

LETTERS

ON

SUBJECTS OF INTEREST.

By J. B. S.

FOURTH SERIES.

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DOCTRINAL.

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LETTERS

ON

SUBJECTS OF INTEREST.

DOCTRINAL.

The Calling and the Servant.

I WAS glad to get your letter and, after all the perils you have passed through, to learn that you are well and hearty.

It is truly blessed when the servant cheerfully enters into the peculiar trials of his fellows, experimentally. Ezekiel did so in a very marked way, and the servant is always efficient in helping others, when he has been helped himself. I believe ministry is most effective when the minister is ahead of those to whom he ministers in suffering for Christ. In Christendom it is the opposite way, the bishop is a lord!

I am cheered that your heart has been led to seek more light "on the subject of bringing out the heavenly man on earth." The more light, or

rather sight we have, the more extended is our field of vision. The same truth which appears small and terminable to one, because he can see no further, appears to another boundless and majestic, because he sees so much, though to both it is one and the same truth. I feel I know very little of the real testimony which in one line I may define, as reproducing or expressing here the Man Christ Jesus, whom the world rejected, but whom God exalted ; expressing Him *here* in the very place where He was rejected. This could not be done but by His body. The body is the fulness of Christ. All the saints that were ever on the earth could not as units represent Christ as His body only can.

Hence if the mystery, that is, what the Son of God is to the saints now—their veritable Head, is unapprehended in power, there cannot be any idea of what it is to represent Him here.

John xvii. shews what is His heart for His own, entirely independently of what we are. In fact our blessed Lord, in that chapter, keeps His eye absolutely on His own heart, and pours out His desires, unaffected or uninfluenced by our state.

This will be answered surely on the earth by the bride coming down out of heaven from God, and is answered now as there is in any of us a coming down from heaven. It is plain we must get there first, before we can come from there.

This latter you have in Ephesians. We are raised up together and made to sit together in the heavenlies in Christ. The place is the point, and the Person the means. Now as united to Him—the glorified Man, we are, according to God's calling, to grow up unto Him in all things, who is the Head; and hence, a manner of life is to ensue, quite beyond any we had known of before. This is the real point of difficulty to accept or to understand. Our blessed Lord while on earth confined Himself generally to the humbling, which He bowed to when He became a man. If He were out of it for a moment, and said, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" He readily yielded, and was subject to His parents. He set forth divine beauty in the details of daily life, in flesh and blood; He was ever a Nazárite. He set forth God in the Man, but entered not into natural joys. He was a man of sorrows, the entirely dependent man, the one who supplies grace to us, who feed on Him through His death, for all our daily trials.

But He is now glorified; He is not now straitened; and it is as He is now, that the church is united to Him; and it is as He is now, that we are to represent Him on earth, where He has been rejected.. He has, blessed be His name, been in my circumstances; and as I feed on Him, He gives me His grace to walk in my own circumstances. This is simple enough; but as

united to Him, I am in His circumstances, and I am empowered through this union, to act for Him independently of flesh and blood, and my own circumstances; and here is the *corn of the land*. Of course, there is no higher walk here than as He walked, but it is possible now, through the power that worketh in us, to rise above all human feelings, as Stephen had done, and thus magnify Christ in my body by life or by death. And here I believe Ephesian practice comes in, and is in every way superior to the practice of the wilderness man.

The practice of the heavenly man is of the highest order; it has no lower standard than what Christ *is*.

If it be love, it is Christ's love as an offering to God. If it be a man's love to his wife, it is as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it. It is as He is now, and not merely as He was.

I think I have now opened my mind very freely to you; you encourage me. As to Philippians iii., it describes the heavenly pilgrim. The corporate always resolves into the individual, otherwise it would be a mere theory, but the individual does not ascend to the corporate; that is not the way of the truth except in learning it. I see great importance in the name Christ in Philippians. If you have not got hold of the body, you cannot be individually in the current of God's mind.

I hope I am not making my letter too long, but yours is so interesting I cannot forbear answering it in detail. I quite feel with you "that many are born mechanically as it were into the current of divine activity." I am satisfied that the many who have broken away from the true ground are, as they allege, on the same ground as ever they were. I believe that many brethren, so called, embraced the truth of 1 Corinthians xii. 12, 13, the responsibility side of the one body, and really were glad to meet one another in this beautiful bond, who all the time had not the truth of the mystery ; that is, that the Son of God is the Head ; for when a question of discipline arose, the beauty of the bond gave way to the duty of the bond ; and as they did not realise Christ's place as all powerful to carry out His own mind and pleasure in the church, they collapsed, and in terms and acts denied the responsibility of the body, or rather the body itself.

It is a remarkable fact, that independency was the cause of the first division at Plymouth, and it is the same in the late one. Many fled from connection with Bethesda because of the bad doctrine, and not because of the independency, and they, I doubt not, are subjected to the same test now.

You touch on a very sad feature of the times when you speak of those who are zealous for

right principles, &c., but are in spirit no further advanced than members of the sects. It is simply intelligence without power, for if there had been power, it would have shewn itself in the holders of it first; as a candle must be lit in order to impart light to another; you will always find that those who hear them are like unto them. Reducing Christianity to a science is most deplorable. I believe there is the divine stream running through the lake as it were, and the very vigour of it is separating it from the turbid, sluggish waters on either side.

We are not to be discouraged; God is for us, and Christ is above everything—Head. It is plain the nearer we approach to the morning star, the more suitable we shall become to Christ, like Rebekah when she approached Isaac; approximation produces suitability. As to your exercises before God, each one is formed by Him; and He is not less forming you now that He has given you more light and truth; and you must remember that all the way it is one tree, or one man. His first ways indicate His intentions about you; as I often say—our first circle indicates every circle throughout our course.

I believe there is intense and unspeakable blessing in being detained before the Lord; it is then one is divinely influenced; all our usefulness depends on our feeding on Christ. I do trust the Lord is awakening souls to the magnitude of His.

calling. The Lord bless you much in your work for Him. We shall be so glad to see you amongst us again if it be His will.

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Ministry.

No one was ever fitted to help others who had not been helped himself. The Lord does not instruct us by angels who never have the same temptations and deliverances which we have.

There are two classes of ministry. One by the servant who has been preserved from a snare by seeing it; another, by one who has escaped from it. Every minister of the word derives his power from one or the other. The first, doubtless, is the higher ministry, and where souls are awake, it is very effective; but the latter is the most generally acceptable, because as a rule, there are more instances of being caught, than of being preserved. We all like to hear how to escape, and be at liberty again.

I do trust that the Lord intends great things for — in raising up among the saints there a man who has learned in the dust the exalted nature of "the Christ"—the Head in heaven, the body on the earth; hence heavenly in all its sensations, intuitions, and affections. Romanism gave up the Head by substituting a man for Christ's vicar. In every failure with (so called) brethren

in this time this is the first. The Head is given up, while the congregational character is retained. That is popery. Sardis recovered the gospel, but *no church*. “The truth” revives in Philadelphia. “Thou hast kept my word and hast not denied my name.” “Thou hast kept my word ;” protestants could say that much ; but the great revival was “my name.” Unbounded virtues and divine consequences spring from His name. His name puts Him in His place. If there be the gospel without the church, you are sure to work the flesh into a coadjutor in service ; and when this is full blown, you can carry on christian things by human means (the great desideratum of the present day) *without* Christ ; and this is Laodicea. We are to go on with Christ, thank God. In the kingdom of heaven founded on the word, not the Holy Ghost, every bulwark of Christianity is being surrendered. There is Catholic emancipation, Jews in Parliament, &c. I have heard that an M.P. said lately in the House, “You gave up the Holy Ghost when you emancipated the Roman Catholics; you gave up Christ when you admitted the Jews into Parliament, and you gave up God when you admitted the infidel.”

Now concurrent with this retrogression, the blessed God has been pleased to revive The Truth in the assembly; so that the truth is really there, though I admit very feebly held. This I feel, that it is an immense responsibility, the simple

fact that it has been committed to us for the good of the *whole* church.

The bee carries the honey to the hive, it is common property; a wasp would eat it! The latter is isolation.

—o—

The Lord's Supper and Table.

THE first great thing to ascertain with regard to the Lord's supper is, His own mind in instituting it. It was evidently to be in remembrance of Himself in His death. He addressed Himself to the eleven so thoroughly bound in heart to Him. It was a request which each heart there most eagerly responded to. To remember Him was the paramount feeling in their hearts. He asked those who were most willing to accede to His request.

A sense of His love would be engendered in us, as the remembrance of Himself in death for us was revived to our hearts. His love led Him to give up for us all things that He was divinely and rightly entitled to as a man here; and the more this love, and the manner of it, comes before our hearts, the more are we attached to Him, and in heart dissociated from all that He surrendered for us. I would not call it a command; I feel I am asked by Him to do what my heart delights to accede to. The request is addressed to

loving hearts, and hence the deeper and the fuller my remembrance of Him, in the hour when His love came out most fully, the more I am attached to Him. I do not say that I bind myself to think of nothing but His death. It is His death which draws my heart to Himself in this very special way, which results in the responsibility which *the table* expresses. The supper leads me into His great love for me, and the table is my answer to it.

The remembrance of my Saviour in death for me, so affects me, that He is then more then ever before my heart in the depth of His love for me, a love which many waters could not quench, and I always find that when there is a real effect produced on me, I am then not so much occupied with the work which produced it (though the effect must carry with it the nature of the work), as with the One who did the work; and hence I believe the corn of the land accompanies the supper, or follows it rather, as in the land, and as it did in John xiv., which surely is the corn of the land, or Christ in glory. Confining the mind to the mere act of Christ's death, though that be the door by which we enter into this new region; would be limiting me to that which produces an effect, and would not leave room for the range and scope into which the effect would lead me. Because when I enter by fresh remembrance of His death into His love for me,

I feed on Himself in death and in glory ; and I am in full purpose of heart to be identified with His death here, which is the table side. It is the very sense of enjoying Him in glory, to which I reach afresh, in remembrance of His death, that prepares me, in heart and taste too, to have the fellowship of His death here. I walk along the Jordan, but on the heavenly side of it. Thus death and glory are mine ; glory where He *is*, and death where He *was*. As I recall His death, I am renewed in His love to rise to Himself where He is, (the corn of the land) and I am prepared for the grave responsibility of being identified with His death in the place where He died for me.

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The Scope of God's Grace.

WHEN we read the epistles to the Romans and to the Ephesians carefully, we cannot but see the difference between where the gospel places us on earth, and where the knowledge of the mystery puts us. In Romans I am a justified man going on to glory, fulfilling (because walking in the Spirit) the righteous claims of the law—all that God had required of a man, magnified in our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence such an one presents his body a living sacrifice, and serves according to the gift given to him of God, known by the

measure of faith. As a Christian, he is hated by the world ; so that he might be killed here. "For thy sake we are killed all the day long." There is nothing of the mystery in all this, though no one could walk in the truth of the mystery if he had not all this ; I am through grace as much an Ephesian saint as I am a Roman saint ; but I must be the lesser, or I could not be the greater.

In Romans I am a delivered one on the earth, walking in the life of Christ, by the Spirit dwelling in me. In Ephesians I am a member of the body of Christ, united to Him who is the Head in heaven, and a member of His body set there where He is, by the same power that placed Him there. The power that put us there, works in us here (see Eph. iii. 20), and now I am not only a justified man going on to glory, but I am united to the exalted Man ; and in His power I am an expression of Him where He has been rejected. The body of the exalted Man is down here on the earth, to grow up unto Him in all things, "until we all come in the unity of the faith, and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

Now we are opposed, not only by the power of Amalek, who cut off the weak ones, but the whole subtlety of Satan is arrayed against us, in order to prevent our being in heavenly beauty down here. Satan cannot deprive us of our

heavenly position, but he tries to prevent our carrying it out.

This is the scope of the grace given to us in the whole, though we grow into it in part. The only way to grow is to be conscientiously true to what we *do* see. “To him that hath shall more be given.” The more separate I am from the world, and the less I am conformed to it, the less am I warped, and the better I can “prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God.” Every true heart knows his own world. My world may not be the world to you. Music is one man’s world; painting, another man’s world; politics, another’s; riches, another’s; his family, another’s; and so on. Whatever is most difficult to you to surrender is your world; and as you advance, according as you seek separation to God, you have to separate from what you are most bound by, for it is that which influences you most. It may be a very paltry thing. Isaac was warped by his son’s venison. Peter wanted to stand well with those who came from James.

The Lord give you to see the whole scope of His grace, and give you grace to lay aside every hindrance, dealing honestly and truly with the one *next to you*; as they say in the country, “cutting the gad next the throat.” Many occupy themselves with the branches instead of with the root. The root is the seat of the evil, and the

Spirit of God always leads us to it. The Lord be with you and bless you much.

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Our New History.

As to the beginning of Christianity, until Christ had brethren, and the Holy Ghost had come, it could not have begun. Then peace and life came out on the *first* day of the week. He became a man, vindicated God in flesh and blood, and when entitled to glory, turned from it to die; and having borne the judgment on us, He was to God a sweet-smelling savour. Here our new history on the earth begins. He was alone before; He has now many brethren. The trouble at — all springs, in my judgment, from separating the burnt offering from the sin offering, Christ was both. The sin offering is my side. the burnt offering God's side. God sent Him to fulfil both. I have escape through one; I have access to God in the other. Righteousness was not God's motive. The throne was established by righteousness, but it was not God's *motive*. God's *motive* was love; and even when Adam fell it was not righteousness which swayed the blessed God, but love; a determination to restore Adam, and relieve him from his degradation. Love is God's motive; and hence when sin lay in the way, and obstructed His love, He sent His

Son to establish righteousness, that His love might have a perfect ground for its activity. Righteousness was a means to an end. The sinner has to get to God in righteousness; that is the sin offering, and no further does the book of Common Prayer go. Justice asks no more. The burnt offering gave full vent to the heart of God. The veil was rent from *within*. Now if I do not begin in the nearness in which love places me, I never can understand anything fully. I never can see my relationship to Christ clearly, if I do not see that He by His work has placed me on His own level. If there be any imperfection in my apprehension of the gospel, there is sure to be a still greater misapprehension of my place in the church—the body of Christ. If I were not as He is, as an individual, that is, of His life and nature, surely I could not be suitably united to Him. I am of His life and nature before I am united to Him. It is all Christ; old things have passed away, all is of God, and Christ is everything and in all.

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Answers to Inquiries—In Christ. The Father's House, &c.

As to your first question, the rapture must include all saints, and not merely the church; and this fact would not be the less consoling to the Thessalonians.

Next: in Christ, must be determined by the context. In Christ, in John, is nature ; in Romans, it is the new headship ; and in Ephesians it is the means by which I am in heavenly places. It does not say union, but there, it is by union that I am in Him ; and it is not in Him as the representative Man, but as members of His body. All saints raised up together, but exhibiting His beauty here corporately. I am, blessed be His name, to know myself as raised up, and made to sit there, as truly and as absolutely as I know that His blood has washed away my sins. One is as much done for me by the blessed God as the other. If I do not know the power to set me there, I have not the power to maintain His beauty here ; and this is the real importance of knowing where the grace of God has placed us corporately.

Lastly, as to the Father's house ; Luke xv. is a parable, and conveys the grace of the gospel, and what the converted soul enjoys. In Jewish language the prodigal would have come from the "far country" (which would be even one yard outside the Holy Land) *into* the Holy Land. But Christianity opens the Father's house to the prodigal, and not the land at all. This was the new thing where the "great supper" was held. Now the Holy Ghost comes down from the glorified Saviour, and delights my heart with the comforts of the Father's house, and not with the

blessings of the land. This is the gospel; but in the church, as united to Christ, I am brought to "that favoured hour, when toil shall all be o'er." This is the difference between the gospel and the church. The deep assurance of the joy made known to me, far beyond Exodus xv., is the gospel; and in the church, as raised up, and in heavenly places in Christ, I am where the grapes grow.

One word more. I think "accepted in the beloved" very different from "in Christ." We are this moment accepted in the Beloved, but all the *full* consequences of that acceptance have not come to pass yet. I am this minute heir of God, and joint-heir with Christ, but I have not come into all the gain of it yet. I am sure the best way to counteract opposition is to confine oneself to passages which distinctly state our present union with Christ. For instance, if the church be His body and if He be its Head *now*, I should not attempt to prove union, any more than I should stultify myself by proving to any one that my head was really united to my body, or that my body was united to my head. The fact of the relationship proves union, because the relationship could not subsist without union; and the vain endeavour (unintentionally I could fully admit) is to set aside the mystery, which is God's first interest; and this has been successfully accomplished for many centuries, even the most

pious lending a hand to it. The truth of the mystery discards and ignores everything of the first man; upholds and confines itself absolutely to everything of Christ; and thus the body completes Him, is His fulness, and displays His beauty.

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Faith the Gift of God.

THE doctrine about faith that is in circulation around you is not a new one, it is a heresy of old standing. It springs from the desire in the human heart to be able to do something for oneself. It is a Satanic subterfuge, when the conscience must own that works cannot save the soul, and that salvation is only through faith, to attempt to make faith man's own work, and that having faith in Christ is the same as having faith in Napoleon. Faith in Napoleon affects me as to my intellect. Faith in Christ effects for me the greatest revolution ever known, translating my soul from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. Can man effect this great alteration, for it is not a reformation but a transformation? Can man acquire by himself, or does he possess this great power?

There is always God's power with faith in God's word. If you believe man's word you have only the worth of what you believe, but

when you believe God's word you believe in God, and this could not be but by the power of God. How could man reach up to God but by His power? "Who hath believed our report and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Faith and power go hand in hand. Man fell when he turned away from God in unbelief; when he pleases God it is proof that a divine light has entered his soul; he believes that He is, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.

The believer lays hold of what God in His nature requires. Therefore Abel offered the firstling of his flock, and the fat thereof. Faith in God is a true apprehension of God with relation to me at the moment, and surely this must be from God, and not from sinful man.

We have an illustration of faith in the nobleman, in John iv.; the moment he believed, the power of God wrought the cure in his son, though miles away from him; so the nobleman "knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house."

Again, all men have not faith: the assertion that they have is a false assertion, uttered in order to place a man's salvation in his own power. True, man is responsible to believe in God, but the fall is that he has turned away from God, and is at enmity against Him. God commands

every man to repent; the law was given to disclose the inveterate opposition of man's heart to God; he was proved by it to be a sinner; all must be lost if God did not compel the prodigal by one means or other to come in. Look at the two thieves on the cross. The one had faith; the Saviour was manifested to him there, and then; while in the other there was no faith, though he could reason well, and had heard enough to know that Christ was no ordinary person.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. It is by divine power that man believes the word of God. His power is in His word. Who ever believed it that did not know His power in it? It is the incorruptible seed, the word of God that liveth and abideth for ever.

The Lord preserve you from these workings of the mind, which is at enmity with God.

—o—

The Corn of the Land and the Manna.

THE corn of the land is Christ in glory; the manna, the life of Jesus on the earth up to glory. If you feed on Him in glory where God has set Him, you are empowered by Him to act for Him in superiority to everything. Here He humbled Himself. He is not humbled now; He is glorified. He is not limited to the compass of man, and to maintain for God therein; that was manna; now

He is far above all principality, &c. Head over all things to the church. This is the corn of the land. It was contended that we feed on the corn of the land in order to be here as He was here; that is, that we feed on the corn of the land to reach to manna. I do not think this is the full truth; though it is quite true that if I feed on Christ in glory I shall by Him be in His grace, or manna here. Paul began above, and hence had His grace all the way down. I believe he had more than the manna, that he had the corn of the land, and that the corn of the land is more than Christ was down here. For instance, He is Head of the church now; He was not so down here. If I know Him as Head, I feed on the corn of the land; not on what He was down here, but what He is now; but I do not lose what He was down here, by knowing Him in glory where He is now. Of course I cannot walk down here beyond what He was down here, but as I am in the power of my union with Him in glory, I am empowered by Him to be superior to all human considerations, in order to act here for Him, as Stephen did. There is not a practical thing in Ephesians which could be derived from manna simply; and yet manna was *par excellence* in the eye of God. It was the Son glorifying God in the form of the man who had dishonoured Him, vindicating God in that form. But now He is exalted, and we are united to the glorified Man. And I am

empowered by Him to do greater things now, and things which could not have been done before. We are seated in heavenly places now, which could not be while He was down here. How could we keep the unity of the Spirit while He was down here ? This can only be done through His *present* power, or the corn of the land. How could I grow up unto Him in all things, &c., while He was down here ? That is not what He *was*—the manna, but what He *is*. How could I put on the new man until I was of the new man ? and no one could be that until after He rose from the dead. Where are the gifts but from ascension ? How could I love as He did until after He had offered Himself to God ? I cannot do anything right here without the manna ; it is His sympathy and present support ; I cannot do without Him as manna ; but as I know Him above, He leads me to rise above all my own circumstances here for Him in His own power. “Be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.” The subject is a very interesting one. Compare the practice enjoined in Romans with that enjoined in Ephesians, and you will see that the practice in the latter is derived from Christ above in everything, while the practice in Romans is more what a thoroughly gracious man could render.

Christ's Work one great whole—Learnt in Parts.

MAY you know well the surpassing greatness of His power! It is a great thing to know the power that put Christ in heaven in that place. It is not only to know the *place*, but to know the *power* that put Christ there. If I know the power I know where the power puts Him, or it would not be power. He was raised from the dead, from man's lowest place, and He is set in the highest. We are to know this power now, a much greater thing to us than knowing the place, because if I knew the place only, I should not be anything when not in it, but when I know the power, I can reach Him in the place wherever I am.

Christ's work for us is one. By the efficacy of His death, He not only cleared us of all that was against us, but He secured to us the place to which He has been exalted. We have to learn this one great work in parts, but it is one whole work. The same work which saved the thief from impending judgment placed him in Paradise; he learned it without a break. You and I must learn it one day without a break; now we are at one or other of the parts of that work.

There are four great parts—two relate to God, and two to ourselves. The blood on the lintel shelters us from the judgment; that was Christ's

death ; but the same death that sheltered me from judgment was the Jordan, and opened heaven to me. True, I did not know it when I first found shelter under the blood, yet it was the same work. He supplements nothing, nor is anything supplemented to His work save the Spirit to glorify Him.

Now a very interesting thing occurs. According to the part that I know, I am in practical life. If I am only sheltered, the one great characteristic of my spiritual state will be to get clear of the scene of judgment, though that is typically Egypt; yet I think it is the judgment that the sheltered one is seeking to escape from, and not from the world simply as such. When the Red Sea is known—Christ's death and resurrection, there is a great advance. There is peace ; the foe is silenced. The Lord hath triumphed gloriously. The morning of the resurrection is enjoyed. There is justification, and it is the joy of the new position which then characterises the one who has entered into it. The song therefore leads on into God's habitation. The work *Godward* is done to secure this.

But now come two other parts of the death of Christ ; one, the brazen serpent, in which I learn that I am dead to sin, and in liberty in Christ's life ; and the other, Jordan. Having died with Him, I am dead to the world, and seated in heavenly places in Him. I am across the Jordan.

In Numbers xxi., when the wilderness is over, I am entering on a new start; I learn that I am free from the law of sin and death in the life of Christ; and I have the water, given of God (verse 16) to sustain me in it. This is a great part of the work or death of Christ; for we believe that "if we be dead with him, we shall also live with him." This is liberty, and the characteristic of the one here, is the greatness of life; while, when across the Jordan, it is more using God's power in testimony, maintaining that you are a heavenly man. Christ's work assured and effected the last at the same moment that He did the first. I think the third is a very interesting stage. Christ's life in all its great and beautiful details engrosses us; it is ours; and I suppose it is here that the sympathy of His heart is known; and here your heart is daily more attracted to Him. We do not lose the knowledge and sense of the previous parts by advancing to the others; nay, we are confirmed and deepened in them.

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The Completeness of the Work of Christ.

As to — he is quite mistaken; he confines the work of Christ too exclusively to the sin offering. Christ embraced every offering. In *one* offering He surpassed each and all.

The simple thing to lay hold of is Christ's work. This work determines my standing. Where His work puts me—a believer, there I am. This is a great point. The thief on the cross got the benefit of Christ's work without any break. From the deepest departure to the highest elevation, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise." That was the effect of the work, and that accordingly was his standing. The work of Christ embraces the beginning and the end; of course it does; or it would not be finished. There must be an end as well as a beginning. *Out* of Egypt, and *in* the land, *out* of the far country, and *in* the Father's house; as you get in figure in Exodus xxiv.; the blood shed, and heaven in sight. Hence our blessed Lord begins with the *finish* of His work to the woman of Samaria, and He calls His work there, *God's* work. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of, my meat is to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work."

There are four aspects of the death of Christ from Egypt to Canaan.

The blood on the lintel.

The Red Sea (these are Godward).

The brazen serpent, and

The Jordan, (which are our side personally).

Christ did all in one death, in one stroke as I might say. Thus all the offerings were at one and the same time. I do not learn them without

a break, but they were done without a break; and the good of this work is assured to me without a break.

The blood of the bullock on 'the day of atonement gave God liberty to have the high priest and *his house inside* the veil; and the blood of the goat, sprinkled on the mercy seat, gave God liberty to send forth from within Melchisedec, to bless Israel *outside*. The same blood gives the blessed God liberty to do two very different things—to put two companies of believers in totally different standings. The blood is the same, but the blessed God blesses each company as His grace leads Him; one inside, within the veil; and the other outside, or in earthly places. It was the one blood in Christ, but there were two bloods in the type, to mark the difference of effect.

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The House and the Body.

YOUR difficulty is, I apprehend, no uncommon one, namely, to distinguish between the house and the body. To begin then, 'the house can have in it bad building, the body cannot. Christ's building in the house is good building, and every living stone in the house, or assembly—the house aspect, is a member of His body. Every baptized person is in the house; only the Spirit-baptized person is in the body.

The house is in ruin. The faithful are called to follow righteousness, &c., with them who call on the Lord out of a pure heart. When it is so, a corner of the house is kept clean for the Lord. "Holiness becometh thy house, O Lord, for ever." The body is on the earth, but not maintaining the unity of the Spirit.

The house aspect of the assembly is spoken of in the first nine chapters of 1 Corinthians, and in the Hebrews. The faithful in the house, led of God, are gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ; and they, breaking bread together, are on the ground of the one body (because the one loaf) of which Christ is Head. At the same time they refuse to admit any one to the table in any way disqualified for the Lord's presence. When discipline in the house is in question, the Lord is owned; when it is edification for mutual blessing, it is Christ the Head who is before us. Each one in his individual capacity answers to the Lord in God's house.

The true course of action at this time is, that every saint should look out for those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart; and all such, gathered to His name, He in the midst of them, act according to His pleasure in the assembly, and are nourished and cherished by Him through the instrumentality of gifts, &c. Every professor, even though genuine, if disqualified by his conduct, is refused at the Lord's table. Every

believer has a *right* to a place there, and I deny the one body if I refuse him his place, unless disqualified by his conduct; and any one at the table acting unfitly for the Lord, we are bound to put away from amongst us, though we cannot now put any one outside the house, seeing that it has become even more extensive than the kingdom of heaven. Perhaps when you weigh carefully the above, your difficulty may in some measure be solved. If I can help you, kindly write again.

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Communion of Christ's Death.

WHEN the Lord was on earth, there was nothing ever enjoined on man, by God, that He did not scrupulously fulfil. He respected fully every ordinance of His, with regard to the first creation, as He was called in it. But He *died out of it*. He gave His body to be broken, and His blood to be shed, and though He will hereafter resume connection with this old creation, yet never again, as being in the flesh or of that order. We now, as His body on earth, enter into communion with Him as He left the earth. We, as it were, find ourselves in spirit apart from everything here with Him, in communion, calling Him to remembrance, at the moment in which He died for us. In this communion, we are outside ourselves, as men; and we present our union, as His body, in

the one loaf, on earth, where He died for us. It becomes the highest and dearest place to our hearts, to be here as He left it; to be the continuation in memory of Himself, and by communion of His blood, we discern His body, because His death occurred here. Thus we remember Him, and find it the moment when our souls pass away from all here, in company and association with Him, not in His life in glory, but we recall Him on earth, as He *left it*, and died out of it for us. This is our grand expression here. But on earth, in our course here, we go on respecting every ordinance of God, and from God. We, through grace, make the old creation to answer to every divine ordinance, which it never had done before, because of the weakness of the flesh. The believer's body is now the temple of the Holy Ghost, and every relationship or position enjoined by God, on the first man, is maintained according to God through the grace of God in us, which necessarily respects what is required of God, in every vessel in which it is deposited.

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Faith-Healing.

THE first error in the so-called faith-healing people, is that they put sin and sicknesses on the same footing. They say that the work of Christ clears us of our sins. He bare our sins in his

own body on the tree—that He also bare our sicknesses—that is, that He bore each alike. Now if this is true our sins could come back on us again; for it is evident our sicknesses come back to us again. Here is their first unsoundness. They put no difference between sins and sicknesses.

Next, they entirely overlook the discipline of the Lord with regard to the body. The body is the Lord's. He has washed away all our sins, but the body is His—His vessel, or channel for His service here; and He disciplines it, when it is acting in self will. “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” And when we are faithful, He allows us to suffer in the body, if not by persecution, by other suffering, for our profit. “We who live are alway delivered unto death.” Surely that is bodily pain.

Thirdly. These people misapply scripture as to prayer, in order to produce results which will signalise themselves. They are seeking for evidences of God's favour and countenance.

The scripture is plain that, “If two of you shall agree on earth concerning any matter, whatever it may be that they shall ask, it shall come to them from my Father who is in the heavens. For where two or three are gathered together unto my name, there am I in the midst of them.” The praying here clearly refers to something which the Lord approves of; and scripture also

implies that those who pray are gathered to His name, and that He is there. I quite approve of prayer meetings of this kind, and have been at two or three of such, with marked blessing; but there it is not unconditional, as the faith-healing people assert; but conditional in a very special way. There is first an agreement between two. It is not prayer for every case of sickness, as if it were a board of physicians, but a case as to which some two had previously agreed; and next, of the deepest importance, that they were gathered together unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Faith-healing in its system professes to effect cures in every case of sickness where there is faith in the invalid, and this must be so when it is assumed that a case of illness is evidence that there is not faith there. Thus Timothy with a weakly body must have been, according to them, lacking in faith. It is clear in James v. 14, that the praying is not promiscuous, but limited to the "elders," and the answer depends on their faith. In the matter of sin, any one can pray for his brother, unless it be a sin unto death. "I do not say that he shall pray for it." (1 John v. 16.) The faith-healing system is like a board of health. Every one can apply; there is no exercise about each case before the Lord. The Lord is not the one who counsels the prayer. Paul thanks God that he remembers Timothy in his prayers.

Ministry, Negative and Positive.

I HAVE laid my hand on your last letter and have read it over again. I fully go with it. I agree that a negative ministry will not do; and truly the negative is not effective, but in proportion as the positive has been presented and accepted. The reason for pressing the negative so much in this day, arises from the fact, that the positive is supposed to be known. It has been accepted in terms. If really accepted, how can such and such a thing be retained? here comes in the negative, as enjoining consistency with the positive, received and acknowledged. I heartily wish there was more of the ministry of Christ you speak of; that cannot be unless one be fresh and full of the subject oneself. It generally marks a declining state to be more occupied with it, as with one's health when impaired, than with the course and vigour of life.

The ministry now, I feel, should be of a prophetic character, the secrets of the heart made known. Prophets came in to recall the people to their privileges which they had despised, and to interest them in the future. But no one is ready for a future who is defective in the present. The true effect of a future is to prepare for it in the present, or the future has no moral claim upon me. I am often afraid in presenting positive truth that one must have omitted some part of it,

or there would have been a greater effect produced on every one hearing it and accepting it.

Mr. D—— was commending John Newton the other day, because he was never pleased with a sermon unless it had made the congregation angry. I feel the edge must be sometimes blunted, for souls do not seem to be much altered, though they admit they have seen and accepted some of the greatest truths in terms. I believe the mere exposition of scripture, what you call intelligence, —the result of the exposition, has tended to damage souls. The soul never imbibes the truth in living power but as it requires it. The tadpole does not get legs until he is ready for them, then he gets them, and he comes out of the water in a new power, and with very pronounced new tastes; and except at seasons, or being forced, seldom returns to his old element.

I have come to one conclusion, and it is a humbling one, that my teaching can never produce an effect on another beyond the effect it has produced on myself.

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Valour for the Truth.

I AM glad that you have looked to me in your difficulty. The Lord grant that I may in some degree help you. My comfort is—"Them that honour me I will honour." If you stand simply

for the Lord and His truth, you will be more than conqueror. It is consideration for a person or persons which has muddled the spiritual eyesight in every instance. The man who does not know his mother's son in his valour for the truth, not only saves himself but those who hear him. Psalm xviii. up to verse 19 is pure grace. From verse 20-29 all depends on our righteousness. Verse 29-36, God is on your side ; verse 37, all your enemies are consumed. The Lord first, and then His own.

In my experience, in each division which has occurred, there was no difficulty to one who had the Lord, according to His right, simply before him. The independency at Plymouth many did not testify against, until the evil doctrine came to light. I question if any who separated simply on the ground of the doctrine, have ever been quite established. There were numerous companies in Ireland before the division ; as many as thirteen in the county T. There is hardly one there now. They could not break the social tie between them. They were for a brotherhood. The social tie is very strong there ; they felt that Christianity strengthened it ; and so it does, when Christ is the centre and source of it. But if He be not, what then ?

There is no stumbling nor hesitation when there is in the soul a paramount sense of what is due to Christ. When persons are considered

for, there is plenty of fickleness and feebleness. If you are decidedly set for the truth, and nothing but the truth, refusing to regard the person of any, you will succeed beyond your utmost expectation, for it is the Lord that fighteth for you: but if you draw back.
“ We are not of them that draw back.”

The sum of all I can say to you is, that if you can bear, after all you have learned, to hear the work of your Saviour, and the motives of God reduced down to the measure presented in —, you are neither happy in your soul nor loyal in your heart.

The Lord bless and save you in this evil day.

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The Body of Christ.

THE present display in Christendom now, as a body, or representing it, so that man's eye could see it, is your idea of the meaning of “ manifested unity.” I do not believe that man's eye could see the body at any time. In Jerusalem, before the mystery was revealed there was a manifested unity. Your own statement, “ I know the body is on the earth,” is the divine citadel from which your faith must work and combat the hosts of difficulties arrayed against the Christ; and we cannot be too lowly or too meek in maintaining the unity of the Spirit, which never would have

been disturbed, but for man's temper; this member and that member refusing to be controlled by the declared mind of the Head. Any one really in the Spirit, owns, according to his light, his corporate responsibility, and though he would not claim, as you, "to be a representation of the body," yet essentially he could not meet on any other ground. If there were only five members of the body, in any true sense or faith of their corporate responsibility, they would meet on that ground, and they would have the Head sustaining them, however lacking they were corporately. Their faith would help others, and thus recovery would progress—that which every joint supplieth.

The Head is what makes the church what it is, and this is the thing insisted on in Colossians. In Colossians i. we have Christ as Head, and there His pre-eminence is insisted on, as Head of the body, the church. The nail of my finger is necessary to, and sensibly connected with my head, though not equal to it; and you do not touch it without affecting my head. It is said the damage done to it would be felt by the head before it was by the finger itself.

Paul does not speak of the Head in 1 Corinthians; the eye is there used as an illustration. "Head of every man," is very different from "Head of the body." There is no mystery in the first; the mystery is that Christ

is the one Head of a multitude of believers ; the members of His body, however small, livingly connected with Him, as are members of our own body. Christ is everything. If you look again at Colossians ii. 17, you will, I think, see that "the body is of Christ" does not refer to the church, that it means the substance is Christ. I need hardly say that "the body of the flesh" does not refer to the mystery. I do not say the body is seen, and I am quite sure the joints and bands, the ministry by which the blessing comes from the Head, is internal. In Ephesians, the gifted persons were for the edifying of the body.

The more heavenly any one is, the more the body is before him for Christ's sake ; so the body, in Ephesians iv. 16, edifies itself *everywhere*, not in the meeting only, as in 1 Corinthians xii. In Corinthians we have the house, which is the manifested thing, up to chapter x. It is responsibility only, and not revelation of the mystery in Corinthians. Nothing about the body in Galatians, nor in Peter. As to 1 Corinthians vi. nothing can be plainer than that it is our natural body that is spoken of there throughout ; you surprise me by conjecturing anything else. The body is the Lord's. In verse 17 it is "he that is joined to the Lord is one spirit." The path of the assembly here is marked out by the position

and present place of the Lord. He is received up into heaven, seated at God's right hand, invested with all power over everything, Head to the church. His place determines our place, we are heavenly because He is heavenly.

You are looking at Christ as to how man treated Him, but not as to the way the Father honoured Him. It is with reference to the latter that our present path and position are determined. He has declared the Father, and He asked the Father to glorify Him. "Glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee."

I am not looking at a display of the body, but I believe in its existence on the earth ; and I am sure that any decision arrived at by the Lord, in the midst of His own, in any place, is binding on the whole of His own in every place. I believe, dear brother, that if you look from heaven instead of with man's eye, you will regard the church—the body of Christ, as His object, and His interest on the earth ; and the nearer you are to Him, the nearer will His object, as a whole, be to you.

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God's Love the Origin of the Gospel.

IT is a misconception of the spirit of the gospel to say that God had to be reconciled to man. God required that there should be a propitiation ;

but, blessed be His name, He provided it Himself. How it must have arrested the ear of John's disciples when John said, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world." God in His infinite grace removes the distance that sin has caused, and which Cain failed to do, though the sin-offering was at the door, or at hand. The sinner was bound to remove the distance, to make restitution for the offence he had committed, but he could not. God then repairs the distance from His own side. He thus shewed how He desired to be on terms. He could not forego His holiness, but yet His love is so great that He gives His Son, and He sets Him forth as a propitiation (a mercy-seat really), through faith in His blood. If I had incurred the penalty of death for breaking the most beautiful work my father had made, surely in righteousness I must suffer. But the father repairs the broken work through another, because of his desire that I should be on good terms with him. This in a feeble measure sets forth what God has done. Man, God's most beautiful work, has incurred death. God cannot forego His righteousness, and man cannot repair the damage he has done. God then in His grace sends His Son. It is now God's Lamb, not, as under the law, the sinner's Lamb.

In the prayer-book it is always the latter, the sinner pleading Christ's sacrifice to escape from

the Judge. No sense at all of the Father's love ; it is only that the sinner can escape from judgment through Christ's blood. Therefore Christ is regarded as the sinner's friend, but God only as a Judge. There is doubtless this side in the gospel, but the other side, the *greatest*, is left out, even that the sending of the Son sprung from the love of God. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son." Christ says of the sheep, "My Father who gave them me." Again, "That he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him."

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The Evangelist.

I.

AN evangelist receives his gift from an *ascended* Christ to gather out souls from the world for the assembly, His body. He therefore rejoices when a poor sinner has been extricated from the grip of Pharaoh, all that terrible power and thralldom broken, and the soul delivered from the power of Satan unto God. I do not think we are sufficiently sensible of the greatness and magnitude of conversion. What a sight to see a soul drawn out of all the power of Satan and the net of Egypt! There was not a green thing in all the land of Egypt ; there was darkness that

might be felt, and there was not a house in which there was not one dead. An evangelist, conscious of that which God had done in delivering a soul from the house of bondage, must have deep exercise of heart before God ; but when he knows the mystery of the Head and the body, when he knows the pleasure of the Head, because of knowing his own place in that wonderful mystery, with what feelings of unspeakable delight must he survey the new-born babe, when he reflects on the glorious manhood that awaits him—a member of the body of Christ, to the apprehension of which another may have the privilege to lead him. The women of Israel gloried in a man-child because he might be the Messiah, but how much more may the evangelist glory in sure certainty that his offspring in the gospel is a part of “ The Christ.”

II.

AN evangelist having received his gift from the Lord for the benefit of the church, sets to work and searches everywhere for the lost pieces (lost souls), sweeps the house diligently until he finds them according as the Lord directs him. You do not appear to seize the nature and scope of the Holy Ghost's action here for Christ. You seem, if I do not misunderstand you, to hold,

that if the saints do not co-operate with you, and invite sinners to come and hear you, you have no option but to use means of some kind to secure an audience. The evangelist, in my mind, in the first instance works alone, has an isolated service, going out to highways and hedges. This is the evangelist proper ; and if he be led by the Spirit, he finds the Eunuch or the Lydia ; he is ever at the disposal of the Spirit of God ; and the less he uses or obtains help from terrestrial things, or things of the world, the better and greater his work. A new thing has come in on the earth—a light from God. The Holy Ghost only can open eyes to receive or to see that light. If you would have that light received without mixture, or leaven of the human element, keep as clear as possible of everything of man. The Spirit uses your voice and real earnestness. Anything “got up” is an offence to Him. Satan wanted to get a share in the work at Philippi. It is often from the way the gospel is preached that so much sorrow and difficulty is entailed on souls before they are able to leave the cradle. You must work like the wise woman (Prov. xxxi.), and if you do, your works will prove you in the gate.

I have said so much for the evangelist proper ; but I believe in a day like this, the gospel should be preached in our rooms as a *continual* thing, where the children and domestics may hear the gospel, where the inquiring soul may learn the

truth. At — three or four hundred attend on Sunday evenings without any kind of placards. Very many not in fellowship, really anxious souls wanting to know the way of the Lord more perfectly. It has gone abroad that the needy soul would get help there. This I appreciate much, and this is the character our rooms ought to bear.

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Converts and Witnesses.

How little one knows or enters into the grand realities of the new *κόσμος*! This is, I believe, a momentous time. We have been, like Israel of old, oppressed by the Philistines in the land. We have, as it were, to regain possession. We have been merely nominal masters of it. It is a grievous anomaly to be nominally heavenly, while not in heavenly power. Here is our lack, a high name with a low practice, heavenly in name without the practical traits of it. It is a strange phenomenon that when there is a revival, even in the true sense, Christians are more occupied with the winning of souls than with standing for Christ themselves. I believe the former would not be deficient if the latter were paramount. Recruiting is for the army; the more constant the fighting, the greater need for recruits; but to leave the front

in order to recruit, is not progress ; it is only a cover to the conscience. No one was ever yet set for the glory of Christ and the extension of His name, who did not rejoice in the conversion of earnest souls. There never is finer recruiting than in the days of successful battles with the enemy. There is fighting, no doubt, to win a soul ; but it is as one can plant the heavenly standard in presence of the foe, that we are witnesses for Christ. It is the witness that is wanted in this day. Every witness is a trophy of the power of Christ on the field of battle. Without converts we could not have witnesses ; but there are many converts who are not witnesses.

.ECCLESIASTICAL.

“Watchman, What of the Night?”

I SHOULD like to hear your forecast, if I may so term it, of the state of Christianity. Politicians speak of their forecasts, how much better should we be able to answer the question, “Watchman, what of the night?” Surely we are permitted to stand on the watch tower. The same view may be granted to each of us, but a view is not enough, though it be an exceedingly great favour ; but the scope of our apprehension depends on our power to see, and the goodness of the light. Well, in order to provoke a response from you, though I have never attempted to reduce my judgment of the state of things spiritually to writing, I shall try to do so to you.

I begin with the present prospect with regard to the gospel. I see that there is everywhere a general publication of it, but I judge that there is not the same depth in the conversions as there had been when it was more privately preached and less public; that is, with the publicity, much to be desired, there has been less

of the Spirit of God; and this feeble work in souls is followed up by the erroneous notion, that holiness is a growth of the old stock, instead of being a practical state consequent on reckoning the old dead.; our members "servants to righteousness unto holiness." The foundation in souls who are thus converted is very shallow, and therefore one cannot expect that there will be strong men from such feeble babes. This is the gospel work on the largest scale; but I trust that many are, on the other hand, insisting on justification and deliverance.

The holiness movement I find obtains where there is the desire (unknown to themselves) to escape from church truth, the truth which only could preserve (see Col.) from religiousness in mind or body. The full gospel, through mercy, is still with brethren, however divided. There may be a lack in some as to the height and nearness to God, in which the work of Christ places the believer, but the great truth of a perfect salvation through His work, remains with them; and those who have strayed from the ground of the church, are in a way more careful to press the gospel in a practical way, as an offset for the truth of the church, which has gone from them. I believe the great duty of those who through grace have been preserved from denying to Christ His place in our midst, for that is independency, is to maintain on every side His

place; beginning in the assembly, or at least first known there, and reaching up to Him as Head of His body the church. It would be vain for one to say that he regarded Christ as Head of His body, the assembly, and at the same time deny Him His place in the midst of His gathered people. My feeling is (and I trust I take it to heart) that we have not presented constantly and clearly Christ's side of the mystery; I mean Christ as Head as we find in Colossians. My impression is that we have been clear and strong on the unity of the body, but lacking in setting forth the interminable resources because of the Head. It is from His side of the mystery that we can say, "in which are hid all the treasures of wisdom and of knowledge." I apprehend that if we were to visit the meetings of those who seceded from the true ground, it would be found, that while they seem very clear about the unity of the body, they say comparatively nothing about the Head. In the recovery of the truth, the first part of the truth shewn to dear Mr. D. was the Head.

I believe this difference at — respecting Romans and Ephesians will result in much blessing; for many will see a wider distinction between them than they had ever supposed. It is remarkable that though the Corinthians had the truth of the one body and "the Christ," it

does not appear that it was fully opened out to them; and one could hardly expect it, when they were not fit for the revelation of the "things which God hath prepared for them that love him." Could any one enjoy the Head in heaven who had not entered into the things which are above? Any one really at rest as to his salvation, must either rise to the mystery, or sink to religiousness—giving an undue place to the mind and the body—mental and sentimental.

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The True Priest.

IN a case of discipline every one is found out. The legalist—the Pharisee who seeks reputation from the assembly, has only one course for every case, and that is excision. The loose and indifferent say, in terms, "You wink at me and I will wink at you." This is even more destructive than the other, and offensive to the Lord. The spiritual, the true priest, has but one thing, the prosperity of God's assembly, before him. There must not be leaven allowed there. If the leprosy be deeper than the skin, it is a fretting leprosy, but the spiritual are slow to pronounce that it is so until it be self-evident. *One* is contrite and abject because continually overcome by the same

evil ; he evidently has conscience, but he has not judged the root ; the act distresses him, and not the flesh from which the act springs. The spiritual has comparatively easy work with such a case. Another errs continually in the same line, but with increased cleverness to baffle discovery, and when discovered, a greater adroitness in excusing it. In the latter case, the question is, Is there any conscience at all ? But I feel it is not so much for the wrong-doer we are to consider, " Not for his cause that hath done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you." The saints are defiled by an unreserved association with leprosy. " Have no company with him, that he may be ashamed," there is neither courage nor faithfulness to adopt ; and thus the " hair," the open demonstration of holy separation to the Lord is lost ; it does not exist, and many are defiled. Where consideration for myself, directly or indirectly, sways me, and not God's interest at the time, I am sure to be like Aaron, more or less influenced by the people. Moses was occupied with God's interest, and he can judge for God. The terrible consequences of unreserved association with leprosy are so little apprehended, that souls are contaminated unknown to themselves ; they are betrayed by their lack of sensibility ; they have moral colour-blindness.

If God's present interest be not the aim and object of my life, I not only lose His support, so that I am like a bird with a wounded wing, but a lower character of holiness is tolerated, like Lot at Sodom, or Jacob at Shalem. I am not according to His nature, which I can never know nor imbibe, but as I am near Him; and if I am near Him, I must be for Him.

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Holiness Essential to the Lord's Support.

I BELIEVE if we were more separate from everything unsuited to the Lord, that He would be very manifestly with us. We cannot come near Him if we are in darkness or defilement. He does not cease to care for us, for He never leaves us, but we cannot be near Him, or in communion with Him with unwashen feet. If we do what is wrong we are unrighteous; and if we associate with the one who is unrighteous, we are unholy. If we were walking in holiness the Lord would very markedly help us. I think there may often be an honest course as far as conduct is concerned without holiness; we cannot understand holiness, the separation that suits Him, but as we are with Him. Moses on the mount learned what suited Him. I do not know the holy except as I am in the Holiest. I believe it is

here we are hindered. The Lord cannot come up with us without first chasing away all that is unsuited to Himself. We often want Him to adopt our order of things. This He cannot do; but He, blessed be His name, insists on our adopting Him and His order of things; and this necessarily at the expense of all that is of the flesh and defiling.

A man might be conscientiously right in his own conduct, who yet was defiled because of his associations; therefore it is said, "Touch not the unclean thing." If I were thoroughly separate from the world that rejected Christ, how could I use it in any way for Him? Could I ask the world or its wall to bear a placard for Christ? I have to introduce a new power; or rather, the new power, the Holy Spirit, supports me, the servant of Christ, gifted by Him who is above all power, to do His work here. Is not the Spirit of God enough to do Christ's work? how then can using the world that rejected Him be tolerated?

The Lord cheer your heart, and strengthen your faith, and you will find that you have not counted on Him in vain.

True Seamanship.

STORMS, all natural philosophers tell us, clear the atmosphere; but it is only those who outlive the storm, who can appreciate that as a moral truth. It would be a poor consolation to a mariner in a sinking ship.

The great thing in a storm is to outlive it. If it has overcome you, it is useless to talk of the good of it afterwards; your history is at an end. I consider a man has not outlived a storm in the church, if he has been driven on the rocks, and stranded high and dry. It has carried him, and made a butt of him. But a man *has* outlived the storm, if he has put his head to the wind, and has hauled down every bit of canvas, and stood out boldly to sea. He knows there is a storm, he has made everything snug on board, but he refuses to be driven by it, he resists it, and really only wants to hold his own.

Now, apart from figure, my impression as to your course at this time is, that you have to go on, not indifferent to the storm, but refusing to be influenced by it. Your course and progress may be retarded and checked, as indeed it must be, but persistent purpose to maintain the course as God has taught it to you, will weather the storm. The difficulty is simply to hold your own, to be as isolated as a ship at sea, and as true to your course as if

you had the most prosperous weather. You may feel how small you are, how lonely you are. The fine fleet you set out with may seem to you almost all dismasted and wrecked, but your safety, remember, may be the safety of many. It is not any great battle deeds you are called on to do, but it is simply to keep yourself safe ; to outlive the storm ; not to be as one under it in any way. You may reply, this is no easy matter, but there is nothing for which there is not power with God. Go on firmly, not as if there had been no storm, but as if it had not altered you one bit. You are as inflexibly bound to your post as if there had been none, but you are aware all the time how others have suffered, and were driven by it. Your help to them consists in shewing them how little it has baffled you ; when there comes a lull, if you are safe yourself you can do great service to the wrecked ones. You will not preach navigation to them, but you will minister to their wants, and seek to restore their shattered frames to health and vigour, before you, even indirectly, allude to the bad and ignorant seamanship by which you were so exposed. You will, in fact, gather up the fragments, you will try to articulate the *disjecta membra*. A patient should never be allowed to touch on his malady until he is well of it. Occupy yourself with all the good that remains ; as you do, you may be thought frigid, but as the ice

of the dirtiest water is pure, your work will be pure and lasting. When God acts, even in nature, be it in ice or in evaporation, He always separates the precious from the vile. The former is the thing to be preserved, and this, in my judgment, is your path at this time.

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The Acts not a Book of Precedents.

THE book of Acts is not a book of precedents. It is a book tracing the course and leadings of the Holy Ghost from the Mount of Olives to Paul's imprisonment; how Christianity was entirely new and outside Judaism. The Jews having refused the Lord from glory, and every offer made to them, "It was necessary [said Paul] that the word of God should have been first spoken to you, but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo we turn to the Gentiles." The Acts trace this out for us, and set forth how every offer had been made to God's professed people on the earth. Hence the servants of the Lord seized every opportunity, temple or synagogues, for declaring the grace of God. But now Christianity being refused by the Jew, it comes forth in its new and heavenly order. And everything now is to be of the Holy Ghost sent down to testify

of the glorified Christ ; and as the chapels, or religious buildings are all now connected with some perversion or limitation of the truth of Christianity, the Spirit would not lead a servant of Christ to use one of them for His testimony, except under very exceptional circumstances.

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Siftings.

I FEEL there is no use in writing unless I enter into something like a history of the state of things. I am sure the test has come, but like an epidemic it has not reached every one yet, nor is it at its height. I see that the Lord called out "the brethren" to testify to the proper calling of the church, the Head in heaven, and His body, in the power, and by the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, to maintain Him, His name, where He was not, and where He had a right to be. To be Christ's representative here was the calling of the church ; the unity of the Spirit, kept in the bond of peace, was essential to effect this. Lose or neglect this unity, and you fail to comprehend the testimony, and therefore you could not keep it. To be useful to souls has been too much regarded as the end and aim of everything ; and hence separation from system became the only church testimony, and this necessarily opened the door for every one who had conscience

enough to feel the corruption in systems ; right enough in itself, if, in the new ground the true standard of the church's calling was in word and practice set forth, so that each novice, not only felt he had escaped from the corrupt thing, but he had reached the nursery where he, though a seedling, saw trees at the proper height. But the contrary has been the case. Crowds have come in, and found, as I have said, relief to their consciences ; but they have not been exhorted, by word and practice, that they had entered a *corps* which had its own calling ; and they easily and without any separation from the world, joined in with the only testimony enjoined or practised, the preaching of the gospel, and a general usefulness which commended them in the sight of men.

Here the mass are ; and now when the test comes, they betray the fact, that they are not gathered as the church of God, that they do not understand the nature of the unity they have professed to enter into. They may argue like Lot, that they never knew it, but still they must be tested.

But it is not from the ignorant, or rather those who admit their ignorance, that the trouble comes most, but from those who, while they are really ignorant in a spiritual sense, assume to know what is right ; and this they do know, many of them, in an intellectual way. There is a theoretical knowledge of the church, and this, with

evangelisation, is made the testimony. The doctrine of unity, of being one brotherhood, without the Spirit's unity, has been most pernicious.

I have no doubt that the truth of the testimony embraced in the words "Kept my word and hast not denied my name," is getting strengthened in many souls.

Most of the labouring brothers here are clear and decided as to the testimony; as to the glorious nature of the truth which the Lord has revived to us in these days, and, however feeble, are seeking to maintain Christ's name here, in, and by the church—His body in the earth.

The Philistines are in the land—on the right ground; our only course is, as in Jude, to be morally separate, or distinct from them; and thus many will be helped.

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The Minister an Example.

My feeling is that I should like to see you at—, and it is simply for the Lord's sake, because I am completely ignorant of how it would suit your profession, or you suit it. I have been allowed for some time to remember you before the Lord, and keeping His interests before my mind, my judgment is that you could be a help there. Every new place has new trials. Your business may grow there, and it is in itself a worldly

place, and one in a worldly place may soon drop into its ways without feeling it. It is coming from the Holiest that we feel the disparity and contrariety of this scene. We become moulded by our associations. I have remarked that what appears very worldly to a separated Abraham, is only the natural way for a Lot. No one can ever determine what is of the world but the one who knows what is of the Father. The only fear I have for you is the world, of which — is a very conservative type; the most commendable, and therefore the most ensnaring, and the most difficult to break away from. To be in real service there, you must insist on yourself being the model of what you preach. Be able always to say like Gideon, "Do as I do." Paul was always the model of what he taught, and I do not believe any of us effect for others in our ministry more than what the Spirit has effected in ourselves. If the ministry be of divine power, and adapted to a believer for his acceptance, surely it must begin with the minister. Charity begins at home, though it does not stop there. I need not add more than to commend you to the Lord. May you be assured before Him that He is leading you; go in faith counting on Him, and if you do, you will find that He will support you with His own grace—the manna, not for a day only, but for your whole time.

EXPERIMENTAL.

“I sleep, but my heart waketh.”

MAY your heart have a fuller apprehension of Christ's heart. It is as we learn His, that we arrive at a true understanding of a suited response to it. “I sleep, but my heart waketh,” is the state of those who have enjoyed His company, even elated by the happiness of the intercourse. One could hardly think that immediately consequent on this peculiar time of happiness, there should be any reluctance for a renewal of it. But such is the uncertainty of the natural heart in relation to divine things, and therefore to the Lord. The natural heart can bear to enjoy itself apart from the Lord, even though it has been convinced that the happiness in company with Him could not be surpassed. The heart remains true to Him, but the sleeping indicates that it is enjoying a rest apart from Him, from which it does not wish to be disturbed. That is, that one can have a cessation of active correspondence and interchange with the Lord, without surrendering the fidelity of the heart to Him. If the heart had been drawn aside one would not wonder at any measure of “sleeping,” or the in-

activity of affection. But that the heart should remain true, "awake" to the deep tie that subsists between Him and it, and at the same time openly prefer the ease of nature to the activity that His love desires, is another evidence of the changeableness of our affections, or rather of their weakness.

But He, blessed be His name, will not surrender His love: His love is ever active; He will enjoy you; though you may for a moment "sleep,"—be inactive with regard to Him, He cannot be so to you. And this is a great comfort. He knocks. I do not think a knock is the way by which He elicits my attention when I am sitting under His shadow with great delight. I consider a knock something to startle or awaken me; and in this case it discloses the state of a true heart, which yet can enjoy itself apart from Him, and really feels it irksome to resume the pleasure of His company.

It has been said that the relationship in Canticles is that of brother and sister (see chap. viii. 1.); but be that as it may, there is no claim here on the ground of relationship, the claim is on the ground of love suffering in its service. The true heart must respond, though there be an excusing itself because of all that it would entail. This is the way the heart not in the activity of love always excuses itself. First, the disinclination to enter on new and suited circumstances, illustrated

by: "I have put off my coat; how shall I put it on?"—I am resting. "I have washed my feet, how shall I defile them?"—How shall I leave this place of ease for the soiling conflict to which love in its activity is exposed in this world? It is an old saying, "He that excuses himself accuses himself." The Lord is not repelled, many waters do not quench love. His hand now finds an entrance. He put in His hand by the hole of the door. It is not His voice *knocking*, but His hand seen. Some distinct act of His arouses the dilatory heart to activity. Love triumphs. The true response comes, "I rose up to open to my beloved;" and immediately there is a sense of the blessing in doing so. "My hands dropped with myrrh and my fingers with sweet smelling myrrh." The first movements in response to His love are marked with distinct fragrance; then follows a very interesting exercise. The Lord has withdrawn Himself. Love is unquenchable, but it likes to be appreciated because it is invaluable. Then after suffering for launching into extremes to recover lost ground, the heart finds repose and consolation in dwelling in detail on the personal beauties of the Lord; and at length the heart surcharged with His loveliness, like the disciples going to Emmaus, seeks Him, and finds Him in His own place. No true rest or recovery of the heart until then. It is welcome and happy light when you find your-

self in His garden—Himself in His own place, and then you will exclaim, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine."

May this year be marked by the deep and full way in which your heart is affiliated to Him, practically ready for His company always, and finding your all in it.

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The Stone before the Wheel.

IT is most profitable and interesting to review the past, to remember all the way the Lord has led us. There are epochs in our history. The gentle and blessed way by which He has led you from one step upwards to another. The surrender He has led you to make for Him, and the consequent gain. But when we review our history we see how slowly we have surrendered all of the old man, and through Gilgal the only entrance to the place where He is, have found our all in Him. The progress is slow; but we know that it is real; not from the gain at first, but from the sense of relief, in the removal of the obstacle as a mote from the eye.

If you are true to yourself you will find that there is some link to the earth, and that by it you are held back; the last link is the one most difficult to break. The one in the ascendant

is the stone before the wheel, and when you are in the energy of the Spirit, it shews itself in the removal of this obstruction.

There is nothing more interesting than the way the stone is rolled away. Go back to your conversion, and recall the exercises before the Saviour displaced the sinner to the joy of your heart. Then what a step, what a surrender, and how great a gain when you separated from the world and found yourself in company with His own gathered to His name! Well, countless have been the surrenders since.

It is when you become "a young man," a strong intelligent capable man of God, that the conflict begins from without. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." Surely it is a fine sight to see a saint refusing everything here which suits and attracts a man. Then you are a "father;" you have found compensation, or the manifold more in Christ. I might be at the door of heaven, as at the door of a garden with the key of it in my hand, when a picture or a worry might hinder me from entering. My title is unquestionable, but I am diverted from entering, and there will be no entering until the stone be removed; though there may be increased vigour, yet health is not re-established, until the distraction, be it pleasure, or pain, be removed.

I do not think that improvement in spiritual

health is the same as progress. I do not see how any one can really progress but inside the door of Gilgal. I may be gaining health in the enjoyment of life outside, but inside I grow in heavenly tastes and ways. I dare say you have surrendered as much as any one, yet you might be detained outside, or diverted as a Barnabas was, and as even a Paul was. All I press upon you is that surrender must go on. "We who live are alway delivered unto death."

The most disappointing people possibly are those who made a great surrender at first, in the way of separation, and are so satisfied with their one great achievement, that they think no more is necessary. They are like ancient towers, monuments of greatness in another day, covered with ivy; earthly, neither fitted nor capable for the exigencies of the present hour. I do not say that you should be occupied with surrender, but sensibly in the Spirit, inside Gilgal, all of the old is left outside; consequently the more you are educated and *imbued* with the new—with Christ "everything, and in all," the more separate you must be from the old when you return to it. The Lord, I believe, is always preparing the loving heart for some advancement, and this advancement cannot be without the surrender of the carnal, which would neutralise it. Hence surrender is a prelude to advancement; "He, casting away his garment, arose and came to Jesus."

Paul was in prison, John was in exile, before either was sufficiently dissociated from earthly things to be fully occupied, one with the things in heaven, and the other with the Lord's ways on earth. I have written a long letter, and have indifferently expressed what I desire may characterise you.

To advance be your one great thought—going on to perfection; not merely happiness and usefulness, but increasing with the increase of God; and for this you must daily forget the things that are behind. May your divine stature greatly increase to the joy of the Lord.

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New Circumstances require New Grace.

EVERY new circumstance requires a new grace. If there be new demands on you, there are ever new temptations to evade or overlook the demands.

Where all are on a moral level, as you three sisters are, there is a danger of either a great declension, each yielding to the other, and thus finding excuse for oneself in the levity of the others (this is when there is no restraint), or there is a self-surrender in each, to promote a common good. Where all are equal, there is no acknowledged right to rule but as there is

spiritual power; and there is not spiritual power to influence others, but as oneself is controlled by it. The less natural right we have to control any one, the more must we walk in increasing self-restraint, if we seek to have any moral influence with them. Thus where we are most at home naturally, we require the more to be guided, and in sensible support from the Lord to help and direct us; so that the circumstances which seem to be the easiest, entail on us the most watchfulness lest we should only please ourselves. He that is least among you is the greatest. Where service is most needed, the one who most renders it is necessarily the greatest.

This new circumstance should be a great chapter in your history. Like the locusts who have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands, able to keep rank. They had not a double heart. Some can get on very well when alone, or under the influence of one who has a claim, who would find it a very different thing to be placed with his equals. If he seeks himself there, his influence is injurious, and nothing can check him then but the grace in his fellows to deny themselves where they might gratify themselves. I look upon you now as on a new form of the school of God. If you can walk in self-control where there is no rein ostensibly, how easy it will be for you when in harness and under rein.

The Lord grant that you may have a very profitable time. "If thine heart be wise my heart shall rejoice even mine, yea my reins shall rejoice when thy lips speak right things." The Lord bless you each and all abundantly.

No Progress without Displacement.

YOU write how the Lord cares for His people everywhere. I am filled with wonder and adoration, I might say, when I reflect on the minute way He watches over, and cares for each of His own; and the effect when this love is apprehended, is to divest us of something more of the old self, by substituting in its place something of Himself. I find a man might reprobate the old man to the utmost degree, and there would be no real progress: or even a man might dwell on the beauties of Christ, and there would be no real progress. But when I see Him and myself *concurrently*, there *is* progress; there is displacement; there is sanctification. The light that shews me the beauty of a room, also detects for me the dust in it that mars or disfigures the beauty. To sanctify us is now the deep interest and work of our Lord; and you will remark, that as he gets more place in our hearts, that in us which had barred Him is displaced. When

this is not on the increase, there is the adoption of a religiousness which makes oneself the centre, as Jacob at Shalem; a falling back, like one afraid to advance, to safer ground, where one had enjoyed less conflict, and more opportunity for natural tastes. I find that among us there is great earnestness at first until peace is known. Then comes the critical moment; if they do not go on to the mystery, they sink to the mental, or sentimental, or both; the mind and the body kept in a round of some activity. What is to preserve the believer from the religiousness of the man but the knowledge of the mystery? and this is what the apostle sets forth in Colossians. If the mystery were known, Christ would be every thing; my walk and service would be according to His pleasure. Under the plea of the gospel, many have practically excused themselves from learning the mystery. Surely the knowledge of it would make one more qualified for *any* service to which the Lord had called one.

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Our New Place.

SOON for us all things will be new. Indeed now to faith, the old things have passed away, and behold all things have become new. I believe that when we truly see our new place where

Christ is, we find it easy to see that we must be altogether new to suit Him in this new place.

There is an order in Ephesians ii. First the place—heavenly places; second—the new creature; third—the new man. The hope of the gospel is heaven. The new place is the greatest and the best. The earth hath He given to the sons of men. The Lord's throne is in heaven. We see in Genesis i. that the place was first formed, and then the occupants for it. Thus heaven is our new place, and so we are formed anew for it. The Lord having gone into heaven leads our hearts there. Stephen looked up stedfastly into heaven. Jesus is there. The soul looks up to see Him where He is. It is Himself who draws our hearts to the new place. "For their sakes I sanctify myself." His absence from this place draws our hearts to where He is, but that place is an entirely new one to us, and we are therefore fitted for it. This new history properly begins with being risen with Christ. "If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth." The new place is now the one that occupies our thoughts. Like a man on a voyage, going to see his dearest friend in a distant place, his thoughts are ever anticipating the new scene to which he is journeying; he anticipates the pleasure of meeting

his friend, the beauty of the surroundings ; and how much more when he knows that everything there is in perfect accordance with the mind and pleasure of his friend. Hardly anything is more attractive to us respecting heaven than that everything there is in perfect harmony with the mind of the Lord.

Now the more absolutely we are seeking the things above, the more fully will the rest of Colossians iii. be practically entered into by us. We learn that we must be practically cut off in divine power from the old man, and then we arrive at the new man, "renewed into full knowledge, according to the image of him that has created him." "Christ is everything, and in all." We are fit for the new place. "Such as the heavenly one, such also the heavenly ones." The heart now not only soars unto the new place because its object is there, but the consciousness that I am new, and conformed to His image, makes me feel more at home there than I could be here. I am fit in new creation for my Lord in the place where He is. I am often made to feel that I am not fit for Him here. But the more I seek the place where He is, the more I find that the work of grace has severed me from the old, and from all that was of myself as earthly, and has made me new —heavenly ; Christ everything and in all. I delight in the new place, for there the object of my

heart is; and there I am suited to Him. I am fit to be in His company. When I look at this place, He is not here; and when I look at myself naturally I am not fit for Him. How happy then to know that I belong to the place where He is; and that through grace I am made suited to Him in that new place; so that I set my mind there, as the place where my deepest joys shall be realised.

May you enter more into these unseen realities, your anticipations brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

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The Action of Light.

THERE is hardly any subject more interesting than recognising the way the Lord leads on a soul. Edifying is His great service. Love edifies, and this is real growth. When the work is real, it is ever with the consciousness that He is making more room for Himself in my heart. Sometimes I know what the idol or prepossession which He supplants is, and sometimes I do not; I only know that I have lost interest in things in which I had interest, though I had not felt when they were superseded. Like the Queen of Sheba, new sights—His things, have come to engage me so fully, that natural things were displaced with-

out my feeling any loss. This is the happier way. But often I am sensible that some taste or gratification which had power over me must not be resumed, because incompatible with the pleasures at His right hand. This is real progress; the dark part is discovered. There is often darkness lurking in a distant corner, when the light is not strong enough to displace *all* the darkness; and it is blessed progress when the darkness *has* been displaced; and though at times it is displaced without our feeling the displacement, yet afterwards, the very sense of being perfectly happy without the "wine"—whatever it was, makes one quick to see, that it is mere wine, which seeks to regain its power over one; and I am able not only to see it as that which is not spiritual, but as that without which I can be perfectly happy, because of what I have found in Christ. Nay, I am afraid of it lest it should divert me from what I know is the best, or weaken my enjoyment of it. It is beautiful when the light so reigns within that the dark part is driven away, and then light like a gilding, surrounds me externally. The whole appearance is affected by it; the body is luminous. The external becomes a transcript of the effectual work inside. There is no affectation about it; that is—there is no self-occupation with how I should do this, or that, but one is like a leafless tree in early spring, coming into leaf all round.

There is a beautiful conformity on every side, in dress, manner, and everything ; "it shall be all light as when the lamp lights thee with its brightness."

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Growth—Fruit-roots and Wood-roots.

THE growth in grace is a very remarkable work. It is the work of God. He that has wrought us for this very thing is God. It is a great and solemn fact, that our growth is the work of God. We are to desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby. It is not merely seeing the meaning of the word, or its exposing us to ourselves, as a man looking into a mirror, but being "not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the word, that man shall be blessed in his deed."

The growth of a Christian is like the growth of a tree ; first only a stem, then branches ; but the growth once acquired, ever remains ; and the growth acquired only prepares for a still greater growth. There is never a sense of having grown. The energy is to grow. "If a man thinks he knows anything he knows nothing yet as he ought to know." We see through a glass darkly. Where there is growth, there is always the sense of a longing to grow. Hence the larger a tree is, the greater its growth. It may not appear to the casual observer to grow so much as a young

tree, but if you were to count all the growths on a large tree, you would find that combined, they far surpass the great visible growth of young trees. I believe the soul that is most growing is never occupied with his growth, but with Christ. Paul after thirty years of growth can say, “For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that Christ may be my gain.” A Christian elated with his knowledge is like a shallow-minded man, vain of his learning. There is no end to the Christian’s growth because it is “growing up into him in all things.” As you grow, you grow more. There is endless growing.

They say fruit trees have three sets of roots. The tap root which it lives by, and which must never be touched. Then the wood roots, which should be pruned; and lastly, the fruit roots, which are to be nourished and fed. The value of the tree is the fruit it produces. It is not mere existence—the tap root; nor is it mere wood, which may be too luxuriant; but the great thing is to feed and nourish the fruit roots. It is said that if they are well manured and ministered to, the tree will withstand frost, and the blight which so often blasts the finest array of blossoms. Thus the real value of growth is not the wood that every one may see, but the fruit which ministers to others, often in a very unseen way, but pleasing to the Lord. The owner of

special fruit shares it with his friends. It comes to them as a mark of his affection and friendship ; and I have no doubt that when there are fruits of the Spirit in and from any of us, we relish them and own them as surely the Lord's gift. I do not mean mere temporal gifts, which often may be only as the wood in the tree ; but I mean the charity, which imparts a moral influence to the life, and ministers in some degree to us the frankincense of Christ. It is thus that fruit, the result of matured growth, is so esteemed by the spiritual mind. "My soul desired the first ripe grape."

Fruit is a divine virtue that has matured to an expression. Growth is of little value unless it attains to fruit. Hence fruit is the glory of growth, and not the wood, which is the measure of my advancement in knowledge. One little strawberry in the roadside hedge, ministers more to the weary traveller, the pilgrim, than all the kings of the forest put together. They may boast of greatness and size ; but the strawberry, unseen as to appearance, has far surpassed them in service.

The Lord give you to cultivate the fruit-roots more than the wood-roots, and then great blessing may redound to you. Fruits are not so much *acts* as charity.

Partakers of His Holiness.

THE Lord does not like us to take an affliction lightly. "A rebuke entereth more into a wise man than a hundred stripes into a fool." But the more you take it to heart, the more you reach "his holiness;" that so to speak is the goal. The FATHER's discipline is intended to effect the greatest gain that could possibly be acquired—even to be "partakers of his holiness." This is the only time this word is used. The mere thought of partaking of the separatedness in which He is, is a great delight and encouragement to the heart. And it has very great practical effects. Once any of us have in any degree partaken of His holiness, we become correspondently sensitive to everything contrary to, or inconsistent with it. It is the superior thing which ever enables us to refuse the inferior, and this in a wonderful way works all round.

It is not that we feel that we are doing anything, but we shrink from the moral atmosphere here, and like to be encased in the armour of light. The process is a very interesting one; your divine taste is so advanced that the incongruities in everything here, are not only apparent, but their real worthlessness is disclosed. You do not feel that you are losing (though you *are* losing the things here) because you are so assured of the highest and greatest gain.

Three great divine facts or events have occurred, and our faithfulness is proved as we are affected by them. The first, that Christ has come, has died for our sins, and has risen. The second, that He has gone to heaven. The third, that the Holy Ghost has come down to be with us and in us. Then there is a fourth which is our prospect, even that He is coming again.

Now every believer knows something of the first—no salvation otherwise; the second and the third test our faithfulness. Christ is in heaven. Do we seek the things which are above where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God? The Holy Ghost is with us and in us: does He lead and control our hearts absolutely in this scene in the absence of our Lord? All knowledge of truth is ineffectual when we are not in correspondence with these great unconditional facts, which remain true even when we are not true to them; but when we are, all the truth is in its place in our hearts.

You are a special interest to the Lord at this time. May He fulfil all His pleasure concerning you, and fit you for His service in a scene where there can be nothing right, because He has been rejected here.

Woman's Service.

EACH believer has been sent by the Lord into this world on some mission. He said at the beginning (a sure time to turn to for guidance), "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you." Before you can enter on your mission, you must be assured of Christ's work for you; you must, like the disciples in the passage I have quoted, first have, in a known way, received of His life, having practically entered into the meaning of the passage, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death." If you are not in life and peace, you cannot enter on your mission. The mission (so to speak) to *yourself* has not yet been assured, and this must be accomplished in you, before you are fit or qualified to serve another.

The history of a bird is the history of a believer. First in the nest, served by parents; then when fledged, learning to do for others what has been done for oneself. First served, and then, in the power and enjoyment of it, serving. There can be no question that it is the duty and calling of each, to serve in some way. But it may not be so easy to find out your specific and proper duty or mission; and this is often the excuse for doing nothing, or something worse than nothing. I do not believe it would be found to be so difficult if you were really fit in heart to

enter on service. I believe you would find out your mission if you simply occupied yourself with whatever came to your hand *for the Lord*. It might begin by carrying food to a sick child, or making a dress for a poor one, or reading to an old saint. There is a serving of one's time; that is—you will not be entrusted with very great works until you have proved your competency in small ones. It is impossible but that a star must shine, and it is equally so, but that if your eye were single, your whole body would be full of light. The cause of idleness, or ignorance of one's mission is, either that one is not fit for it, or not free and humble in heart enough to begin at the little works appointed for one to do. It is an universal principle, "He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much."

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The Sympathy of Christ.

I THINK the Lord is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and He sympathises with them. Will is sin. Infirmity is not sin, though it might lead to sin; as Sarah, when from fear she told a lie. (Gen. xviii. 15.) Fear is not a sin in itself; I may have a timid nature. The Lord had more sensibility than any man, but He never gave way

to it unduly. He could say, "The floods of ungodly men made me afraid." If I am weak or in pain, He feels with me as to my suffering, but the gain to me is, when I know how He feels, and how His grace would lead me apart from will, to feel in the suffering. If He did not feel with me, He could not help me. He feels with me, but He meets it divinely. I meet it, as a rule, selfishly. He could say under great trial, "I thank thee, O Father." He says to me, as it were, I feel it as much as you do, or a great deal more. He felt the storms, the indifference of the Pharisee, &c., but He was not swayed by feeling. He ever went through it divinely. What I have to seek is that God should be more before me than my own feelings; that I do not deprive God of "the tithes"—of His due in my sorrow. My very suffering, which the Lord enters into, leads me, when enjoying His sympathy, to learn His way in them, and then I have advanced in the knowledge of Himself in the trial. Relief from the trial makes me rejoice, but His sympathy increases and enhances my knowledge of Him.

There is one thing which one learns when in company with the Lord, that could not be learnt any other way, and that is, sensibility. I see how He feels every incongruity, but I see also how He regards it, not as it affects Himself, but as it affects God. This is the way Paul was brought to regard the thorn. You may be sure that the

more you feel your trial, the more there is grace for you to bear it. Feeling is nothing without the grace. Feeling in our Lord drew out the grace, because there was nothing but good in Him. In me, feeling tends to draw out temper; but when I know His sympathy, I am sure to have His divine way of answering to the feeling.

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Good Intentions not Power.

“My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me.” The virtue of this word is that it marks out the manner and order in which help comes. You are occupied with the Lord and not with the thing which may require His help; and as you are occupied with Him solely, He requites you markedly, by His right hand upholding you. The great thing is to be upheld in a world of antagonism; your intentions, however true and of God, are defeated in such a scene, if there be not a present help. You must have good intentions if the Spirit is working in your heart, but good intentions are not power, and will not secure you, if you do not carry them out. “The sluggard desireth and hath nothing.” But even with full determination to carry them out, they are only the railway line; the engine

is still required ; otherwise the very sincerity of your intentions will exasperate you with the obstruction. Do not give up the right purposes because you have failed, but remember that it is not the intentions, however good, you are to trust in, or to keep before you, but the Lord Himself. If you are following hard after the Lord, your heart is set on Him only, and not on the carrying out of your intentions. And as He is thus your object, He makes you sensible of His help, not so much to carry out your intentions, as to make Himself known as upholding you. When intentions are your object, the more your conscience justifies you, the more are you aggrieved when they are thwarted. The reason you are allowed to fail is, that you are making your intentions your object. The better anything is, the less will the Lord support it when it usurps His own place. He is to be the sole object, and when He is, wherever you are, and whatever you are called to, you consider for Him, and He rewards you by supporting you.

You will find that it makes a great difference, whether you come into any sphere here, with your heart set on Him, or set on *doing* something, even the best. When you come, having Him simply before you, you regard everything you come in contact with in relation to Him. It is not as things affect yourself, but as they affect Him. You have before you a perfect

Man; and you thus come in conflict with the man here who is always imperfect.

I desire for you that you may enter on everything here so prepossessed by the Lord, so impressed and attracted by His perfections, that you do not build on the worth of your intentions, but that you are quite under His control, to act for Him as occasion offers. In a sense you have no intentions; and instead of feeling aggrieved when hindered in carrying out anything, the sense before your heart, whenever you fail, is, that you had not sufficiently considered for Him, to whom your heart is absolutely engaged; and you will always find, that when He is first with you, your best intentions are promoted by Him, and He is more and more endeared to your heart. May you prove this very abundantly!

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The Outside indicates the Inside.

“THOSE that be planted in the house of the Lord, shall flourish in the courts of our God.”

Every divine demonstration has its origin within. “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness neither shadow of turning.” It is from the Lord the good is generated.

Hence there cannot be an expression of grace beyond the grace within, and the only way to ensure a fuller expression, is by getting more from the Lord for oneself. It is out of the belly shall flow rivers of living water. They flow in first, before they flow out. I can see my defects outside, but I cannot correct them outside; and if I were to attempt it, it would be mere patching up. When I see the defects on the outside, I must refer it to a lack inside, just as if I were to see a flaw on the leaf of a plant, I should at once attribute it to some damage at the root. The outside is like a barometer, it indicates the state of the heart; and the only way to be fair outside, is to have the grace of Christ ruling within.

There are two great eras in a Christian's life. The first is when the devil by force would compel him not to leave the world—this is Amalek. I say force, for Amalek fights, and the young believer, ardent in grace, likes to turn his back on the world because he has come to Christ, and the devil works on his fear, as he did on Peter in the high priest's house, so that he dare not take such a dangerous path; he shrinks back, and like Isaac to his wife, he denies his relationship to Christ, though he could not surrender his own knowledge of it. Many are turned back here. They think that they cannot bear up against all the opposition that the path of separation from the world would entail on them. Now the one

who *resists* Satan here, succeeds in turning his back on Egypt: he is a "young man" (see 1 John ii. 13) he has "overcome the wicked one."

But you have greater conflict to go through before you can reach the real battle-field, and this is Balaam. As Amalek was Satan's power to prevent you from leaving the world, the device of Balaam is, to prevent your entering the land, where the true contention—the setting forth of Christ in the scene of His rejection, can only be.

Now Balaam is very different from Amalek; and before you encounter Balaam you have learned according to John iii. and iv. that Christ is your life, and the Holy Spirit dwells in you. And you have overcome Og, king of Bashan, and Sihon, king of the Amorites—the force of Satan. This is, I suppose, the fire of persecution, which is what we get in Peter, while it is Amalek more in James. Force is to be met always by resistance; Peter should have resisted. And when the force of persecution is directed against you, you are to "rejoice." (1 Pet. iv. 13.) But, after you are more than conquerors through Him that loved you, you are confronted with Balaam—the last form of the enemy before crossing the Jordan. Satan now would minister to the susceptibility of your nature. This device begins by an invitation; not an opposition now, but a solicitation—an offer to gratify you where naturally you can be most gratified. And there

is no power against it but faith in Christ, which effects fasting ; that is, not merely refusing the invitation, but if we "through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body," we shall live. If we "walk in the Spirit" we shall not "fulfil the lust of the flesh," and to this end we must sow to the Spirit. Here is the real school. It is that in the grace of Christ you refuse the offspring of your natural taste. It is not merely that you have made up your mind not to gratify it, but that you refuse it a place. This is practically Marah. The self-gratification is refused. Christ died on account of it, and that sweetens the death to you.

As I said at the beginning, the uncrucified sentiment, never intended to be divulged, will crop up in some form sooner or later ; like a needle that one has swallowed, it will appear some day where least expected. Thus Balaam succeeds by ministering to the most vital part of one's nature. No real relief from Balaam but Jordan. You are dead with Christ. But at the same time remember, that as no good can be really outside but that which is wrought within through the grace from on high, so assuredly there can be no flaw, nor incongruity outside that had not *commenced* inside ; and if it had been nipped in the bud, as a real evil, it would never have come outside. On the contrary the subduing of it inside, not only secures from its appearing out-

side, but the beauty and fragrance of the grace which had mastered it within, is seen.

Every one suffers from vexation, and often from those nearest to us. The vexation or the irritation, or the hard feeling itself, is sure to come, but the danger is not so much from the entrance of either, as from entertaining it, feeling like Jonah, "I do well" to have my own feelings. It is the grace of Christ, in the power of the Spirit, which only can supplant the workings of the flesh; and when these workings are thus superseded, there is always an enhanced sense of the favour of the Lord, and there is flourishing in the courts of our God. You are not unused to conflict, "but let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing." And may His blessing satisfy your heart and beautify your life.

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Dependence and Watching.

MAY you remember that this is not your rest, and may you not weary in the race. We taste of the joys of the Father's house when we reach the finish of the gospel; and though we know that we are placed in the heavenlies as members of the body of Christ, we are not absolutely in heaven yet; we are running on to it. It is

really a steeple chase ; every kind of obstruction is thrown in our way. But as we walk on in faith, we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

The great thing for you entering this new year is faith. Faith is seeing Him who is invisible. When a mariner, however tossed about on the sea, can see the sun, he can tell the bearings of his ship.

Your great object should be to set the Lord always before you. Be not satisfied with praying or reading the scriptures, but that you see Him, your eye resting on Him, "Whom not having seen we love, in whom, though now we see him not, yet believing, we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." You look for Him as the mariner looks for the sun in the hour of difficulty. Every hour is an hour of difficulty with us, and if we do not keep our eye on Him in the little difficulties, we shall not be able to find Him in the great ones.

There are two things you must ever be in the sense of, and the fuller your sense is, the better you will get on. One is the sufficiency of Christ if you seek Him—"My soul followeth hard after thee, thy right hand upholdeth me." This is all you could desire ; but there is another sense you must have, and that is, the violence of the power that is against you. Satan is the god of this world, the prince of the power of the air, so that

you should feel "I am encompassed with enemies, and I am not safe unless near the Lord." He is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe. In most cases, failure occurs, not because souls are not reading and praying, but because they are not watching. They are caught, where they did not *fear* any harm. "Blessed is the man that feareth always." Be a little child, holding tight to its mother's hand when it sees a big dog. Be always assured that more than a mother's hand is ever beside you, and be always aware that a terrible dog is in wait for you. Thus may you be greatly blessed.

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Weaning.

WHERE we feel most in this life is the place where we are afflicted as a rule; where there is most vitality in us naturally, there the blow is felt most. If we were dead where we are most alive, it would be comparatively easy for the Spirit of God to carry us on. The soul would be like a weaned child—the will would be broken. Where the strength of my nature is, where my whole heart is, there all my purposes and desires are concentrated. The Lord knows well where the greatest vitality is, and He touches that, in order that there may be an

acceptance of the emptiness of everything. The things that are seen are temporal.

Many Christians think that because natural affection is in itself lawful it is not wrong to be engrossed with it. This is unsound, for when I am Christ's disciple I have hated even my own life for Him, and He surely directs and *enables* me to fulfil every ordinance of God in His own sweetness and truth. But I sit loose to everything because He is so absolutely mine, and I am His. I have died to the natural purpose and will *with* Him, but He lives in me, and now He enables me to fill all my relationships in divine power and beauty.

Poor Jacob thought to save Rachel and Joseph by a plan. (Gen. xxxiii. 2.) He succeeded for a time, but eventually they were the first he lost.

The Lord grant that you may find such a resource in Christ for your heart, that He is not only a compensation to you for any loss, but that because of the deep satisfaction of heart which you have in Him, you can in some degree say: "I have nothing to regret nor to lose."

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The rule of the Spirit.

THE great comfort in a Christian's life is, that he has to be pre-eminently occupied with the present. A natural man according to his ability

and ambition is working for a future ; he has not acquired his goal. A Christian has not reached his goal, but it is secured to him. "I go to prepare a place for you . . . and receive you to myself that where I am there ye may be also." The past of our history cannot be altered ; as to our sins they are remembered no more ; as to the peculiarities of our nature, some one way, and some another, not sinful, but personal, they have to be ruled by the Spirit of God, and not by our own will which is evil. If I had no will, and the Spirit of God so rules me, that my body is a living sacrifice, I should be doing the right thing each moment.

God made man upright, what we require for a true walk is to have the rule of the Spirit instead of the rule of our will. The rule of the Spirit is not severe, though it be very wide apart from the rule of our will. Everything conducive to my wellbeing as a creature of God, the Spirit suggests and supports, when I am simply subject to Him ; whereas the will is whimsical ; one time proposing great self-consideration, and at another, to attain some gratification, commanding a wanton sacrifice of health. The Christian's history is made up of acts, the deeds done in the body ; and all these acts bear on his position in the kingdom. Hence every act is of importance, and each act is good or bad according to the author of it. The Spirit of God does not in principle sanction

asceticism, neither does He sanction self-indulgence. The ways of wisdom are really the ways of pleasantness and peace. If I *need* anything, the Spirit could not be indifferent to it. For the Lord's service I may have to endure; for instance, I might get a wetting when visiting some sick one; but my work over, the Spirit would lead to seek and enjoy relief. Sickness is properly a discipline, either to repress a natural faculty where the will has a more ready access, or to call out in me patience, which is a great mark of the Spirit's power in me. Thus the day duties in a Christian's life are most interesting, not that you should be so much thinking of what you are doing, as being assured that you are doing it to the Lord; for here really lies the difference; the will only thinks of your immediate gratification, the Spirit thinks of your pleasing the Lord. The result is very marked. Where you have pleased the Lord in the act, you have not only your own gain in the act, but you have increased your tie to Him; whereas when you please your will, your pleasure ends with yourself. In the latter you may feel that you have spent your money profitably; in the former you have invested it in the best way. The only way to arrive at this is making the Lord your sole object, and you will not do this but as He becomes necessary to you. Ruth cannot do without Naomi; and then she lives for her, goes

out into the field to glean—a very laborious work, and proper only to the poor or strangers; but she pleased the object of her heart, as well as provided for her own need.

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The Heart Won—Twofold.

WHEN there is real purpose to win Christ, the Lord is unceasing in His succour. The more the heart is won by Christ, the more is it dissatisfied with everything else, though it may try many things to satisfy it. It is a great thing when the heart is fully won by Christ. There are two ways of winning it; or to speak more accurately, to be won perfectly, it must be won in a twofold way. Jonathan is won, because of what David *did*, Ruth is won because of what Naomi *is* to her. The woman in Luke vii. sets forth the first; Mary of Bethany the other. In one, He is my relief; in the other, He is my resource. The heart is fully won when it knows Him as its one resource; but it must feel its need of Him thus first. When the heart is won, because of what Christ has done, which is the Jonathan state, there is awakened in it a sense of dissatisfaction apart from Him; and in order to quiet or relieve this, many things or exploits are undertaken, which relieve, while they engross, but no

longer. But when the heart is set on winning Christ, or on having Him as its gain, it has discovered that which only *can* satisfy it. This is a great discovery, and not as common as people think or say. Now once your heart is really set on having Christ as its gain, you have come to the Ruth state; and then many of the good works which one did in the Jonathan state, though right in themselves, will become more a duty than an exploit, or an engrossment. They will fall very low in comparison with the one great, absorbing, satisfying occupation, which now rules the heart, and distances every other.

You have a true purpose to get on; if you exchange the word "on" for "up" it would help you much, because the danger with you is the sense of acquisition. Now when you are seeking to get up, or to have Christ as your gain, the more you do so, the less will you have the sense of acquiring. Here is your first check; but because your purpose is true, the Lord has been unceasing in all His ways (as the Father too), first in providing you with everything you could want; but in another way, in your health, &c., clipping your wings. You have everything here, but in a cage. Secondly, you have made your duty, schools, &c., primary things with your heart; you have pursued it as if it could afford you nearness to Christ. I commend the schools, as a duty of a landed proprietor, but they are

not the chief service of a heart set on winning Christ. They are not primarily Christ's things; and while you put them in that position, they will be like dust in your eyes, which not only causes pain to the eyes, but also deprives you of light, and you neither know the cause, nor can you see where the dust is.

There is neither joy nor strength, but as I am in the line of the Spirit of God. When I am really for Christ, I am in concert with the Holy Ghost, and I must have both joy and strength. Though I visit the infirmary for incurables, or be beaten in the streets, nothing can deprive me of the Friend within.

Thus, as it appears to me, two things, or rather the remnants of two things, conspire to depress you. I believe that if you rise every day with the cry to the Lord, that your heart might simply follow the purpose which He in His grace had set there—even to win Christ, that you will be amazed at the way things will appear to you, and how your own heart will expand, and regard everything. This is my unfeigned desire for you.

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Christ the Magnet and Resource of the Heart.

In the Lord's goodness I am permitted to write to you on entering upon another year in the wilderness. The Lord has shewn you and —

much favour during the last year. The result of His blessed work is, that "as He is, so are we in this world;" then untold blessings for this *present* time are assured to us.

We do not see Him alone in His joy and greatness, as angels do, as far as they are concerned; but we, as we see Him, see what is ours, for we are Christ's. As from the sun all light comes, so from Christ every grace comes to me. With the sun, the light is gone from me as soon as the sun disappears, but Christ never disappears, and the light and grace I have received from Him is never withdrawn from me, because it is ever true for me in Him, even though I have not, or do not enjoy it. Again, the sun has lost none of its light though it has shone for many a year. So Christ, blessed be His name, loses none of His grace, by sharing it with millions. The world gives, and loses what it gives. He shares, and ever retains His fulness to share still on for ever. We are not mere spectators or guests, great as that would be. We are participators, members of His body, assimilated to the image of the glory, as we behold His unveiled face in glory. Faith is seeing Him that is invisible. When I see Him, I see my Resource. It is not looking in, but looking up. My heart, like David, may be able to speak of the lion and the bear, which He had previously enabled me to overcome. I set Him alway *before* me, because

He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved. Like the mariner at sea, I look out for the sun—for Christ. If in a storm, I see Him asleep on a pillow, in the hinder part of the ship ; I say—*He* is quiet ; I receive of His grace, and *I* am quiet.

Again, if I see Him walking on the crest of the wave, I say—I can walk there too, for Christ is there, and I am His, and His power is mine.

The progress of the soul is thus very interesting. Like a dog following its master ; the one thing before it is the way the master goes ; only with us, when we follow Christ, we share His power in the path, as Elisha got the double portion of Elijah's power by seeing him go up. “If thou see me—it shall be so unto thee ;” all turned on seeing him ; and so it is now. It is not what I have known and enjoyed, but where is *He* ? Where do I see Him ? If I see Him rising, as in Romans, I see that I occupy a new ground, like Noah after the deluge. If I see Him at God's right hand, and the Head of His body, the church, as in Ephesians, I know that the power that set Him there has raised us up together and made us to sit in heavenly places in Christ. From the smallest detail of daily life, up to the interminable range of glory, the one single thing for me is to see Him—“shewing himself through the lattice.” Where is He in this domestic trouble ?

Where is He in every circle up to and in glory ? The one resource everywhere. We often look at our difficulties first, before we look at our resource. How blessed for us to be so assured that Christ is our resource, that instead of being distressed by any difficulty, we at once turn to Him who having passed through the heavens, is touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and has, at each trial, some special provision for us in the smallest thing, as well as in the greatest.

The Spirit of God is our telescope. "He, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God and Jesus."

May you enter on this new year with greater enjoyment in our most marvellous telescope than ever, and thus be ever able to see the Magnet of your heart, and your almighty Resource, in every difficulty great or small.

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Jordan learned practically.

"HE bringeth down and He bringeth up." Often when a serious illness befalls us, we experience what it would be if all natural lights here were extinguished ; how one could part company with all here, and depart to be for ever with the Lord. This experience is very helpful ; one finds that the Lord's presence can be abundant compen-

sation for every loss here. He is magnified to one's heart in a moment like that; and even if the illness be removed, the experience taught, because of its dangerous nature, cannot be lost; you have learned to accept Jordan. True it is, that often in the first instance it is the prospect of one's own dissolution which challenges the heart as to how it would bear to leave all here and go to the Lord. But when the challenge can be accepted in the words of Rebekah, "I will go," the light and power of Jordan—of crossing this death with Christ to *where He is*, are known and enjoyed; and this knowledge and enjoyment remain, though the health be perfectly restored; one is able in the brightest circle of earthly blessings still to say, "I will go," and not only so, but I know and enjoy the way to Him. This is really Jordan. My own death or dissolution is not Jordan. Jordan is when I am loosened from every tie here so absolutely by death with Christ, that I can cross over in spirit to the place where He is, and become so formed in that place, that I am in every divine relation on earth more truly for Him.

You see it is a different thing to be loosened to every tie here when there is no hope of my being able to stay here, and to be so when I have plenty of natural vigour to enjoy them all. Christ surely is the joy of the heart when it *cannot* enjoy anything here; but He can be

its *supreme* joy when it has full natural ability to enjoy all His gifts here. Nay, He can be so much so, that it delights in parting company with all here, and in spirit crossing over to be with Him where He is.

When I know Christ fully as my Saviour, God's love perfected to me, I delight to make much of Him at my own expense, as Jonathan stripped himself for David. Next, when I know Christ's company as *indispensable* to me, like Ruth, I give up my own *place* (earth) for His place; but when I know Him above, as united to Him there, I can *resume* here in cheerful devotedness, like a faithful wife to an absent husband, in every position in which He is pleased to set me. Knowing His *work* for me, I strip myself for Him; knowing *Himself*, He is necessary to me, and I leave earth for heaven; but when I am in the restful enjoyment of union with Him, by which alone I reach Him in heaven, I resume here in faithful devotion to His interests.

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Fruit or Usefulness.

“FIRST the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.” The last is fruit or usefulness; and all the previous growths were working to this end. The blade is the first manifestation of

a distinct new existence here; and so it is when a Christian takes a stand for the Lord. If you had not been born again in secret, like the grain in the soil, hidden from every eye, there could have been no blade. The blade at once declares your generation, as I may say. It is the first appearance of this new being here, but its first appearance (the blade) tells what it is; in your case it is seen that you are of Christ—a Christian. Every one that can distinguish between one blade and another, immediately marks you off as a Christian.

Many are very long before they are thus distinctly manifested, and sometimes they are very pleased with themselves, or their progress, when they have arrived at this definite growth, which answers to the blade, that is, to be distinctly recognised as a Christian; but this is not enough. As the blade becomes really established an entirely new phase is reached, and that is the ear. The ear indicates that I am *set* for being useful; not useful *yet*. It is the *purpose* to be useful that the ear sets forth; as the blade has weathered many variations of climate, wind, rain, and sun, before it has reached the ear, so has the Christian experienced many trials and hindrances, and surmounted them, before he has reached as visible his fixed purpose—to be of use here. In other words, to be for Christ here and to serve Him. When he has come to this, he has ad-

vanced from dwelling in, and caring about himself and how things relate to him. To be for Christ is now the great purpose of his life. This is the ear. Where the purpose is simply this, the usefulness comes, which is the full corn in the ear. I believe the hindrance to most is the lack of single-eyed purpose to answer to the purpose of the Lord in leaving them here.

The Lord give you simple purpose to be here for Him; not only here definitely as one of His, but so devoted to Him, that He may use you—that you may, like Ruth, be ready to do the smallest service which comes to your hand, because it is the one that is suitable at the time and pleasing to Him—not thinking of yourself, but how you may be here according to His pleasure.

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To please the Lord—the highest Aim.

To do the things that please Him is the highest and happiest aim and state. Enoch, the seventh from Adam, proved the blessedness of it. Before death had made, as it were, a complete sweep, the seventh is translated, that he should not see death, and before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God. He “walked with God” (Gen. v. 24); “he pleased God.” (Heb.

xi. 5.) This is the highest place for man on earth ; the place our blessed Lord, who could say, " I always do those things which please him—" the Father, so fully filled; and it is not only the highest, but the happiest.

In the first place, if I please Him, I answer to His mind, in creating me, and setting me on the earth ; what can be morally higher than to fulfil one's mission on earth, " unto all well pleasing " ? What more can His greatest work do, what less ought it to do, than to answer to the end for which the Creator had made it ? One will readily see that there can be no higher place, nor any higher aim, than " whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to him," for that is the meaning of the word rendered " acceptable." . This being admitted, and it cannot be denied, the next point is, how this aim, which is the highest, is also the happiest ? It is happiest because it occupies us with our true Object, and this of itself must divert us from thinking of ourselves, which is always the source of vexation and sadness ; and as it is not to get something from our Object, but to answer to His pleasure, we are *waiting* on Him and not *expecting* something for ourselves. If I expect, I am thinking of getting, and myself comes in, in the inquiry whether I have received or not ; and if I do not feel that I have received, I get disquieted and dissatisfied. But if I am so occupied with Christ that I am thinking of

pleasing Him in everything I do, and referring each and all to Him, I am *waiting* on Him to know His pleasure. It is not what *I* would like, but what *He* likes. It is not to get, but to please Him ; this occupies you with the mind of Christ ; and like flowers to the sun, you receive, while you turn to Him, the colours and the fragrance that He desires.

If I walk with a person, I must study to please him, if I care that we should walk together. "How can two walk together except they be agreed ?" And so with the Lord. As I make Him my object, and study to please Him, I must, necessarily, in habit and taste be more like Him. Mary pleased Jesus, and was she not pleased herself ? The more I please Him, the more I am pleased. I make Him my object, and study Him, not the effects of His gifts on me. I like His gifts because they are a pleasure to Him. I see the word, the attitude, the service that will please Him. I consider not for myself. My alabaster box goes, though it will be covered up in a tomb. Nothing is a sacrifice if I know that it will please Him ; but this I cannot know but as I *wait* on Him ; not for my own benefit, but that I may fulfil, in every detail, what will call forth His delight. He ever delights in us, but He does not express it but as we are where and how He would have us.

The Lord compares Himself to one who had

planted a vineyard, and when He had done everything for it, it brought forth wild grapes. As He says, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it, wherefore, when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?" That is, it brought forth nothing to please Him. He looked for the ripe grapes. "These three years I come seeking fruit and finding none." He seeks the expression of His own grace in us, and if we are thinking of growing grapes for Him—of pleasing Him, He is intensely our object, and we testify of our delight in Him by doing His pleasure, while at the same time our own hearts are gladdened as we answer to His mind. What a cheer to be to the one I love, what that one desires; it is the greatest delight to love. He is that to us, and He desires that we should be so to Him; and our love is never satisfied until we are so to Him. Hence He says with reference to fruit, "If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love, even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love;" and also, "My joy shall remain in you, and your joy shall be full." Both love and joy are known to the one who is pleasing Him.

If I am seeking my own happiness, or to be pleased with myself, I am not occupied with pleasing Him. The vine appropriates soil and climate to produce the ripe grapes. Thus every

energy is devoted to this end. If you are thinking of pleasing any one, you are diverted from yourself; and not this only, you are interested in the one you are occupied with; and according as you love such an one, you feel your love rewarded and strengthened, because it is active, and has been engaged with that which gratifies it.

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The Testing of Faith.

THERE is a cheering side to every divinely appointed pressure or disappointment. It is good to bear the yoke, and cheerfully too, or it would not be as Christ bore it. Where our wishes are checked, it is often not only better for us, but really less trying, than when they are gratified. I think we should get to comprehend in some measure every dealing of the Lord. Sometimes we think we have learned our lesson because we have faith about it; that is, we are really cast upon God as to it, and know that we are. But then comes the *trying*—the testing. The faith has to be tested, in order that we may be governed by it, and that it may be proved that it is not merely a sentiment in our minds, but a power over our whole being. It is not enough for a horse to be able to jump a fence, it is necessary that he *should* jump it, in order that

his limbs should be made skilful in acting up to his power.

A weakness be it bodily or otherwise, is sometimes allowed to continue in order that there may be dependence, and when there is dependence, the weakness becomes a gain ; the grit—the trying thing is superseded by a pearl.

Do not be trying to *be* anything, let the heart be what it is, as Christ is in it ; and as to work, the greatest secret of doing everything well and pleasing to the Lord is giving your attention to the one thing at the time, so that that thing is the one attended to until it is finished. I have had often to say to a labourer when I called him to do something, "Finish what you are at first." It is a great thing to work on cheerfully, expecting from none but the Lord. Self-contained, a fountain, not a brook. This can only be when one is satisfied in the Lord. He delights in the soul that is satisfied in Himself, and can use such an one.

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Led "Round."

I CANNOT tell you, though I can tell the Lord, how thankful I was to get your letter. Varied are the ways by which the Lord leads us "round ;" often not direct when He would have us to

teach others also. Moses was forty years in the wilderness before he was fit to lead the children of Israel. Caleb had to remain forty years in the wilderness after being assured of the land. He must not enter on possession without experience. Paul was allowed to diverge to Jerusalem, that he might be the unflinching witness of the setting aside of the old order of things, and that "the Christ" in, and from heaven, was now the centre and the manifestation of God's ways and counsels. I think we are sometimes ready to say to the Lord—Could you not have taught me without subjecting me to so much sorrow and humiliation? The answer I have had is, "You could not be effectually taught any other way." The Lord knows the nature of the obstacle in me which He has to overcome: a less efficient hand might think that it could be removed in some other way.

One great comfort is, that the greater the struggle, and consequently the greater the victory, on the Lord's side, the greater the champion you are for the truth. Paul the greatest Pharisee, was the greatest witness of the free grace of God; and I, from my heart, desire and pray, that you may now come out the great witness of Christ's present interests on the earth.

I was brought low and He helped me.

HE who loves you infinitely more than any of us, is making your bed in your sickness. As we wait on Him we learn what His purpose is in the suffering—the wisdom of it. It comes from the deepest love; but the delay with us is in being able to see the wisdom of it. Jacob is crippled before he meets Esau; he is a self-reduced man before he is a triumphant one, through God's own ordering. Joseph comes from a prison in Egypt to nearly the highest position there. “I was brought low and he helped me.” The great gain in discipline is the helplessness which discloses the vanity of natural resources, but at the same time separates our hearts to God. Then we are “partakers of his holiness.” In Jordan “the living God” was known; and in the tediousness and irksomeness of illness there is a sense of the emptiness of everything, and the measure of one's real resource in God is found out. I have said to a dear brother before now, surrounded by his family and natural comforts, “you enjoy the word and the Lord in your present circumstances, but I should like to know how much real spiritual enjoyment in the Lord you would have if these happy surroundings were broken up.” They *were* broken up afterwards, and no doubt with very great blessing to him.

In sickness one loses the power to enjoy, while in bereavement one loses the object to be enjoyed. I believe one learns differently in each. In illness I am occupied with myself, there the grievance is, and while there is life there is hope. It is my resourcelessness as to power that is impressed on me; while in bereavement it is my resourcelessness as to the place; I am lonely. My very health makes me the more keenly to feel like a tree with its branches torn off, which can never be restored. There is an end of hope in bereavement. In the one case myself is lost for a time to me; in the other, the stay of my heart may have gone for ever. Thus the Lord is the One who heals us in the one; and He only can fill up the blank in the other.

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The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.

WE are left here for two great purposes, one to be of service now; the other to fit us for our appointed place by-and-by. We are useful in service as we learn grace, and we do not value grace but as we know ourselves. Hence there were forty years in the wilderness to teach that man should not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord shall man live. I value the grace that

forgives me my sins. If I had not had sins I should not have valued the grace which could and did righteously forgive them. It is my need in this scene which casts me upon God, and when I obtain mercy, and find grace, I am relieved of my need, and have received from God, instead of it, so that by the grace of God I am what I am.

Ways and habits of my own liking remain with me unless they have been superseded by grace. When I am led on in the nurture and admonition of the Lord I am not looking for defects in myself, but the word detects me, and grace uses the detection as an opportunity for giving me what is of Christ in its place. In human education the habit or way which my parents or guardians disapprove is condemned, and as I have sense I discontinue it; but under the nurture of the Lord the habit or way which is unsuited to Him is not only disapproved of, but superseded, and the manner of His grace is given to me instead of the one reprobated. Hence to a Christian it is said, "Put off all these." They are habits; but put them off and put on the virtues of the new man. It is not as it is with men, natural education, and training; modifying or suppressing this or that selfish habit, so that it may not call forth censure, or make me disagreeable to others; this is what is called good manners—that I restrain my

selfishness within due bounds, that I do not seek myself and my own liking at the expense of the likings of others, but consider for them first. But this will not do in grace. It is not improvement, or repression, or self-control, in this or that thing, but my selfishness or liking of *every* kind must retire, and for it be substituted the life of Jesus, an entirely new thing, and not any modification of the old. Thus grace leads me to act as Christ would act.

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To live Christ.

I SHALL be glad to hear how you prosper, for prosper we must if travelling the path of life. To walk in His life down here, eating His flesh and drinking His blood, acting as He acted, though apparently atomic, as all life is, rears up a monument for all eternity, a great coral reef. One is so often endeavouring to do some great thing, instead of the greatest of great things, which is *always* at hand, namely, to live Christ here. Every act that is of His life will endure for all eternity, as the source of it had existed from all eternity. I feel it would at the same time abundantly occupy me and fit me for any service, were I simply set on living Christ here; beginning my day with storing up the manna,

and finding not a moment of my time uninteresting or unoccupied, because I had still another, and a fresh step to learn. The same step is not set on the second time. Act the step before you for this moment like Christ, and if you do, it will be recalled and revived at the judgment seat; but if not, that particular brilliant is lost, and you will never wear it. You will have plenty to do all day; and the man most in His life and ways, is always most fitted and prepared for special services, such as leading a forlorn hope. A slave can adorn the gospel of Christ in all things.

I find that the brightest summer, is when the winter has been longest and most severe. The wheat, the best grain, passes a winter in the soil. The bud, or blossom, or fruit, most fragrant of Christ, is the one which nobody knows what it cost me but Himself; and where one had hardly noticed it; like the beautiful wild flowers in the hedge row, contending with bushes and briars, to shed their fragrance on the unthankful or unthinking traveller going by.

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Freedom must precede Devotedness.

I WAS on the practical last evening. Your body presented as a living sacrifice is the *beginning*. Many begin with good works of some kind, but

the real beginning is—the vessel is the Lord's, cleared out of everything which would in any way divert it from the new mind which is now to govern it. A man's mind is his kingdom. It is conformity to the world in some form which is the check or obstacle to the mind of the Spirit in us. The body would be luminous if there were no part dark within.

If I understand that I am *free* from the body of sin (Rom. vi.), and from the body of death (Rom. vii.), I rejoice that my body is the Lord's. This is the first thing; the next is, that the body of Christ is my *first* circle of interest. This is quite individual; it is a practice which can only spring from the state in which I am set; and the state springs from the standing—what God has done for me. The better I believe and know the full way in which the Lord has commended Himself to me, the better shall I commend myself to Him. Very often there is a real desire to commend oneself to Him, and in truth I should be commended of the Lord, but I may seek a right thing in an incorrect way; and then I never reach it, because the crooked cannot be made straight.

I believe that the more I dwell on what He has done for me, and in consequence made me, the more am I in consonance with His pleasure, the more I do the things which please Him. If I am really free from the law of sin and death,

what liberty His Spirit has in me! The law of His Spirit is asserted and maintained in my body according to His pleasure. Freedom must precede devotedness. Often one is devoted in order to be free; then always there is self-occupation in some form. It is the freedom to be enjoyed in devotedness which is the charm to me, and not the object to whom I am devoted. The hound hunts for the game; the hunter for the happiness in the sport. When I am quite free, my devotedness to the Lord is all on His own account; His life, and ways, and thoughts, all charm me, and advance me in moral likeness to Himself, which is the highest reward to a heart devoted to another sensibly superior to it. The devotedness of a free heart is occupied with what it acquires from its object, and not with that which it confers. When it is in any degree the latter, it is that I may receive something, my gain is before me; whereas when the Lord is simply my object, to learn more of Himself is the one aim of my life; and I do everything that I may win Christ.

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Learning Self in God's Presence.

YOUR letter cheered me much; nothing morally finer than that a soul should feel the pravity of man naturally, in the light of God's presence

in grace. Without the latter it would be the darkness of distance. With you, thank the Lord, it is the consequence of nearness. This experience will make your future history glorious in the eye of God, most pleasing to the heart of Christ, and a blessing, almost second to none, to yourself. Now, you feel that, "In me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing." One has often the doctrine of the end of man before one really rejoices that one is fully freed from it in the cross. Then you can heartily thank God through Jesus Christ. It is a terrible experience; I know it, dear brother, to be so disgusted with the old self that we are glad to be set free from it in the life of Him who set us free. I do not believe that any one has really valued freedom from the law of sin and death until he has felt the corruption of himself. Then he hails with joy his freedom from it. It is then the doctrine of it is truly valued. The most of us learn it through experience, by seeing and feeling the precipices to which the flesh carried us. Were it not for the hand that ever holds us, we should have tumbled down! Surely then we are not only glad to be in Christ, and free, but we dread the flesh even more than before.

I have had you often in mind before the Lord. Surely I am encouraged now more than ever. I look now that you may come out to be fully for Him here.

The Experience of a Caleb.

THE longer you are in the wilderness as a Caleb, with an actual acquaintance with Hebron, the more truly and really does your heart make ready for possession, as well as being enriched with the durable nature of His mercies to you here. "Thy raiment waxed not old upon thee, neither did thy foot swell." (Deut. viii. 14.) Hence, the longer one is on the journey, the more miraculous the unchanging character of His care and ways with us. The wilderness was immensely different to Caleb, and to the rest of Israel. He was not in the land, he was travelling on to take possession, but of a country known, not only by report, but where he had been; and as he travelled on, he was learning that the very same care or provision made for him at the first, remained fresh and unworn up to the last. Not only were his garments fresh, but his foot was unweary. The garments and the foot were in the same state all the journey up to the end. The one, is the shelter of His wing all along the road; the other, the cost to myself, or the tax on myself, all the way: the one unchanging, the other unwearyed. They suffered not outwardly nor inwardly: they were nourished and cherished all the way.

Each year your heart is deepening in the care

of God in the wilderness, and has a brighter consciousness of your heavenly possession, which gets more enjoyable to you, while heaven is more and more within your reach. You can say, "They that are planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God." You are blessed with the upper springs, and the nether springs; and they increase simultaneously. It is as I enjoy the upper springs that I am conscious of the nether; as I eat of the corn of the land, so do I practically partake of the manna; as my heart is occupied with the glorified Christ, so are my steps here in the life and grace of Christ on earth. The less you have from earth and the world, the more you are in the wilderness; and it is in the wilderness, and in the absence of natural supplies, that you know the Father's care, and that the knowledge of heaven brightens. If you lose naturally, you gain spiritually as to both. The more the wilderness is a wilderness, the more God's resources are made known to you. The moment we gain from the earth or man, we are losing the wilderness, and with it the divine comforts of it. If I have nothing but God, I am in the wilderness, and I am supremely happy. It is the admixture of old and new wine which occasions our ups and downs here. The wilderness is having all our resources in God on earth, and without any check in heaven. He is everything to us. If I

love the things that are in the world, I turn away from the wilderness. I might retire from the world politically and positionally, and yet enjoy the things that are in it; and inasmuch as I do so, I am not in the wilderness in the true sense of the word; nor enjoying God's provision for me when in it. God will take care that my needed comfort shall not be impaired, nor my natural force abated; but wherever I seek outside of Him, I do not get from Him. The more all my springs are in Him, the more I really enjoy heaven, where all my springs shall be in Him, with everything to co-operate and nothing to distract. My springs are in Him now, though hindered by Satan's temptations and distractions.

It is only as you are thus truly in the wilderness that you are in the joys of God, or are able to discern what is of God all round you. You must be separated in your own soul from the world and its things, and have found your springs in God, before you can be sure, or clear in judgment, as to anything or any one for God. If I am in the light I know what light is, for it aids me; and I know darkness, for it opposes me. "The spiritual man judgeth all things, but he himself is judged of no man." It is not that you have spiritual knowledge, but that you are spiritual, living on divine springs; and then you can determine like test-paper the reality of each,

and you seek it too. You know nothing but as you have been it ; you cannot know the heavenly but as you have been in it ; and you cannot discern in another what you have not known in yourself. You may see more in another than in yourself, but you could not see it at all if it were not, in some measure, in yourself.

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Joy the result of Fellowship with Christ.

“REJOICE Zebulun, in thy going out, and Issachar in thy tents !” Joy is very much connected with our fellowship with the Lord. Joy is not spoken of in John xiv. where the subject is the way the Lord has provided for us during His absence. We have joy in chaps. xv., xvi. and xvii. ; in xv. in connection with service ; in xvi. 24, it is in connection with answers to prayer respecting church interests ; and in xvii. it is His own joy. “As the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ.” Thus our joy is more connected with identification with Him than as a consequence of His work for us. Surely His work for us has relieved our hearts of every fear, but it is in fellowship with the Father and the Son that our joy is full, and it is in connection with Himself personally that Peter says, “Joy unspeakable and full of glory.” “Re-

joice in the Lord, and again I say, rejoice." As far as I see, we have peace as the result of Christ's work for us, but joy is more the reward of service, or of devotion to His interests. I think you may remark, that almost everywhere the ministry that is valued is the expounding of Christ's service for us ; and, as is always the case, the demand indicates the supply. This measure of teaching is in keeping with the desire, and very often the necessity of souls, and hence there is little joy: I am quite sure, that if our hearts were restful in confidence in His unbounded interest in us, we should devote ourselves to His interests, as being really identified with Him. Union is the consummation of love, while communion is the life and fruition of union. I believe the Lord would prefer that I had one thought in common with Him as to His interests, than that I were the doer of any number of good works. The Lord loves our fellowship; we are called "unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ." The more we are in His company, the more we love Him, for we know Him better. Peter, James and John, went with Him to the house of death, to the glorious mount, and to Gethsemane. May you have the deep and ever-increasing joy of being here in daily fellowship with Him as to His interests here.

The Journey and the Hindrances.

You have passed through a year of much exercise. It has been like a long voyage; the ship has been subjected to many a trial as to how it could bear up against the winds and waves from without, and furnish and preserve the needed comforts for those on board, or within. The without and the within, I might say, constitute our history for each year. I suppose each year is an era in our lives. The without is an unceasing opposition. Pursuing the illustration, the sea on which we sail is man's heart. The waves—the influence of man; and the winds—the power of Satan. Be it calm or storm, the opposition is the same. You cannot be helped by anything purely of man. It is in not remembering this that we all suffer. It is here the dark part is. The ship—the new being, has to make its way through the sea to the heavenly port, but if the ship expose itself to the sea, to the influence of men in any way, it suffers accordingly. Its highest condition is to be proof to its entrance, while in itself it has provisions of all kinds—"home comforts" for the whole voyage. This is the *within*, and from the Lord. We are really to expect nothing from without, to be ever on our guard; we have a relentless and unsparing foe, none the less dangerous when carrying a fair exterior. Surely the deep sea is

not less dangerous in a calm, than in a storm. In a storm you are watching on every side. The pumps are regularly worked ; the whole of the ship is looked after in the strictest way, and if there be not supplies within, all hands would faint and die, even though you could successfully surmount the opposition without. The ship through grace will live ; but many a sorrowful day would be avoided were we more alive to our danger, and the unceasingness of it.

You are cautious enough at any rate, and you are well provisioned, through grace ; but while you keep on at a steady pace, are you courageous enough ? Every one, thank God, can see the port you are bound for ; for Hebron you are bound, but are you like Caleb unable to take Kirjath Sepher ? I suppose there is a spot where each of us shews the white feather. I merely ask the question. I can truly say, "This also we wish, even your perfection" ; when you fail in courage, "add to your faith courage." Courage has to do with the without ; the lack it always indicates some lack within. God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of courage.

The Lord be praised for the way your ship has traversed the deep seas for so many years, but where there is most grace, there is most progress. The ship that has gone well is the one that goes on better. The Lord bless you much.

The New Being in the New State.

IT is very profitable, yea, all important, to begin one's day with the Lord. The manna could not be gathered when the sun waxed hot. The great thing is to get so near God that you are divested of all connected with yourself, your own feelings, and impressions, and interests ; and you find then that they are not indispensable, that you are quite happy outside and apart from them. Such a season as this has the greatest and most blessed effect on one,—to have the sense that I am perfectly happy *apart* from all the prepossessions here—however great and good they may be in a human sense. When the Queen of Sheba was in the presence of Solomon she had for the moment nothing to regret nor to choose. It has a marvellous effect on one to be in the full sense of the new being even for one minute, so grand and so great is it ; and yet it is our only true state, and will be for all eternity. With raiment white and glistering I come into a world where everything spoils and tarnishes it, and I feel it ; but I have to walk in paths of righteousness for His name's sake. You must get there really to understand what it is to be there. The word declares the thing to you, but you are not established in it until you have tasted of it.

Attainment and Gift.

I HAVE for some time been thinking of writing to you. I believe, if I may be candid with you, that the defect in your teaching has been "the attaining process." There are two ways ordinarily of advancing. One by assiduous pursuit, and thereby acquiring the thing desired; the other, by gift—endowment. The first may be illustrated by a man who makes his fortune, and rises to eminence; the other, by one who has received riches and honours by inheritance or gift. Now the latter is the way *we* receive everything divine, because everything is the gift of grace.

Let us examine the conditions or state produced in a saint by each of those two modes in which progress is sought. The one who tries to progress by assiduous pursuit, is eager, earnest, full of aspiration, not satisfied with seeing. "Give, give," is the unceasing desire. Very attractive such a one would be as a listener, very interesting as a narrator of discovered truth, and of heavenly scenery. In manner there is a pleasing drapery of devoteeism, a captivation with Solomon's things, but with no knowledge of being united to Him, and, therefore, with no sense of possession. Hence there is no power to rend one's own clothes, and be superior to feelings or tem-

pers in anything. Like a miser the joy is in acquiring, and recounting their gains, that is, their progress. They condemn every one not in accordance with themselves. They are always individual; they never have the sense that their acquisitions are in common with the body of Christ, or that all the saints are in conjunction with them.

Now on the other hand, those who are advanced by gift, first learn that what they are offered is common property for the whole church. "To each the manifestation of the Spirit is given for profit." Anything conferred on one is really belonging to all; nothing is individual or personal endowment; and hence it is not as I discover truth that I progress, but as I comprehend Christ, and that I am united to Him. The more I see of Christ, the more I see what belongs to the church, and to me a member of the body of Christ. It is not the height that *I* have ascended that occupies me but *His* height; though His height indicates my height as in Him; I derive from Him. It is Christ who is exalted before me, and if I see like the Queen of Sheba, I am not a mere spectator. The church is united to our Solomon, and all things *through Him* are ours; not ours because we had come to Jerusalem and had seen them; hence the effect is quite different. The more I see that I belong to Christ, and that I am united to Him, the more I use His

power to free me from habits, manners, tempers, which hinder the exhibition of His life in me. I am assured of being one with Him, and of having all things in Him; and as this deepens, my manifest progress is in self-judgment, and in abrogation of the old man, which, even in that which was gain to me, shuts Him out. This gives subduedness of manner, and makes one sensible how little one is in keeping with the eminence to which we are raised; and while seeking to walk worthy of the vocation, one is ever more sensible of grace and worth in others than in oneself.

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When in the right road I find His succour.

I WAS on Hebrews iv. this morning, and it came out very interestingly to me. If you are on the road to the rest—to heaven, you will find the High Priest's sympathy on the road. I think that He helps me over my infirmities, that I may be in company with Him in the holiest. He leads me first to taste of heaven in His own presence. *Then* I run on to it in power, through faith in Christ. But first I have to be helped along the road in the wilderness. I have to lean on my Beloved. The first thing is, you must be on the road to heaven, or He cannot help you. As I

was saying, I ask a person—where are you going ? not—what is the matter with you ?

There are a hundred roads, only one is the right one. The Word is to lead me to the right one. Every conscientious person is sensible that there is a divine action at work with him. This is the Word exercising his heart to lead him into the right road. Many a one is cheered by the sense of this divine action, though not helped. This action every godly soul knows ; but it is not sympathy. Martha had the one, Mary had the other. It is here, too, we grow in attachment to Christ. No love for a person can be formed apart from company with that person. Our attachment to the Lord personally is in proportion to our sense of what we gain by being with Him. Then we *follow* Him. We give ourselves to Him. “I love the Lord because He hath heard the voice of my complaint,” is the start of our personal love to Him.

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The Quality and Order of Divine Love.

I HAVE been much edified lately by John xiii. and xv. When the whole character of the ruin and evil was disclosed, the apostasy of Judas, the flesh of Peter, the crucifixion of our Lord, He, when leaving His own in such a scene, says, “Love one another, *as I have loved you.*” I

believe all turns on the little word “*as*.” Washing one another’s feet *as* He has washed ours. No word is more debased in Christendom than the word “charity”—love. The more beautiful and excellent any divine thing is in itself, the more marred and misrepresented it is in the imitation of it by the mind of man, because he reduces it down to his own level and desires.

“Charity” among men, means simply doing everything for me which would please me. Whereas Christ’s love has regard distinctly to one thing, even our perfection. He washes our feet and *wipes* them. Any love in me for my brethren less than, or of a different order to this, is not His love; and therefore one often feels no word so hard practically to follow out as that little word “*as*;” and yet, according as it is carried out, what remarkable effects follow!

In this love you seek to remove every spot from me, and I from you; and thus together we are seen to be His disciples. In chapter xv. this love goes on to death. He lays down His life for us. “Greater love hath no man than this; that a man lay down his life for his friends.” “This is my commandment that ye love one another *as I have loved you*,” the same order of love, that goes on to death!

I trust the Lord is helping you on. He delights to unfold Himself to us, but the greater the love, the less will it disclose itself unless we

are in a condition to receive it. Melchisedec meets Abraham and discloses the heart of God to him, but Lot never (as far as we know) saw him, nor did he as to his own felt condition of soul need him. He sought his goods, and he got them. If he had been simply walking with God, how differently he would have been met!

The present gain of living Christ is, I trust and pray, coming more definitely before our souls. It is a cheer to the heart to know that nothing can be done against the truth, but for the truth. The Lord keep us, dear brother, strong and glad of heart in maintaining His truth and name, and serving Him. He would like to employ us to His own praise, and to lead us into fuller knowledge of Himself.

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Renunciation before Enjoyment.

THE end of the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy. He has the end ever before Him. I conclude that you have now returned to your own house; every day has its cares, and as the heart is simply waiting on the Lord, each day reveals more of His solicitude and grace to help us along. I believe the more we use the power which is ours, the more we live in the Spirit, the more shall we break from everything which would

mar the enjoyment into which He leads. Renunciation before enjoyment, otherwise the old clothes, or hindering things, would mar our enjoyment. Put off the old man that you may enjoy the new. It *has* been put off for you in the cross, or you could not do either. In every advance, I believe the Spirit, the bond of union with Christ, indicates to us the hindrance to our enjoyment of Christ, by the thing which He severs us from. Paul had to be severed from Jerusalem before his heart thoroughly rested in the heavenly places. The Spirit severs me from one thing after another; but the severance, as I understand it, indicates to me not only the hindrances, but the character and nature of the enjoyment is foreshadowed in contrast, and as compensation for the thing renounced. If it be Jerusalem, then it is for heaven. If it be one's own clothes (habits, feelings, tempers), then it is for new ones. If it be leaving the ship, like Peter it is for 'a vastly higher security, in the presence and company of Christ.'

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Discipline.

THE highest intention of discipline is that we should be "partakers of his holiness" (that word is only once used). Every stone thrown at Stephen detached him more from the present

life, and brought Him sensibly more into the holiness of God ; so that discipline is a positive, present gain to the sufferer now, and of course fits him the more for service here, as well as for the place which each one is to occupy in the holy temple in the Lord. The sound of the hammer will not be heard by-and-by. The old man has to be knocked away, and the more it is, the more the life of Jesus is manifested here. Hence, “we who *live* are alway delivered unto *death*.” This I repeat is the highest discipline—suffering for righteousness. But secondly, there is retributive discipline—reaping what you have sowed. Thirdly—if we do not judge ourselves we shall be judged, like Jacob at Shalem. This is, I think, a third order of discipline. The fourth is governmental. I might suffer on account of my ancestors, say, in having a weakly constitution. The remnant of Israel will suffer for the rejection of Christ ; that is, they will suffer for the conduct of their ancestors. Discipline is a most interesting subject.

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The Divine Path.

I AM very much interested in studying the divine path. It is always impossible to man. “This is the victory that overcometh the world, even

our faith." When you are in the divine path, the visible and the natural do not influence you; your eye is elsewhere; you see Him who is invisible.

Eve was influenced by what she saw. We are preserved from the influence of things around us, when we are walking in faith. We are in victory over the world then. A beautiful view is to the glory of the Creator, but if it diverts me from doing my duty as Christ's servant, it is evident that I am overcome by it. Hence as I am in faith, I am not looking for guidance by circumstances, though they be of God's providence, but when in faith I am led by Him; and then the circumstances are at best only subsidiary. It would be a wonderful life to be ever in faith; not influenced by the visible, overcoming the world, the heart resting in the Son of God.

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Sorrow and Trial.

I.

"WHOM the Lord loveth he chasteneth." Thus He shews His interest in us. His purpose is that we should be partakers of His holiness, a word used only once in scripture. You have both passed through deep sorrow. The Lord not only

measured the sorrow, but He is near you now to make Himself your solace. Thus the affliction is a gain in a twofold way; that is, on one hand you are detached by it from some "weight," and on the other, you are more separated unto God. When you are in Christ's path, He sympathises with you in your desolation, and you learn Him in a fuller way than ever before. The word (as we see in Hebrews iv.) leads you into clear light exposing all the mixed motives, and when you are in the right way, you find how He feels with you, and by His company not only consoles you, but effects for you the greatest blessing, even that of knowing Him better, and being more simply attached to Him. The deepest attachment is formed in sorrow; that is, in your sorrow you find out the real value that any one is to you. No doubt Mary (John xi.) learned more of the heart of Christ as He walked beside her to the tomb of Lazarus than she had ever known before.

May you both, though sowing in tears, reap in joy. To remain here after death has removed a beloved one gives one a right sense of the nature of the scene. The Lord has died here, and as we are true to Him, we follow Him to the place where He is.

II.

HEARING of your deep sorrow I think you will like me to write you a few lines of sympathy. I often feel that if we truly entered into communion with His blood, that is, being identified with His death, no death here would be a surprise to us. The greatest death—Christ's death—has occurred here. He not only died here, but He died on my account, which intensifies it immensely.

You never feel sorrow less because you have gone through much of it; nay, the more sorrow you have gone through, the more you feel every fresh sorrow. In our individual history there is no time in which our blessed Lord so peculiarly reveals Himself to us as in sorrow. Sorrow in itself makes one a recluse, but the Lord cannot be shut out, and when I know His sympathy in my sorrow, I am not only more attached to Him, but I am mellowed, I am sensible of a heart with the tenderest love touching my heart, and helping it, when I was ready to admit no one. The fact of finding Him beside me, and how He draws me to Himself, has wrought out in many a one a new era in the kingdom of love, a deeper tie to Him than ever; the very absoluteness of His love in its depths of tenderness has bound me absolutely to Him, and for Him, and I am weaned away from myself and the dark chamber

of sorrow, into the bright and holy sense that I am an object of deepest interest to Him, and the very sense of this softens me into the gentleness and hope of a weaned child.

May you be thus blessed, and though you sow in tears you shall reap in joy !

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III.

IT is a very blessed time when there is a real sense that every tie to this world is being loosened, and one is about to step into an entirely new place “with Christ.” Everything is real then. What He has done for us is deeply real ; the nearer we are to Him, the more perfectly His love shines into our hearts. There is no fear when His love is perfected with me.

But it is not only that the dark side has been cleared away, but He Himself is made known to us, not only as the Saviour who has set us in unclouded peace with God for ever, but as our friend—“a friend loveth at all times ;” “the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.” He is indispensable to us. We cannot do without Him. “His left hand is under my head and his right hand doth embrace me.” What a sense this gives us of His present consolation, as Paul says, “If there be any consolation in Christ.” This is the

greatest personal enjoyment now. I do not say, that standing here for Him, knowing our union with Him in heaven, does not lead us into a higher joy; but there is a more private joy, if I may so express myself, in sitting under His shadow with great delight, and His fruit sweet to my taste. It is what He is personally to me. I am restful in the perpetuity of His love, when I learn that I am united to Him; but it is the love that He has engendered and fostered in my heart privately with myself, which makes the union such a climax of bliss.

I send you this little line, that you may seek the more to know Him in this private way. He will bring you to His banqueting house. Be to Him as Ruth was to Naomi, "Where thou goest I will go." May your joy be indeed in the Lord; may He be increasingly your delight.

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IV.

IT seems unaccountable to us at times, that the Lord who loves us so much, and is so deeply touched with our sufferings, should allow us to suffer so much, when we know that He could prevent it. John xi. acquaints us with His reason for doing so. If He allow great grief to overtake us, that great grief will recall a greater

grief to Himself, and will receive from Him a sympathy and a consideration, which without the grief would not have been required. How it explains His heart to us! Our deepest heart-sorrow He allows, in order that He may make Himself nearer to us. He removes the most-loved one, in order to make known how all-sufficient He can be to the heart.

Blessed Lord! How great is Thy love, that Thou desirest to be so near, and so much to us! May your heart find it so, dear brother! May the terrible blank be filled up by Him, and then instead of loss there will be great gain. May you have this great gain; and thus may you be divinely comforted.

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V.

IT is one thing to be silent and passive under suffering, and quite another to be conscious of its "needs be;" and though it may be only in a very partial way at first, to derive such real good and help from it, that, instead of lamenting, one is owning to the Lord His wisdom and thoughtfulness in putting one through such necessary discipline. Now this can never be reached but through exercise of soul. The trial which one feels much, ought to exercise one much before God. If I am assured that His love is as great.

as His power, and neither knows measure nor end, must I not be exercised before Him as to why, in His love, He should allow me to be so afflicted? The very exercise engages and connects my soul with Him; and this nearness acquires for me help and instruction about many other things. The waiting on God in the time of affliction, or because of it, is requited with a growth and a strength in God, which tends to relieve of the suffering which was the original cause of waiting on Him; and the soul, once truly habituated to wait on Him, learns so to value it, that it never again can do without it; and then it can say, "All my springs are in thee." The fact of the desolation which one feels here when a beloved one has been removed, and the reluctance with which one refuses to submit to it, proves that the heart required the trial, in order to discover to it that it had rested and hoped in something outside of God; and the exercise of soul, consequent on the affliction, leads to that nearness and waiting on Him, which supplies what was before unknown. Most blessed it is when the trial produces this, its true effect, the one intended for us by our gracious God, whose heart is set on our blessing.

