, then, of the first small claim on our blood-bought time of anything that is not of Christ, lest we entangle ourselves, and thus get deeper and deeper into what at first seemed but a little thing. It is not a question of the expediency of the occupation, but of the integrity of spending the time which belongs to Christ in that in which He can have no fellowship.

Every moment here must bear its impress on the coming eternity. In the light of such truth as this, can we trifle away that which God has given to us to put to eternal interest on what at best can neither bear fruit to His glory, or minister blessing to the undying souls around us. When we become entangled we cease to war; we have, in a sense lain down to rest where Christ was rejected, and Satan is well pleased to let us alone. Let us remember that the more “innocent” the entanglement, the deeper the danger, and the less the hope of getting free. But how great the reward of fleeing it! It may cost us much: Satan may have woven many a toil around us ere we are aware of it. There is much that is bright to sight and sense on the one side, but on the other there is one joy—worth all the wealth of worlds to the heart that knows Christ:

“That he may please Him who hath chosen him to be a soldier”.

Do we forget that we were chosen for something more than deliverance? We are called unto the fellowship of Jesus Christ out of this present evil world. Redeemed from its joys and entanglements as truly as from its sin and its judgment, we are chosen to be good soldiers of Jesus Christ, to fight our way heavenward, resting in nothing here, because our portion and our rest is with Him.

A. E. W.

EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT.

DEAR—I have to thank you for your letter, I look upon it as of the Lord, that just after being raised up to a measure of health after long illness, that letter should be put into my hand. Will you allow me in bidding this subject of “non-eternity of punishment” farewell, to make a few observations on what you have said in your, to me, very melancholy letter.

I am of course aware that the expression “for ever” is used in the Old Testament in different senses, as it is with ourselves in English. A lease of a house “for ever” does not convey to us the same idea of duration as the being “for ever with the Lord”. The connection in which such a phrase is used will of course determine its meaning; that may not, however, always be the case, apparently, in the Scriptures, because there may be different meanings in the same passage.

What I have said will apply more or less to the word “everlasting” in the Old Testament; but, any one who will read carefully Is. lxxv. 17, 18, and lxxvi. 22, will see from the manner in which Jerusalem is connected with the new heavens and earth that it is possible, that as the bodies of the saints will arise glorified, so the earth will as it were arise from its conflagration glorified, in a sense. I do not assert this, but it is possible, and should it be so the everlastings of blessing to Israel will never end. The great truths of the resurrection and of the eternal state are not generally very clearly brought out in the Old Testament. They are there as in Job xix. 25-27; Ps. xvi. 9, 10; but not clearly there generally, and that agrees with the wisdom of God, Who reserved the full unfolding of those truths until He should come Who is the light.

It is to the New Testament we have to look for full and clear light about eternity, and full indeed is the information it gives. In its light the meaning you have given to *αἰώνιος* is altogether wrong, it never means age-lasting in the New Testament. If you had carefully looked at all the places in which it occurs you could not possibly have made such a statement. Out of the somewhere about seventy places where it is found there are not more than say three where it is possible to put any other meaning on it than eternal, in the sense unlimited duration, and even these few are intended, I think, to convey that meaning.

And that fact I judge to be of the special direction of God. It was He Who caused the Word to be so carefully used, that, if possible, you and others might not dare to trifle with it.

I never find in Scripture any such statement as that spirits are annihilated. "The angels which kept not their first estate but left their own habitation He hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day" (Jude vi.); and it does not say that they will then be annihilated. Some think as you know that these fallen angels are Satan and his angels. I do not say so, but certainly Satan and his angels are spirits, and everlasting fire is prepared for them, and why everlasting fire if they are to be annihilated. (See Mat. xxv. 14; Rev. xx. 10.)

Human beings have spirits as well as bodies. In Luke xvi. it is said that the rich man died and was buried. His body was put into the grave, yet his spirit was living and suffering torment. Only a parable say some. The Scripture does not call it a parable, but even if it were, it teaches truth, not falsehood, and one great object of it is to show the difference between the righteous and the wicked after death.

"Sodom and Gomorrah and the cities about them in like manner giving themselves over unto fornication and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 7.) Those cities have long since ceased to be, the persons who inhabited them died, their spirits are suffering the vengeance of eternal fire, and they as well as the spirit of the rich man (Luke xvi.) will be re-united to their bodies in the resurrection of damnation, according to John v. 28, 29, when the Son of God will pronounce their eternal doom as we read in

Mat. xx. 41-46, and no person reading that passage with an unprejudiced mind would ever think that eternal punishment meant punishment for a limited time only, and that the opposite blessing of life eternal meant life for ever—the same word *αἰώνιος* being used in both cases. Neither does *κόλασις*—punishment, mean in the New Testament a negative thing, such as the absence of life or enjoyment, it means torment, as in 1 John iv. 18. The unsaved go into eternal torment.

The same awful thing is taught in Mark ix. 43-48.* The Saviour's warning is, beware of going into the fire that never shall be quenched, not your body only, or your spirit only, but yourself altogether, for their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. These terrible words, their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, are used to strike with awe as meaning unending suffering, but if the wicked are annihilated, of what consequence is it to them that the fire is eternal, and what an empty warning the passage contains. If you look at Rev. xix. 20 and xx. 10, you will see that the beast and the false prophet are cast into the lake of fire, where the devil is cast also, and that they will be there tormented day and night for ever and ever.

You do not appear to be aware that in these last days a number of persons have arisen who are constantly falling out with the present translation of the Scriptures, making themselves objects of pity to those who understand and value its general excellence. The same sort of persons, or a class akin to them, are propounding this theory of non-eternity of punishment. I regret to see that your letter is, I fear, a mere copy of their teachings. The Bible is a book for believing lowly babes (Ps. cxxxi., Isa. xxviii. 9), not for cold critics. Depend on it you never got your present opinions at the foot of the cross.

When persons leave the simple teachings of the Scriptures they are without any fixed standard of belief. Thus Unitarians are much divided concerning the degree of honour to be paid to the Lord Jesus

* There is probably in this passage an allusion to Isaiah lxvi. 23, 24. In the time of Jerusalem's future blessing from one new moon to another, and from one Sabbath to another, those who come to worship the Lord shall go forth and look upon the carcasses of the men that have transgressed against Him, for their worm shall not die, neither shall their fire be quenched.

Christ, and of those who reject the plain statements of the Scripture concerning the eternal punishment of the unsaved, some adopt the idea of universal salvation, one of its teachers plainly stating that he hoped to shake hands with the devil in heaven. No doubt there are many other shades of opinion, and some are Annihilationists. From your letter it appears you have become one of these.

I do not doubt but that there will be different degrees of punishment in eternal misery, but every degree of it will be eternal.

I deplore deeply your being caught in a trap of Satan. O come down off your lofty pedestal and sit where Mary sat—at the feet of Jesus. If you will learn of Him who was meek and lowly in heart you will cease to cavil at His own simple words.

You desire, you say, to be humble, so do I, the Lord knows; but humility is not a beautiful far-off grace which when it is attained makes its possessor better in his own estimation than he was before he got it. Faith is at the root of humility. Believing, *really believing*, such Scriptures as Matt. xv. 19, Jer. xvii. 9, Rom. vii. 18, Gal. v. 19-21, we understand what we are in ourselves—utterly bad; that stops all boasting, we are full brothers and sisters to the vilest on earth. Believing, too, in what God has done for us and is to us in His Son, we perceive that we have freely, redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, and not only so but that we are in Christ, “complete in Him” (Col. ii. 10), “new creatures”. (2 Cor. v. 17.) “Loved as He is loved” (John xvii. 23), and thus “made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.” (Col. i. 12). Thus our sin and shame and degradation are in ourselves, our glory and boasting are in Christ. That is humility. It is very near us, just at our hand, but do we perceive it?

And further, one great object of God in training His children here by His Word, and through all their circumstances and joys and sorrows, is that by growing in the knowledge of Him and of themselves, they may learn increasingly to give Him all the glory.

Now, good-bye. I entreat you to cease from trusting in the words of foolish men and in your own intellect. Were you sitting in lowly love at the feet of Jesus He would not have suffered you to write to me, on an awfully important subject, a shallow letter containing serious untruths.

May God bless you, may the Lord rescue you. Think not of me as one who writes in a hard spirit, the tears are starting into my eyes. Faithful are the wounds of a friend. Commending you to the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, I am your unworthy brother. J. P.

MUTUAL SUBJECTION.

NO feature is more beautiful in creation than the mutual dependence of one thing upon another, all

culminating in dependence on God. Sin broke the relation subsisting between the creation and the Creator, and hence the essence and root of all sin is self-will and self-assertion.

In the nation of Israel God sought to restore that relation outwardly by subjection to Himself and subjection to all the multiplied claims appointed by Him within the nation; but in the book of Judges we find two sad illustrative pictures of Israel's departure from God in idolatry, and of their departure from morality among themselves: “In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did what was right in his own eyes”. (Chap. xvii. 6, xxi. 25.)

In the Church, life and harmony depend on subjection to the Head, and on mutual subjection one to another. Subjection to God cannot set aside the subjection of a believer to his fellow-believer; nay, it demands it, and whenever a Christian takes an independent place towards godly saints with whom he is associated he breaks the unity of the Spirit, and does despite to the harmony of the whole body, for which he will have to answer at the judgment-seat of Christ; for our Lord has not only enjoined submission to Himself, but to every appointment in His house, and to every servant whom He has made a ruler therein. “Barnabas *determined* to take Mark” (Acts xv. 37), and godly men now often “determine” to do things, whereas, were they guided by a humbler spirit, they would seek the fellowship of the saints, and we should not hear of sorrowful matters that so frequently meet our ear.

Everywhere is this fellowship needed, if we would fulfil the mind of God, and maintain the lordship of Christ. The lordship of our own will is very opposite to this, and we all have to learn what it is to be subject one to another in the fear of God; but nowhere is this more called for than in the comparatively isolated position of labourers in a foreign land, where mistakes are more easily made, and the corrective element is less readily found. Labouring together, whether in work or in prayer, implies mutual subjection. When, however, we escape the self-appointed rule of man, we are in danger of the lawlessness of the flesh, and the divinely-appointed law of subjection is apt to be forgotten. The glory of all God's works is their subordination, and the highest lesson of the redeemed creation of God is subjection in the first instance to God, and in the second to every appointment of God. What confusion would there be if the moon refused to go round anything but the sun! and yet in ignorant self-will how many children of God claim independence of all rule but God's, forgetting that disobedience to His appointments is disobedience to Himself.

May this be laid on the heart of workers for God, that so at the judgment-seat of Christ they lose not their reward for having refused subjection to the fellowship of saints, to which all are called. (1 Peter v. 5.)

NOTES ON GIVING.

In Answer to Correspondence.

IN answer to questions proposed by one correspondent, who refers to the articles on Giving which appeared in our August and September Nos., we would offer the following suggestions:—

1 Cor. xvi. 2 cannot be quoted in support of collections in assemblies. Nevertheless it is evident that the principle of such collections is scriptural from 2 Cor. viii. 1, where it is the grace bestowed on churches not on individuals, so in ix. 5. There is the "making up" of the bounty of the Church, which evidently means the gathering of it into one collection.

Nor is it without significance that the casting into the treasury of the gifts of rich and poor together was witnessed with approval by the Lord.

As to a separate collection for expenses and for the poor, this has no sanction in Scripture. The Lord and his disciples had but one bag, and when he who bore it was instructed "that thou doest so quickly," "some of them thought because Judas had the bag [not the two bags for expenses and for the poor] that Jesus had said unto him, Buy these things that we have need of against the feast; or that he should give something to the poor." (John xiii. 29.) Righteousness requires that expenses be first paid. "Owe no man anything."

The handing of collection boxes round a meeting we cannot but regard as borrowed from systems whose chief object was the extortion of as much money as possible from the congregation. Often to our certain knowledge has money been given by this method solely because the giver was ashamed to be seen allowing the box to pass without a contribution. How is it possible that this method of "shaming those that are poor" (see 1 Cor. xi. 22, margin) can be for the glory of God? It has been urged that this way of collecting secures the largest results. Most likely this is true, and wherefore? Simply because the element of human censure or praise is introduced as part of the motive that constrains. Rather let collections be ever so reduced than have them polluted through such a wretched expedient.

But one says, how then is the liberality of saints to be stimulated and elicited? Just as any other grace is to be developed, by plain and reiterated exhortation on the subject from the Word of God, that thus the fruit may be the result of due exercise of conscience before God and not of a mere carnal motive.

J. R. C.

42 James Street, Hamilton,
Ontario, Canada, October 23, 1877.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—I have been requested by a few Christians to communicate with you in reference to a Believers' Conference, which it is purposed to hold in this city on December 30 and 31, 1877, and January 1 and 2, 1878. Trusting you will kindly advertise same through the *Northern Witness*, so that the many teachers in England, Scotland, and Ireland might at least have the opportunity of hearing the Macedonian cry.

The first Canadian Conference of those gathering in the name of Jesus only was held same date one year ago, and was attended by a few hundred hearty young believers, and was certainly most successful. We have every reason to believe the coming one—if God permit—will be even more so, and would be so glad were the Lord to direct some of His own dear servants here to minister in the Word to those who have not the same privileges as British Christians.

J. M. CARNIE.

P.S.—This is a great field for gospel work, and the God-sent labourers are truly very few. Hirelings there are in abundance already, and of course they are steadily increasing as the vast country is being settled. A scattered few seek to preach Jesus and the resurrection.

J. M. C.

HOW THE LORD REGARDS HIS PEOPLE.

"Ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building."—(1 Cor. iii. 9).

"BELIEVERS," Acts v. 14, &c.	"BRETHREN," Matt. xxiii. 8, &c.	"CHILDREN," John xi. 52.
"CHRISTIANS," Acts xi. 26, &c.	"DISCIPLES," John viii. 31.	"HEIRS," Rom. viii. 17.
"KINGS and PRIESTS," Rev. i. 6.	"RANSOMED," Isa. xxxv. 10, &c.	"REDEEMED," Isa. li. 11, &c.
"RIGHTEOUS," Ps. i. 3, &c.	"ROYAL PRIESTHOOD," 1 Peter ii. 9.	"SONS," John i. 12, &c.
"SAINTS," Rom. i. 7, &c.	"WITNESSES," Isa. xliii. 10, &c.	

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