

THE
GOLDEN LAMP;
OR,
TRUTH IN LOVE
FOR
THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

"I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD: HE THAT FOLLOWETH ME SHALL NOT
WALK IN DARKNESS, BUT SHALL HAVE THE LIGHT OF LIFE."
John viii. 12.

"Now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light."
Ephesians v. 8.

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works,
and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—*Matthew* v. 16.

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THE GOLDEN LAMP.



THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

THE death of Christ may be considered—

1. As a temporary triumph of Satan.
2. As a bloody crime committed by man.
3. As the judgment of God against sin.

In this order it is proposed to treat the subject briefly.

I. THE TRIUMPH OF SATAN.

Since man was created this world has been the scene of a constant strife between Satan and God as to the possession of his soul. In this conflict God, for His own wise purposes, has permitted Satan to attain an extraordinary amount of success, though never ceasing for a moment to assert His own claims.

At Satan's first attack man fell. In that fall the whole future race was ruined. The ball set rolling soon gathered such dread force that God repented that He had made man on the earth, and deluged it in wholesale destruction.

Hell triumphed; Satan gloried; God was apparently defeated. His own verdict upon His own creature was that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually; in short, that he whom He had made in His own likeness was now wholly assimilated to Satan's. What disaster could be more complete!

After ages made no change for the better; for soon we find that the highest idea men retained of their Creator, "the uncorruptible God," was of one "like

to corruptible man;" while in process of time they came to liken Him to birds and four-footed beasts, and even to "creeping things." (Rom. i. 23.)

What fearful havoc had Satan made of the mind that once communed in hallowed friendship with the Author and Maker of all things!

Into such a scene the Lord Jesus came. From the moment of Satan's first bold assault, God had foretold that out of the ruins he had made should One arise, whose heel should bruise the serpent's head. Satan's conqueror should spring from the conquered race.

Nothing daunted by the threat, the same audacity which dared to plot the spoiling of man—the very acme of God's fair creation—emboldened that great potentate of evil to lie in wait to destroy man's *Redeemer*; for we read in Rev. xii. 4, that the great red dragon stood before the woman to devour her child as soon as it was born. The serpent prevailed to destroy the woman; ^{if he were right} the great red dragon appears to destroy the woman's promised Seed.

He argued thus, no doubt: If by skilful plotting I could so quickly overthrow the highest glory of God's creation, why should I not succeed again, and defeat His plan of redemption too? And so he lay in wait, and the moment Jesus was born the sword of Herod leaps forth for His destruction, and soon there was not in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, one living child of two years old or under.

It was the bloody work of the great red dragon. But God was conqueror this time. The Seed of the woman was not among the slain.

Foiled in his character as the dragon and the murderer, Satan retires for a time, till the Son of God goes forth to His mission of redemption, and there on the threshold He encounters the enemy again, now rehabilitated in the old character in which he had been so successful. The wily serpent is before Him, to tempt, to lie, and, if it may be, to deceive.

For forty days and nights he plied his unsuccessful wiles. Through three millenniums he had never up to this met a champion able to resist his arts, and long had it seemed a settled fact, that to be born of woman and to be Satan's slave were inseparable conditions. But now at last a Son of man appears, "tempted in all points like as we are," yet, strange to say, "without sin." (Heb. iv. 15.)

Such a rebel in his camp this mighty potentate cannot suffer, and with consummate cunning, as a last resource, he takes up the word of God—the very weapon by which himself had been till now defeated—and by it seeks to lead our Lord to self-destruction. (Luke iv. 9.) What the sword of Herod had failed to do, he thinks the sword of the Spirit shall accomplish, and thus earth be freed from this dread champion of the cause of man. But in vain. The humble Nazarene was the power of God, and the wisdom of God, and with "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God," He fences off the deadly thrust.

Defeated in the long struggle with wisdom and holiness, Satan immediately returns to his character as murderer, and at Nazareth inspires a multitude of his slaves to seek to cast Jesus headlong from the cliff on which their city stood. But again he fails. That life is invulnerable till the predetermined time arrives.

Passing on to this, we hear Christ say, "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." Darkness so weak, so feeble, so harmless hitherto, now gathers round Him in power. "Satan entered into Judas Iscariot." The perfidious kiss, the lying accusations, the malignant envy gain the day, and Jesus Christ is crucified.

When we observe the persistent efforts made by Satan to bring about this end, we cannot fail to come to the conclusion that the marvellous results of that death against himself must have been entirely unknown to him; for otherwise he would have sought rather to avert than to compass it. It was therefore

the hour of the triumph of darkness in a special sense. And this we see in the events and expressions of feeling at the cross itself.

What means that scoffing and scorn, those cries, "Himself He cannot save!" "Let Him come down from the cross!" "He trusted in God, let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him"? Why that wagging of the head, that shooting out the lip?

Is it not the gloating of Satanic spirits over the accomplishment of dark designs?

"I destroyed man by my wisdom, and now have I destroyed man's Redeemer. The Seed, who was to bruise my head beneath His feet, has now fallen before me, and I am myself unhurt."

That Sabbath on which the dead body of Jesus lay in the tomb was, by a significant coincidence, "a high day." A high day too with the prince of the power of the air. "Seal the stone, and set an armed watch, and make all as sure as ye can;" for if only that dead body can be retained in its resting-place, redemption will be as complete a failure as creation, and even Enoch and Elijah must return to their captivity.

Even the disciples felt the darkness of the hour. So little did they understand the scheme of salvation, that they evidently thought all was lost when Jesus died. "We thought that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel; but now," they implied, "our hopes are dashed to pieces." Mary's tears and Thomas's plain-spoken unbelief imply the same. Their chosen leader was no more; their trusted champion had fallen in the fray. After all their suffering and loss for His sake, they stood now the scorn and gazing-stock of the world.

So men groaned, and so Satan revelled. Where is now the redemption of Israel? What has become of Him who was "born King of the Jews?" Is this the woman's Seed whose heel was to bruise the serpent's head? Is this crucified One the Son of David, upon

whose shoulder the government should be? the Son of Abraham, in whom all nations should be blest? Oh, woeful disappointment of confiding hopes — proud triumph of hellish purposes!

“O fools” that those disciples were, “and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets had spoken.” Their tears were soon to be changed to laughter, and the glorying of the enemy was to cease.

God did not suffer His Holy One to see corruption; but loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be holden of it. (Acts ii. 24–31.) True, He was crucified through weakness, yet He lived again by the power of God; that body sown in dishonour arose in glory. The seals are broken, the stone rolls back, the affrighted keepers flee away, and the crucified Redeemer comes forth from His grave a Conqueror, and not so for Himself alone, but taking possession of the keys of death and the grave, He opens the way of life to all His people. And having thus spoiled principalities and powers, He whom these powers had made a spectacle for scorn and ignominy now makes a show of them openly on the very field of their fancied victory.

Since Satan and his angels fell from their excellency, since that bright cherub, “full of wisdom and perfect in beauty,” exalted himself to his ruin (Ezek. xxviii.), and “corrupted his wisdom by reason of his brightness,” and was therefore “cast down from the holy mountain of God, where he walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire,” and was condemned to eternal perdition, his pride had never received so great a blow as this.

In the very moment when unutterable audacity seemed to reach its climax of success in the overthrow of God Himself in human garb; when He whom he well knew to be the very “Prince of Life” was slain; when his great weapon—death—had triumphed over Him who said, “I am the Life” (John xiv. 6); when

principalities and powers of the air had reached the utmost strain of their boasting (as well they might; for now it seemed that sin, and crime, and rebellion, were to unthrone God), then calmly, without a ruffled garment, without an effort, and without a word, their victim arises from the chains of His captivity, and spoils the strong one, who for ages had held the power of death. Not only does He take his keys, but opening wide that prison door, He leads forth in anticipation a multitude of captives (Ephes. iv. 8, margin); not only saved from death Himself, but now the Captain of our salvation, to bring God's many sons to glory. (Heb. ii. 9, 10.)

And Him whom Satan crowned but a little while ago with thorns, hurling back upon the head of Him who spake it the very curse pronounced upon the earth (Gen. iii. 18), we see now crowned with glory and honour; and that lowly name of scorn and contempt so highly exalted that unto it every knee shall bow, not only of things in heaven and earth, but even under the earth; and these glorying hosts of hell shall from their solitary cells in everlasting chains confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father.

“ His be the Victor's name,
Who fought the fight alone;
Triumphant saints no honour claim,
His conquest was their own.

“ By weakness and defeat
He won the mead and crown;
Trode all our foes beneath His feet
By being trodden down.

“ He hell in hell laid all;
Made sin, He sin o'erthrew;
Bowed to the grave, destroyed it so,
And death by dying slew.

“ Bless, bless the Conqueror slain,
Slain in His victory!
Who lived, who died, who lives again,
For thee, my soul, for thee!”

“THE SON OF MAN.”

THIS is an expression which, as we all know, whilst rarely used of the Lord Jesus by any prophet or apostle, is yet constantly in His own mouth. The number of times it is recorded that the Lord Jesus so spake of Himself is eighty-four (12×7). Probably this very number is not without design. However that be, we find that this term is used in four different senses, in its application to Christ, in the word of God.

I. It is the name of Christ as respects His deepest shame and sorrow. Thus in Matt. viii., “The Son of man hath not where to lay His head.” So, too, of His crucifixion He thus speaks, “When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know,” &c. Hence this word looks in part at all His self-emptying condescension throughout His life, and at all His humbling of Himself to suffering and death upon the cross.

II. It is the name of Christ in His very highest glory. In the eighth Psalm the expression seems used in somewhat of an abstracted sense. The sceptre of creation is in the hands of the Son of man. But who of the sons of man can grasp this sceptre or wield it worthily but Christ? Several have sought after this, but God ever has overturned their dominion and shivered their sceptres, and ever *will* until He come.

In this Psalm this sovereignty appears exercised on the earth alone. But so worthy is He that His sway is seen in the New Testament to be extended throughout the entire creation. Also the words of this Psalm are there taken up and applied to Him in an infinitely more glorious sense than David knew aught of. For thrice by St. Paul the words of this Psalm are quoted in a manner demanding our rapt attention.

They are quoted in Heb. ii. 6–8 in order to show that the rule of this wondrous Son of man is “not

yet." He, in the perfection of His obedience, is sitting patiently at God's right hand until His time has arrived. This interval He is employing in sympathizing with, succouring, and interceding for those who seek Him there; whilst to all the foolish thoughts of ignorant disciples to antedate His reign of triumph and of peace, God's word is, "not yet."

Again we meet with these words at the close of Eph. i., where we read that God has raised Christ from the dead, seated Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name named, not only in this age, but also in the age which is coming; and "*hath put all things under His feet*, and given Him to be the Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." Here we learn in addition, that when this wondrous Son of man reigns, we His Church must be associated with Him as His fulness. As for Adam, though lord of all, it was not good that he should be alone, but he required a help meet for him. So from the Christ once slain there is being taken His partner and future companion in His glory. Her will He present to Himself glorious, the Church, even as God brought Eve to Adam.

Lastly, this same eighth Psalm is again quoted in 1 Cor. xv. 25, whence we get the heart-cheering instruction that this future reign of Christ is in resurrection, and is to put down all anarchy and disorder. There verse 26 is badly translated. It should be read thus, "The last enemy, death, shall be destroyed," and not that it shall be destroyed last. On the contrary, as we all rejoice to know, He will swallow up death in victory as soon as He returns to inaugurate His reign. Other enemies will be disposed of subsequently. Then when all have been destroyed, He will hand up the kingdom unto God. Thus is He obedient to the end. The sceptre is not wrested from His hand, as by

death from all others, except Adam, who surrendered his sway to Satan.

Putting these three Scriptures together, we learn from the first that the universal sceptre is indeed to be in the hands of a man, but that God's time has not yet arrived. From the second we are taught that it will extend throughout the entire creation, and will not be limited in the last Adam's case to earth alone; but whenever He reigns, we, His bride, His associates, shall reign with Him. And then the great resurrection chapter teaches us to look forward to an entirely new order of things which His power shall introduce, when death and every other foe shall be finally vanquished.

The reader will find other divine indications of the sway of this Son of man of Psalm viii. in Matt. xxi. 16; xvii. 27; iv. 8, &c.

III. The sentiment couched in the phrase "Son of man" is now of perfect, pure, and full *grace*. This Son of man is now in God (John xiii. 31, 32), and glorified. *He has glorified God on the earth, and God has glorified Him in the heavens; yea, "in Himself."* But as we are, as we have seen already from Eph. i., associated with Him, we too, who are His, are brought nigh to God; we too dwell in God, and have God dwelling in us. (1 John iv. 16.) Oh, what love and grace for His sake is lavished on us! We are quickened together with Him, raised together, and made to sit together (with Him) in the heavenly places. Here, too, note that the book of the Acts of the Apostles—that is, the history of the Church at the beginning—is written by the same penman as the third Gospel. Luke wrote the picture of Christ as Son of man, and then in his second treatise he shows who are and how they are (even by the Holy Ghost) joined to the ascended Son of man. God's grand design shall yet be accomplished in bringing many sons, erst sprung from Adam, unto glory through Him who took human

nature, and, as the great Captain of our salvation, was perfected as a Saviour through sufferings.

IV. Finally, this word regards Him as appointed Judge of all, and of human kind. In quickening, the Father and the Son both work; but in judgment every thing is left to the Son, in order that in that nature in which He has been insulted He may be honoured, even as the Father is honoured. (John v.) The fact that this divine man is already raised from the dead is evidence that He is the appointed Judge. (Acts xvii. 31.) No one has such difficulties as He had; no one is so sorely tempted by Satan as was Jesus. Yet has He overcome all. Yet was He obedient even unto death. How fit that this One should be the Judge. And because He is omniscient, with His eyes as a flame of fire, and His feet like fine brass, He is perfectly competent. Also *He is "ready."* (1 Peter iv. 5.) How when on earth, though He came not to judge but to save, was He not heard measuring out the relative degrees of guilt (John xix. 11), or of sacrifice (Mark xiii. 44); as if all this were to Him so very easy.

I add that this word, "Son of man," is never once in Greek $\delta \ \iota\upsilon\omicron\varsigma \ \tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \ \alpha\upsilon\delta\rho\omicron\varsigma$, that is, the Son of *man* as distinguished from *woman*; for this would imply that He had an earthly father, which is wholly untrue. No; the word in the original ever is $\delta \ \iota\upsilon\omicron\varsigma \ \tau\omicron\upsilon\varsigma \ \alpha\grave{\nu}\theta\rho\omega\pi\omicron\upsilon$, that is, of man generally, as distinguished from other creatures.

THE LAST PROMISE AND LOVE'S RESPONSE.

How the loving heart lingers in joy and sorrow over last words uttered by those whose face will be seen and voice heard no more on this side the River. Words of warning and counsel seem to have double weight; words of love, a double sweetness; commands, a double sacredness; and promises, a double certainty. The tone and expression of the silenced voice are never

forgotten. Again and again are its accents recalled, and its utterances more deeply engraven upon the heart. Those lingering words seem to live again. The parent, the child, the husband, the wife, whom death has taken away, seem to speak once more.

With these thoughts we would take up for contemplation the Bridegroom's last promise, as recorded in the last verse but one in the Bible; and as we meditate on these most loving words, and in some little measure drink into their sweetness, and enter into their depth, may faith respond to the language of inspiration, and may we daily utter our "amen" to the promise so graciously given and so lovingly reiterated. (See Rev. xxii. 7, 12, 20.)

The Promise is—

"SURELY I COME QUICKLY."

In order to enter into this promise made by our blessed Master, ere He closes His testimony to His Church, in this prophetic book of "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," it will be well to turn to the first chapter, and notice the characters in which He is introduced.

To Him is given the first ascription of praise. "Unto Him that loves us, and that washed us from our sins in His own blood, and made us a kingdom and priests unto God and His Father."*

In contemplating Christ as the Lamb of God, the Bridegroom of His Church, we are called to remember that He loves with an ever present love those who believe in Him; and as washed in His own blood and glorified, they can hear with infinite delight the announcement, "*Behold, He cometh with clouds.*"

But He who here looks forward to the finished work of redemption, as it will be manifested before long, has

* In this verse *all* later criticism reads *loves* in the present tense, instead of *loved* in the past; and *kingdom* instead of *kings*. That we are to God a kingdom over which He reigns is a truth never to be lost sight of.

a work and a service to perform for those whom He shall then present unto Himself and to the Father blameless and faultless; and in reference to this work, He is revealed to us as the Son of man, walking up and down amidst the golden candlesticks. His glorious person is portrayed by the finger of God, that our faith may realize His ever present aid.

His priestly garment is girt about the paps with a golden girdle. He is prepared for service, and girded with the strength of the Almighty. "*His head and His hair* were white as wool, as white as snow." He who was crowned with thorns stands here as the Ancient of days, the Lord of glory, who, still in the ever loving ministry of His grace, comes to His oft sleeping saints and knocks, saying, "Open to me, my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled: for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night." "*His eyes* are as a flame of fire," and the flashing light from those holy eyes tells of the jealousy of love that speaks to Thyatira words of warning, and yet of encouragement, and ends by saying—"That which ye have already hold fast *till I come.*" "*His feet* were like unto fine brass," which, burning in a furnace of holiness, can walk undefiled amidst all the defilement here. Holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners, He is yet ready to succour the failing and the weak, and is the ever present help in need. "*His voice* was as many waters"—the voice of the Almighty, that still says to His dismayed disciples, "It is I; be not afraid;" to the hungry multitudes, "I am the bread of life;" to the mourners, "I am the resurrection and the life;" to the blind, "I am the light of the world;" and to the trembling ones, "I am the way, the truth, and the life." *His right hand* held the seven stars; and the everlasting arms uphold those who come unto Him, causing each to say, "His left hand is under my head, and His right hand doth embrace me." "Out of *His mouth* went

a sharp two-edged sword." That sword, which will be felt by the world in terrible judgment when He comes as King of kings, is to be felt *now* among unrepentant saints (like those at Pergamos); for the judgment that will be executed on the ungodly by and by even now begins at the house of God. (1 Peter iv. 17.) Lastly, "*His countenance* was as the sun shining in his strength." He is the Sun of righteousness, who shall come with healing in His wings; and He comes now ever and again in life-giving power and joy to those who love Him and keep His commandments.

Thus does God describe the Lord Jesus in His present activity of service in the midst of the churches.

In the presence of this glory John falls at the feet of His Lord as one dead; for, like Daniel in the presence of the same glory, his "comeliness was turned into corruption." The Lord lays His right hand on His fallen servant, and says, "Fear not; I am the First and the Last: I am He that liveth, and was dead, and, behold, I am alive for ever more: and have the keys of hell and of death."

The One who is thus presented to us is seen a little further on in the book as "*the Lamb* in the midst of the throne," to whom all power is given in heaven and in earth. He is also (chap. vii.) *the Shepherd* that leads the flock by the still waters of the living fountain; and finally, at the end of the book, He is revealed as the Lamb, *the Bridegroom* of His Church. What mysteries of love do these names unfold!

Having contemplated the glorious Promiser, let us meditate a little on the words of the promise.

"*Surely*" *va*, *yes*, is the affirmative particle preceding the promise, and is given by our Lord as if to silence all the doubts and misgivings which the course of events might cause us. He would say to all, "Yes, I come." He knows how much we need the comfort of the hope of the coming as an ever present reality,

and He whose yea is yea, and whose nay is nay, affirms the fact of His advent, let appearances be what they may.

The Good Shepherd says to His scattered sheep, "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and there shall be one flock and one Shepherd." The Lamb of God, on His way to the altar, said, "*I will come again*, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there you may be also." The risen Christ speaks to His disciples of what may befall them, but it lies between the present moment and the time intimated by His saying, "*till I come*;" and we are told to continue the communion of the Lord's Supper "*till He come*."

Earth's history to each believer is wound up then; and in the epistles every step in the life and walk of the Christian points to that time.

When first awakened from sin, and aroused by the testimony of the gospel, it is "to wait for God's Son *from heaven*." (1 Thess. i. 10.) When pressing forward in the pathway of holiness and consecrated service, it is said, "unto the *coming* of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thess. v. 23.) When contemplating the joy of the harvest home, with its crowns and rewards, and its rejoicings, it is said, "in the presence of the Lord Jesus at His *coming*." (1 Thess. ii. 19.) When suffering and martyrdom become the portion of the people of God, they are to look forward to "rest when the Lord Jesus shall be *revealed* from heaven." (2 Thess. i. 7.) And if in the world they are to have tribulation, they may find peace in the storm now by the promise for the future, "I will *come* again, and receive you unto myself." (John xiv.)

All points to this one hope—the coming of the Saviour. If this resurrection hope fail, all has failed; and therefore the Lord repeats the promise of His coming; and, when leaving it on record for the last time, He most graciously prefixes it with the signifi-

cant expression, "SURELY." May we *now* take it to our hearts in loving confidence, and whenever tempted to be discouraged because of the way, may we remember our Master's "Surely;" and may faith thereby triumph over sight, and joy over sorrow.

"*I come.*" This is love's promise, and it is a present one. It is not, I will come, as if carrying us off into the regions of a future uncertainty; but it is presented to our faith's grasp, that we may be able to say each day, "He comes," who is the Coming One (*ὁ ἐρχόμενος*) of our heart's longings.

If a man has some great coming event before him, it moulds and shapes the history, the aspirations, the labours and toils of his life; all of which, realized or unrealized, leave the heart with the bitter feeling of "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Unrealized hopes here make the poor, disappointed soul sick; and realized hopes lead to the knowledge that "the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear with hearing;" and the bitter conviction is wrought that "all things are full of labour; man cannot utter it." It is all too deep and too dark to the unsatisfied heart of the natural man.

Above all such disappointments the faith of the Morning Star raises the child of God; for as surely as the star of Bethlehem led the seeking ones to the manger, so certainly will the Morning Star lead the believing followers of Christ to the dawning of that day when they shall behold the King in His beauty. Whatever may disappoint, *this* will not; for the promise is made by Him who cannot lie. The divine answer to all our perplexities, trials, sorrows, or sufferings, is still the same. The voice of the precious Saviour says, "I am coming."

Thus the advent becomes a controlling and moderating power in the Christian, raising him above those influences here which otherwise would lead him in the way of the world. At home, abroad, in the market

or on the exchange, in the shop or in the counting house, he hears the ever-sounding whisper of the Bridegroom's voice saying, "I come." By the faithful soul it is heard above the din and noise, the competition and the strife, of scenes and circumstances that surround him. The shout of triumph in success is little heeded, and the bitterness of defeat is but little felt. All is calm and peace to the soul that accepts alike the evil and the good from Him who will come and turn all sorrow to joy.

So may it ever sound calm and clear to our watchful, longing hearts, mitigating all our trials, and chastening all our joys, till we see Him face to face, and behold Him, not as now, through a glass darkly.

The last words of the blessed sentence is "*quickly.*" How important is this concluding assurance! The slothful servant says, "My lord delayeth his coming." The world says, "Things are as they have ever been." The devil whispers, "Hath He surely said, I come quickly?" insinuating there is an uncertainty, a misapprehension somewhere, and appealing to commentaries and sermons, he would persuade the saints that the Coming is altogether spiritual, as *some* in the apostles' days said of the resurrection, that it was only a spiritual idea, and had, therefore, already passed in the case of the believer; and thereby the faith of some was overthrown.

The glorious appearing of the Lord to set up His kingdom on earth, and the glorious resurrection of His saints, which is connected with it, were no mere casual topics in the preachings and the teachings of the apostles. The cross has paved the way for the glory, and the first and second comings of the Lord are but as two parts of one work which the Lord, the promised Seed, is to accomplish.

With God there are no delayings, no lingerings, as of one careless or indifferent; but there is a waiting for the arrival of the fit time. Thus, after nearly

nineteen hundred years from the covenant made with Abraham, confirming the promise of the Seed, the Son of God was born in Bethlehem, as it is said, "When the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son." (Gal. ii. 4.) And now we are waiting for the fulness of the time, which has well-nigh reached another nineteen hundred years, when God shall again send forth Him "whom the heavens must receive *till* the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."

To us the time seems long; but we need to enter into the mind of the Speaker. Looking at our own little sphere, and selfishly thinking of our own participation therein, the time seems long; but when faith gets into the thoughts of God, and contemplates His vast designs, shall we call two thousand years long to prepare the stones needed to construct that heavenly city of whose glories we are told in the Word? If thirty-three years were needed to prepare the blessed Christ for His cross and His glory in resurrection, is it any marvel if even a hundred times that were needed to prepare the material for the heavenly building, when we remember "the mount of corruption" out of which the stones are being hewn, and the squaring, fitting, and polishing needed to fit such stones for the city?

The word "quickly" is necessarily a relative word. When a friend near at hand, engaged in some little matter, says, "I will come quickly," the lapse of a few minutes, or a few hours at most, sees the promise realized. If one far away, and with much on hand, says, "I come quickly," we regard the promise as kept if we see him in a few years. And when we contemplate the magnitude of the interests in heaven, in earth, and under the earth involved in the session of Jesus at the right hand of God—the destinies to be sealed, the work to be accomplished—is it to be

wondered at that well-nigh nineteen centuries have passed and we have still to wait, it may be, a little longer for the *quickly* to be realized?

Yet to the eye of God all these centuries are less than two days (2 Pet. iii. 8); and when we look back upon them by and by we shall understand that word, "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, but is long-suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish." The "quickly" shall be vindicated, "for," the Spirit says, "yet a little while" (*μικρον ὁσον ὁσον*, a little time—how short! how short!), "and the Coming One will come, and will not tarry."

For every day that the blessed One tarries there is an object, beyond the reach of our knowledge, and while the outgoings of love to Him will ever lead us to cry, "Make haste, Lord," the confidence of love will ever give the fullest assurance that "He will not tarry," though He still waits the accomplishment of divine counsels.

Love's Response remains to be considered.

"I SLEEP, BUT MY HEART WAKETH."*

CANT. v. vi.

THERE is perhaps nothing that the Lord would more desire to maintain in the souls of His saints than the feeling of their being strangers and pilgrims here, only waiting for their one dwelling-place at His return. Even though we really love Jesus, we like not to be as the wanderer here, but prefer quiet dwelling-places; and we feel it a hard thing, either inwardly or outwardly, to be like Him who had not where to lay His head.

* These thoughts may be profitable to all who read them, but to those who knew the late G. L. W., who fell asleep in London, September 28th, 1872, they will have an especial value, as some expression of the feelings of their aged, meek, and lowly friend.

But it is not in quiet settlements here that we grow most in the knowledge of Christ and of His truth. The time, however, is coming when this will not be the case; the time is coming when God will give quiet, and peace, and settlement, to His people. God knows that the want of this is painful and trying to us, and He sympathizes with us in our trials; but still, those who seek this rest here below will find that it only leads them into entanglement and trials of heart.

In a former chapter we find her who is here spoken of more in the character of a stranger and sojourner. Then she was not sleeping, and found no difficulty in hearkening to the voice of her Beloved. But now she is in altogether a different place. She had wandered into circumstances of rest, without being led into them by the hand of her Beloved. She was peacefully resting in these circumstances. She felt the desire for rest and quiet, and she took it; but she was seeking this rest while the Beloved of her soul was not resting; on the contrary, He was standing without, and His locks were wet with the dews of the night.

True, there were blessed graces still around and within her. She truly said, her heart was awake, and she may have looked at the graces that were in her. There was, in one sense, a watching for her Lord, and she might have said, “My state is as it should be;” but no, there was one thing wanting—she had put off her shoes, and was not in readiness to move whenever she should hear the voice of her Lord.

He visits her, but she is not ready. There was a bond that held her when the full requirement came to arise at the bidding of Christ. She was not ready, and therefore, when afterwards she arose and opened to Him, her Beloved was gone. Her conscience tells her *why* He withdrew, and then she is deeply grieved. She calls Him, but He gives her no answer. The watchmen that go about the city find her; they smite

her, they wound her; the keepers of the wall take away her veil from her, but still she finds not her Beloved.

Then she turns to "the daughters of Jerusalem." They ask her who her Beloved is. She is able to think and speak of His beauty, and of the preciousness of His love; but yet she could not find Him.

Now, I believe, beloved friends, that the main features of this chapter are abundantly found in the Church of God. It teaches us what our place is, even to delight ourselves in our Beloved, and find our whole rest and joy in Him. It also teaches us the graciousness of the love of Christ.

He had been to seek *her*, but she was not ready, and this had led her into a thorny road; but when she was brought back to her right place, she again proved the fulness of His faithful love. When at last she finds Him feeding among the lilies, she exclaims with rapturous joy, "My Beloved is mine, and I am His," and He gives her a full answer, in describing the blessedness that He finds in her. He indeed had never ceased to love her during all her wanderings; but still she was not happy, and even when speaking of His love to others her soul was not enjoying the comfort of it.

And so it is often with us. We may not be speaking the words of hypocrisy when we say, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely." We may even draw others to go along with us through our description of His grace and loveliness; but our hearts may, at the same time, be feeling cold and sad, because we have not been watchful, and have lost our Beloved; nor can we be truly happy until we are brought back into our right place of nearness to Himself, and again hear the expressions of His love to us.

We see, in the picture here brought before us, how soon the tender love of Christ (as to our present enjoyment of it) may be grieved away, if we do not see

the blessedness of entertaining such a friend, and of being able to entertain Him with something that is most precious to Him. He delights to find in us something with which He can have fellowship when He comes to us. He wishes to find tenderness and regard, a ready watchful love to bid Him welcome, and lay ourselves and all we have at His feet. When it is not so with us, whether to Himself personally, His truth, or to the poor saints here below, there is a sad want of joy in our spirits until we find our right place again, and then He speaks to us in the fulness of His love.

This is, I believe, the picture of the failure of some who have grace, and whose hearts are watchful, but who have chosen circumstances of rest for themselves, and have washed their feet. They have put off their coat, and are not ready to rise at the voice of their Beloved. They have laid down to enjoy pleasant slumbers; and though their souls are still in a gracious state, and, in a sense, they are watching for their Lord, yet they are resting in pleasant chambers, instead of standing with loins girt and shoes on their feet, ready to come forth in a moment when He calls.

Nevertheless, we find in these chapters sweet assurances of the inward bond that unites Christ to the believer, and the believer to Christ—*love*. This is the secret bond that is stronger than death. In His heart it is full and complete; in ours it is only found in measure. This blessed bond of union is brought before us all through the Canticles. We either find sorrow of heart in the bride, because of the absence of the Lord; or joy, because of His presence.

Let us seek to keep ourselves as free and detached from present things as may be, both outwardly and inwardly. It is a great thing for Christ to require our love, and to prize it. We often think of Christ's love towards us, and we cannot think too much nor too often of it. It is our joy and strength; but then we

must remember that *He* also seeks our love, and that if He finds any sympathy in our hearts answering to His, it is precious to Him. If He finds that we have the hearts of faithful friends to Him, that we have similar views, feelings, and desires, it meets the wishes of the soul of Jesus, and is really precious to Him.

It is important for us to see what the saints' hearts can supply to Christ, to see that when they are walking in grace and in love to Him, and when there is the power in them to think about and delight in His truth, that these things are most precious to Him. May this be our experience, beloved friends, yet more and more.

EXTRACTS FROM ADDRESSES DELIVERED AT TEIGNMOUTH.

For some years past special meetings have been held in the autumn at Teignmouth, at which various servants of the Lord have given addresses on stated subjects. They have usually been printed, and from the notes of recent meetings (which are about to be published) we subjoin a few very brief extracts.

Mr. G. B. G., in speaking of the love of God as unfolded in the gospel of John, said—"The broad stream of God's love may be compared to a river at its mouth. There is the wide expanse which the sea-tide pours in, but there is also the deeper current, the river's settled bed. The love of God towards the world may be rejected, despised, and unheeded; but this deeper channel of love towards His Church flows on. God knew the world, as such, would reject His love; but He reserved His Church to Himself. The 13th chapter of John opens up this character of love—the deep channel—the unspeakable love wherewith He loves His Church. 'Having loved,' it says, 'His own which were in the world, He (Christ) loved them unto the end.' Let us note some of the characteristics of this special love.

(1) It is a *secured* love. God took care that He would

have a people for Himself, and so He gave us an appetite for His love, or we should have rejected it as the world still does. (2) It is an *unchangeable* love. 'He loved them to *the end*.' (3) It is a *tender* love. (Eph. v. 29.) 'For no man ever hated *his own flesh*; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the Church.' It is no *effort* for Him to love those whom He hath purchased with His own blood. (4) It is an *intense* love. 'Thou hast loved them, *as thou hast loved me*.' Who shall describe the intensity of the love wherewith the Father loves the Son? God's love for His people is measured by the love of God for His Son."

Mr. H. D. took up some verses in the Proverbs, and used them as illustrating some important practical truths. Alluding to Prov. xviii. 10, he said—"Our place of security and blessing is *above*; for 'Jehovah's name is a strong tower; the righteous runneth into it, and is safe,' or rather, as in the margin, 'set aloft.' The running into it is by the wings of faith—wings that can rise there as in a moment. 'They shall mount up with wings as eagles.' It is not that you or I can skilfully climb there; but this name itself lifts us up by its own blessed triumphant power. 'The way of life is *above* to the wise.' (xv. 24.) How are you and I to be above? Not merely leaning on Jesus' bosom, and secure within His arms, but also walking there; for 'the way of life is above to the wise, that he may depart from hell beneath.' We should not merely delight that we have this name to run into as a refuge, but should also use it in the pathway of daily life, to keep us up in spirit; for we are to walk in our high places as with hinds' feet."

Mr. R. C. C. said—"Natural men never see the snares spread for them; they have no wings to rise above the gulf; they are born and bred on a dung-hill, and above it they cannot and will not rise. We who have the Spirit of Christ know the things that are freely given us of God, and walking in the

Spirit we prove that Scripture true, 'Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of anything that hath wings.' We must rise above the world to know what it is—what it is when foul, and what when fair; we must rise above the foul world, and especially above the world when it is fair—fair by pleasure, fair by religion, and fair by wisdom. The sins, pleasures, religion, and wisdom of the world are all Christless, all without God (beginning and ending with the creature and the will of the creature, all from beneath, of Satan), all abominable to God. Let us rise above them in order to see, and escape, and avoid the snare."

In speaking of fellowship (1 John i.), he said—"God as the Father is craving, and Christ as the firstborn among many brethren, and as the friend with His many forms of friendship, is craving our fellowship. 'Our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.' There is not a word said about glory in this epistle, because it is understood; the silence about glory speaks loudly. It is taken for granted that the love and fellowship of God cannot be satisfied without giving us glory. 'This is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.' There is not one of us but needs to be delivered from a natural love of the world in some shape or other. It is not only to overcome evil we have power by faith. Supposing there be here a stripling only this morning born of God; he has not only the power by faith to overcome evil, but power—I do not say to root out—but to subdue the law in his members, so that God, as his Father, shall not be offended by his indulgence of it, and Christ, as his lover and friend, shall not be offended by his giving place to it."

Mr. L. S., speaking of these last days, said—"At the first starting of Christianity the exception was a false Christian—the masses of professors were true; now the true Christian is the exception—Christendom is an apostasy, a great lie. It is a blessed thing to be a Christian; a wonderful thing to be saved. If you are

saved, and have the life of Christ, that life is pleasing to God. If only a professed Christian, without the life of Christ, you are not fit even for the present age. The Holy Ghost, in Hannah's song, called this world a dunghill; and we are still, in one sense, obliged to be as strangers on it—*poor*, but *rich* in Christ, to be set among princes in the age to come. False professors of Christianity are not fit for the world; their end is to be trodden under foot of men. (Luke xiv. 34, 35.) Let us, as Christians, see that we have laid down our life altogether, and put on our Lord Jesus Christ, the armour of God, taking up *in Him* our relationships, our business, that we may do all as God would have us do it. So shall we be ready for changes, for distress, for poverty. Nothing will hurt us; for above we have riches, dominion, and power; our service is to be going about doing good."

Captain H., with reference to the wide-spreading heresies which abound, said—"All these are the precursory signs of that great coming apostasy, or falling away from the faith once delivered to the saints of Christ. The word of God has given us repeated warnings, so that their very existence among us, instead of weakening our strength and faith, should stimulate it."

And again, when speaking of subjection to the word of God—"Yes, truly, all hangs on this, the real subjection of our hearts. And what will be the measure and power of that subjection? Just the measure of our apprehension of the grace of God, making us holy, happy children of God. If our hearts are thus affected by the word of God, our minds will be kept in simple subjection to the things we have learned."

Mr. W. S. spoke of the safeguards against the perils of the last days (one of the subjects of meditation): "The chief safeguard against every evil is to have the love of Christ in the heart. It is not our opinions, however clear, but love to that blessed Person that

will be our protection. You will not listen to anything against a person whom you love. If your heart is given to another, any slander or evil spoken of that person will be like touching the apple of your eye; and so, if you want to be preserved from being deceived by the delusions that are coming on the earth, have your heart knit closely to the Lord Jesus by a living faith. Spend much time in His company. Jesus desires your love more than you desire His. His delight in the affections of His people is infinitely more than we can understand. . . . Our chief safeguard is love to Jesus. How are we to have it? By the constant exercise of faith in 'His love to us.' 'We love Him because He first loved us.'"

He also enlarged upon women's place and service: "God intended women to occupy a very blessed place; but in consequence of the work of Satan, women have failed to occupy that place, and have often been the cause of great mischief, both in the Church and in the world. We read in 2 Tim. iii. of '*silly women.*' '*Silly*' is opposed to that which is wise. The same word is used with reference to Ephraim: 'Ephraim is like a silly dove without heart.' (Hosea vii. 11.) There I think we get the Scriptural meaning of the word '*silly.*' '*Silly women*' are women who have no heart for the Lord Jesus; those who, whatever their other attainments, whatever their natural ability or gentleness, are without heart for Christ. No doubt these '*silly women*' were in the Church, but they had hollowness of heart for the Lord. The human heart must have an object to love, and woman especially so; it is her nature. If the Lord Jesus is not the object of her heart's affections, she will have some other object. . . . I want to show also the contrast to the evil I have spoken of. We read of women who had been saved by the grace of God, delivered from the devil's power, and healed of their infirmities, constantly waiting upon the blessed Lord, having the great honour of serving Him, follow-

ing Him in His journeys, and supplying His wants. Have you ever thought of the honourable situation in which they were placed? Women had more loving appreciation of the worth of Christ than any one of His disciples. Not one of the disciples valued Him as the women did, or so proved their love to Him; and no one understood about His death and burial but one woman—Mary. All objected to the costly expression of her love; but she deemed nothing too costly by which to express her love to the blessed Lord. This is being wise at heart. Wisdom is to have love to Jesus, and those who love Him shall never be dupes of the deceiver. If you want to be preserved from being made tools of mischief in these last days, learn to love the Lord Jesus with all your hearts. He gave His life's blood for you. You will never have such a lover as He is. Let Him have your heart, and then it will be utterly impossible for any one to pervert you from the right way."

Mr. R. W. B. gave an address on the presentation of the body as a "living sacrifice" (Rom. xii. 1): "Remember thy body is holy; purchased at a great price for the service of God. A temple of the Holy Spirit who dwells in you. Take good heed: defile not this temple. (1 Cor. iii. 17.) Remember that a sacrifice of this sort *pleases God well*: therefore withhold it not. But He must *have it all*. It will not avail thee to offer Him the fruit of thy lips, if thy feet are leading thee astray from the path of righteousness. It will not profit thee to stretch out thy right hand and bestow alms, if with thy left hand thou art smiting thy brother. Yield up thy members, *all* thy members, unto God, and thou shalt do well."

The foregoing are but very small and disconnected portions of these addresses; but they may give an idea of the important truths dwelt upon, and may suffice to commend the valuable little pamphlet in which they will be found.

POWER FOR SERVICE.

MEDITATION on the Word, and watchfulness unto prayer, keep the soul in that freshness of communion with the Lord which fits for His service. "*He that abideth in me, and I in Him, the same bringeth forth much fruit.*" "*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.*" And when his own soul has been refreshed, from him shall flow forth "*rivers of living water,*" for the refreshment of others.

Every service we undertake ought to be the result of fresh, personal communion with the living Head, the Fountain of all supply. Nothing short of this will meet the need. There must be enjoyed association with the source of life and blessing, in order to become the channel of life and blessing to others. Ability, however great—gift, however distinct—are not enough without personal communion. Unless we drink ourselves from the Fountain-head, our ministries will be dry and profitless.

"Lord, what am I? A worm, dust, vapour, nothing!
 What is my life? A dream, a daily dying!
 What is my flesh? My soul's uneasy clothing.
 What is my time? A minute ever flying:
 My time, my flesh, my life, and I,
 What are we, Lord, but vanity?"

"Lord, what art Thou? Pure life, power, beauty, bliss!
 Where dwellest Thou? Above in perfect light.
 What is Thy time? Eternity it is.
 Thy state? Attendance of each spirit bright:
 Thyself, Thy place, Thy days, Thy state,
 Pass all the thoughts of powers create.

"How shall I reach Thee, Lord? Oh, soar above,
 Ambitious soul! But which way should I fly?
 Thou, Lord, art way and end. What wings have I?
 Aspiring thoughts—of faith, of hope, of love:
 Oh, let these wings, that way alone,
 Uplift me to Thy blissful throne!"

THE FIRST AND THE LAST SACRIFICE.

“Abel . . . brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the Lord had respect unto Abel, and to his offering.”—GEN. iv. 4.

“By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it (*i.e.*, the sacrifice) he being dead is yet spoken of.” (Margin.)—HEB. xi. 4.

ABEL believed God, believed His word concerning man's fallen state; was conscious of his own inborn sinfulness and actual separation from God; conscious of his being shut out from the paradise of God.

Abel believed God's mercy, and gladly availed himself of God's provision. He drew near to God, in God's own appointed way, through a sinless substitute.

God had in part revealed His own fore-appointed plan of salvation, that of bringing the sinner nigh through death, even the death of the God-appointed victim.

God delighted to find ready acquiescence in and intelligence concerning His plan. Abel's drawing near by faith, bringing a lamb to be slain, was the firstfruit of redemption.

Abel came in God's own way, and was accepted. Cain came after the way of his own heart, and was rejected.

Abel's sacrifice foreshadowed the offering up of the Lamb of God without blemish and without spot, and was unto God an offering of a sweet savour, betokening the work of “the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.” Abel's sacrifice was the first of whole hecatombs, foreshadowing to the offerers a better and more enduring sacrifice, yet in themselves insufficient to take away sin.

Unto God these sacrifices were but the schooling of those who sacrificed unto better things—unto a more perfect sacrifice that should suffice for the sin of the world, yet doubtless also pleasant, in so far as they

created appreciation of His own wondrous plan so dear to His heart.

Thus was Abel's sacrifice pleasant unto God because that Abel, as a poor contrite sinner, appreciated His blessed mode of reconciliation through the death of a sinless victim, and thus Abel stands out the foremost of the long line of worshippers "reconciled unto God" through blood.

"It is finished!" burst forth on Calvary from the lips of the dying Son of God. The veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom, and the way into the holiest was made manifest. The last sacrifice was offered—God's costly provision for fallen man's redemption. "This man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God." "For by one offering He hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified." "He hath by Himself purged our sins."

The blood of this sacrifice speaketh better things than that of Abel, insomuch as the substance ever excelleth the shadow.

The blood of the lamb that Abel brought in offering was but a faint and imperfect type of the "precious blood of Christ, God's "Lamb without blemish or spot."

This one sacrifice hath in God's sight atoned for sin. Now remaineth God's condition—"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life." "And through Him all that believe are justified from all things."

Precious blood of sprinkling, how fully doth it meet the sinner's need, answering every claim! Truly God can say, "When I see the blood I will pass over you." When God sees the sinner confiding in that precious blood He passes over, smiting not in judgment, but delivering in mercy.

"No blood, no altar now—
 The sacrifice is o'er;
 No flame, no smoke ascends on high—
 The Lamb is slain no more;

But richer blood has flowed from nobler veins,
To purge the soul from guilt, and cleanse the reddest stains."

Christ has risen from the dead the Lord of life and glory, and hath been exalted of God, even of the Holy God, to be a Prince and a Saviour, and the living power of the "life-giving Spirit" (1 Cor. xv. 45) accompanieth, and co-worketh with, the preached truth of His finished work of the efficacy of that one grand Calvary sacrifice to cleanse the foulest clean.

Blessed are the tidings that "once He hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." Blessed, too, the tidings that "He shall appear the second time without (*i.e.*, not to offer a sacrifice for) sin unto salvation"—unto our eternal and glorious salvation!

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

PART II.

THAT the death of Christ afforded to Satan and his principalities a momentary triumph was the first part of our subject; we now have to consider it in another sense, viz.—

II. THE GREATEST OF HUMAN CRIMES.

It was murder—deliberate, cold-blooded murder. Not the passionate outburst of sudden and irrepressible violence, under the influence of great popular excitement, such as has often led men to commit heinous crimes, of which they soon bitterly repented, but the accomplishment of criminal designs deeply laid and carefully worked out for years before—designs which had their origin in an accusing conscience, blinding prejudice, and malignant envy.

This second aspect of the subject is not disconnected from the first. It is, as it were, another branch of the same tree. Then we saw Satan in his own person seeking Christ's death, under the false notion that therein lay his own hope of success; now we see men the

willing instruments in the same skilful hands to bring about this end.

I say willing instruments; for if not, if men were but passive and irresponsible agents to carry out the eternal purposes of God, or the changing plots of Satan, where were the justice of that solemn indictment, "They have slain them which shewed before of the coming of that JUST ONE; of whom *ye have been now the BETRAYERS AND MURDERERS*"? (Acts vii. 52.)

Satan sought Christ's death, and men willed that He should die.

It was man's glory that he was created like a God, with an independent will; his shame and ruin that he used that will against the God who gave it; that wilfully, not of compulsion, but of argument and persuasion, he in Eden gave himself up to Satan as his lord, and elected between him and God, that he would follow Satan and be his child. Thus said our Lord, "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye love to do (see Alford's translation). He was a murderer from the beginning . . . and now ye seek to kill me." (John viii. 44, 40.)

A murderer from the beginning when he achieved the death of man; now a murderer in a more awful sense, as having brought about the death of Christ, his own Creator. And yet, not satisfied with the mere accomplishment of that end, he dares to employ *men* whom Christ had come to deliver from his tyranny to be the judges, the condemners, and the executioners of their Saviour. Did ever impious daring gain so complete a victory?

May the contemplation of our implication in this audacious crime teach us thoroughly, and save us from forgetting soon, the heinousness of the guilt from which that very death of Christ has cleansed us.

By the death of Abel fallen man proved himself to be like his father, "a murderer from the beginning." Soon from such sowing a full crop grew up in the

earth, and it was "filled with violence." (Gen. vi. 11-13.) The flood put a sudden stop to the murderous confusion, and for a moment there was peace in the deluged earth, as when first the Spirit moved upon the face of universal waters. (Gen. i. 2.) But it was the peace of death and of the grave.

A new family increased and multiplied, and as it grew, corrupted itself as before. God—the God of creation, of holiness, and power—faded from their eyes like a dissolving view, and reappeared a being like unto themselves, "and to four-footed beasts." Him they worshipped, and to the object of their worship were conformed. Becoming thus "as natural brute beasts" (2 Peter ii. 12), they not only, like them, corrupted themselves in those things which they know naturally (Jude 10), but their "feet were swift to shed blood." Destruction and misery were in their path, "like as a lion that is greedy of his prey, and as it were a young lion lurking in secret places." (Psalm xvii. 12.)

Turn to Psalm xxii., that plaintive wail of the Crucified in the very moment of His persecutor's triumph, telling to His Father the unknown agonies of human cruelty in the hour of utter desertion: "Many bulls have compassed me: strong bulls of Bashan have beset me round. They gaped upon me with their mouths, as a ravening and a roaring lion. . . For dogs have compassed me: the assembly of the wicked have enclosed me. . . Deliver my soul from the sword; my darling from the power of the dog. Save me from the lion's mouth: for thou hast heard me from the horns of the unicorns" (or rather, the rhinoceros).

In this passage the Lord compares His murderers, by whom He was at the moment surrounded, to those wild animals in whom are combined all the most strongly developed qualities of violence, brutality, blood-thirst, and uncleanness.

The "bulls of Bashan" represent their irresistible

power against the unresisting victim of it. The "ravening lion" shows their ferocious craving for His blood. "The dogs" were symbolic of that moral pollution and uncleanness which characterized the Gentiles now combining with "the assembly of the wicked" Jews to quench, as they thought, the light of life. While in the rhinoceros we may understand all these forces and devilish instincts united. It was at once the strongest and most untameable of beasts. (See Job xxxix. 9-12.)

If to this we add the language of our Lord concerning the Pharisees on a previous occasion, "Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers," discerning thus the subtle purposes and deceitful artifices by which this bloody deed was brought about, we have a picture complete of man's part in the death of Christ.

The cross of Christ thus revealed in hideous reality the true extent of human depravity. The veil of civilization drops. The mask of social refinement is removed, and man in his highest natural estate of Roman civilization and Jewish religion is exposed in naked brutality, the murderer of his Benefactor, untried, unconvicted, uncondemned. (Luke xxiii. 14-22.)

But further, if such be the ferocious spirit of man as seen by the eye of Him whose judgment even in the hour of His agony could not err, how is the crime aggravated in enormity when we consider where and at whose instance it was perpetrated.

It was done *in Jerusalem*.

It was done at the instance of *the Jews*.

Consider that there was on earth one nation, and one nation only, to which God had made Himself known, calling Himself its God, speaking to it by His holy prophets, giving it lands and ordinances, kings and priests, and, above all, giving it ever His own presence in its midst; by Him redeemed from captivity, led through the wilderness, and established in His holy land. And consider that, when His beloved Son

came to earth, it was this very nation that gave Him this reception.

The history of Israel is a long story of inexhaustible grace in God, of ingratitude, backsliding, and rebellion on the part of Israel, and unwearied long-suffering on the part of Jehovah.

Can we wonder, then, that God should say when He contemplated sending forth His Son, "They will reverence my Son"? (Matt. xxi. 37.) If there was on earth a spot where the Son of God might expect to be received with loud hosannahs of loyal acclamation, that spot was Jerusalem. There the first sound that meets His ear was, "This is the heir. Come, let us kill Him."

They watched Him, heard His tender words of gracious invitation, saw His lowly self-denying toil for men, stood by the grave when He awoke the dead, felt the sweet virtue of His healing hand in their own crippled limbs, and then, with a deafening shout of execration, they cried, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him! His blood be on us, and on our children."

Their God they had not known heretofore but by report; they had heard His word, and the history of their nation told out how He had loved and borne with them. Now at length they behold Him visibly present among them, and when they had fully observed Him, they with one accord resolved, "If this God be our God, away with Him, away with Him; we will *not* have Him to reign over us."

Hear the touching appeal of wounded love—"Pass over the isles of Chittim, and see; and send unto Kedar, and consider diligently, and see if there be such a thing. Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but my people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit. *Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this*, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord." "What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?"

“Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?” “My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.” (Jer. ii. 5, 10-13, 31.)

Among idolaters was never such a thing known as that they should turn against their own gods. But the people whose God was Jehovah preferred a robber before Him. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.”

Thus the death of Jesus lies by hellish purpose and design at Israel’s door, and by foul perpetration at the Gentiles’ also; and thus is all the world held guilty before God for the death of His Son.

No question now remains between heaven and earth, between God and man, but only this, “What think ye of Christ?” On the answer each man’s fate shall turn. Till by repentance man turns to trust and love that blessed One of God, he must take his place with the world as His rejecter and murderer. For if thou dost not reject and despise Him, how is it thou dost not trust and love Him?

This is the crime that, if persisted in, hath never forgiveness. But all others will be blotted from the indictment for every soul of man that now, before the door is closed, accepts the crucified One as his Lord and his Redeemer.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

THE Lord Jesus was made perfect through sufferings. He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; He was stricken, smitten, and afflicted. But oh, who can know what His sufferings were! for it was *suffering love*. It was “for His love they were His enemies” —love which longed to find entrance into every heart, which longed to bless all with His own uncreated blessedness. It was love that brought Him from the

bosom of the Father, and made Him hasten to Jerusalem, even when knowing all things that were to come upon Him there—the cursed death of the cross, and that bitter cup of which He said, “Father, if it be possible, let it pass from me.”

Oh, this is love that passeth knowledge; it hath a height and depth which are unsearchable! How hath God commended His love to us? He spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all. It was love that sent Jesus; love that longed to flow out on this desolate world; and when no way could be opened but through the rent veil of the flesh of Jesus—His well beloved and only Son—He withheld Him not.

What love does the blood of Christ unfold! With what a price have we been redeemed! and how precious must we be in the sight of God when bought with such a price! Well may we be called on to be followers of God as dear children.

What must be the grief of such a Father to see so many prodigals wandering from Him, and refusing to return to His arms of love. And how must the spirit of love grieve over *us*, in that we delight ourselves so little in such a God, that we know Him so little as a *satisfying* portion, that we *rest* so little in His love, casting all our care on Him who does so care for us.

Why are we so little without carefulness, although we know that the same love that sent Jesus watches over us, and numbereth the very hairs of our heads, and that a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without His permission?

Alas! alas! we realize but little of the love wherewith He loves us. We say we believe in it; but our evil hearts of unbelief are ever departing from the living God. Oh to be made to know and believe the love wherewith He loves us, that we may know there is indeed a quiet rest in God even now! Is it not a rest to feel that the eternal God is our refuge, and that underneath are the everlasting arms?

Oh to know more and more what the peace is which Jesus gives! to let it rule in our hearts, to lean on His arm, yea, on His very bosom of love, while going up through the wilderness! It is *here* He would have us to lean. The nearer we are to Him, and the more confidence we place in Him, the more the longings of His love over us are satisfied. Oh to be made now to drink from the river of God's pleasures! to have every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ! (which was confiding trust in His Father's love, depending on Him for all things) that we may now live by Him as He lived by the Father.

THE LAST PROMISE, AND LOVE'S RESPONSE.

(Continued from page 18.)

Love's response to the last promise is,—

“AMEN. COME, LORD JESUS.”*

Love replies “Amen” to the loving promise made by Eternal Love. It finds at once an echo in the heart. There is no hesitancy, no uncertainty. He who is “the Amen, the faithful and true witness,” has spoken, and faith has accepted the promise, and says “Amen.” Which means, not “so be it,” but “it is true and faithful,” and therefore rather “so shall it be.”†

* The text in the English version runs thus: “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” The *even so* is the rendering of the Greek *vai, yes*, repeated (which is rendered in the first clause *surely*); but it is omitted in the older MSS., and rejected by all critics, and the response is as given above.

† This use of Amen is confirmed by 1 Cor. xiv. 16, where Paul says, “How shall the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks?” It was uttered as the response of faith to the truth of what in thanksgiving had been said to God. The word is from the Hebrew, and means *sure, faithful, true*, and thus at the end of prayers or promises signifies that they are sure of fulfilment because “He is faithful.”

This needs to be remembered; for many say Amen whose faith rises not up at all to what Amen means, or to the assurance of Abraham's faith, "being fully persuaded that, what He had promised, He was able also to perform." (Rom. iv. 21.) Thus may our faith respond to the promise of the speedy return of our Lord, and, though days and years have passed, and may yet pass, say still, "He is quickly coming;" for He has said it.

This promise, like every other, is yea and Amen in Christ Jesus; for "*in Him* is the yea, and *in Him* is the Amen, unto the glory of God by us." All hangs on the person of Christ; all is "*in Him*;" and here we are called to rest. Did any thing depend on the Church or on the creature, no promise could stand an hour. God has therefore centered and hidden all in Christ, that all His most "precious promises" may be raised above all possibility of failure.

God as the God of covenant and of promise "interposed Himself by an oath," saying to Abraham, "Surely blessing I will bless" (Heb. vi. 13-17); and so He interposes Himself evermore for the "strong consolation" of those who "have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before them; which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the vail; whither the forerunner is for us entered."

Here we see on what our Amen rests, and to what it points. It rests on God, and points to our Forerunner. The coming Christ is the man upon the throne, who has gone in before, and who sits there *until* the time of retribution on His enemies comes; and then before the retribution falls He takes His faithful ones into the place prepared for them, whence "only with their eyes shall they behold the reward of the wicked." (Psalm xci. 8.)

In the meantime faith gives a present power of entry within the vail; for though faith takes us in, in fact

we are left here, looking forward to the time when the faith sought shall harmonize in the presence of the Lord.

Now follows faith's prayer—"COME, LORD JESUS."

Prayer must rest on promise, even as the promise rests on God. "He hath said, and shall He not do it? He hath spoken, and shall He not make it good?" He will; and so the cry ascends far and wide, "*Come!*" uttered often amidst many misconceptions, and with little intelligence as to what the mode, or time, or manner of that coming may be.

It is uttered by many an obedient servant who has served long and well, and feels his work is done. It is uttered by many a faithful soldier who in the battle and amidst the noise and confusion around longs for the rest that will soon come. It is whispered by many a lonely, patient sufferer longing for rest, yet rejoicing to wait the appointments of infinite love.

The servant whose pound has gained ten can say "Come." The weak, the failing, and the sad can say "Come;" for when He comes the weakness will be turned to strength, failing to perfection, and sadness to sorrow. The loving bride says "Come," and no present earnest given to faith can satisfy or remove the longing of the soul for that personal fellowship when the Bridegroom shall be seen "face to face," and spoken to "mouth to mouth."

But who is to come?

"*Come, Lord Jesus*"—LORD JESUS!

How deep the meaning of those words which so often pass our lips. Do we realize as we should either His Lordship or His salvation? for both are included here. To say "Lord Jesus" rightly, is to do the things that He says. Not those who only say, "Lord! Lord!" shall enter into the kingdom, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."

The Headship of Christ to His body, the Lordship of Christ to His household, and the Kingship of Christ to

His kingdom must never be forgotten. If salvation gives us *Jesus*, who shall save His people from their sins, and places us in the highest pinnacle of bliss, it lays on us the responsibility of recognizing Him as our "Lord."

The cry, then, "Come, Lord Jesus," involves, first, that we look to the coming of the Lord and Master, who shall take an account of His servants; "for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." We shall be made manifest then, and each will receive according to his own work. We may underestimate one another, we may overestimate; but there will be a righteous estimate made then, not according to the outward appearance, but according to the purpose of the heart. The Lord before whom we stand will allow no false measures and no untrue weights. All will come to be measured and to be weighed by the rule and by the shekel of the sanctuary. Then, we are told, many that are first shall be last, and many that are last shall be first.

Oh, what upsettings, what transpositions, will take place in that day, when all shall stand before Him whose eyes are as a flame of fire, kindled with the love and holiness of God! Yet shall we not fear; for though "*righteousness* shall be the girdle of His *loins*," that is, strength and might put forth in righteousness, "*faithfulness* shall be the girdle of His *reins*," that is, the affections of His heart towards His redeemed will secure the faithful fulfilment of all His covenant grace.

Oh, how precious these blendings of love and holiness in the person of our Lord! May they blend in us! May they be found in harmony in each child of God, even as they are in our "Lord Jesus!"

May our hearts be found in watchfulness and prayer, as well as in faithfulness and truth, ever giving expression to the words that the Holy Spirit has indited for us—"Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCHES OF GOD.

(Continued from vol. iii., page 305.)

[In the previous volume an extract was given from Mr. S. J. Deck's pamphlet (published in New Zealand) on the Position and Discipline of the Churches of God, for which we have had many expressions of thankfulness. Therein the writer pointed out the local and discriminative character of the Lord's dealings with the seven churches of Asia. (Rev. i. 3.) He now proceeds to show that the teaching in Paul's epistles to the churches is similar, and that the instructions given to Israel contained the same principles.]

THE guilty sinner, fleeing to Jesus, is not only reconciled and pardoned, but receives the spirit of adoption, crying, "Abba, Father." He is no more a servant, but a son. (Gal. iv. 7.) Thus does God's grace meet the legality of man's heart. But having been made free from sin, we have become the servants of Christ; and He who stooped so low to wash our feet says, "Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." There are thus two aspects in which the believer is regarded, viz., that of sonship or *relationship*, and that of *service* according to *office*.

The same is true regarding the Church. She is the bride, according to *relationship*; but seen in the place of *service* upon earth, she is the light of the world, God's house, His witness for truth and grace. These aspects must not be confounded. Some of the epistles regard the Church in the former, and some in the latter aspect. This is indicated by their opening addresses.

In those epistles which have to do with believers as the servants of Christ, they are regarded as corporately associated together in this responsibility, and the address runs as follows: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth;" and again, "Unto the church of the Thessalonians which is in God;" and these epistles contain rules for the government, ministry, and discipline of the Church of God.

In the epistles, however, which regard believers in the way of relationship, they are addressed as individually responsible directly to the Lord Jesus, and the address runs thus: "To the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi;" "To the saints at Ephesus," &c.; and in these epistles we find no trace of corporate (or church) action and responsibility.

The Epistle to the Ephesians presents the church in the former aspect, even as that glorious body which will be the bride, the Lamb's wife. Here we have *relationship* to Christ, and of this body every believer, whether sleeping in Jesus or now living, is a member, whatever his walk or apprehension of truth. Hence it has not a local, but a general character; and when the believer is exhorted in it as to his walk, whether amongst his fellow saints, or in the ordinary spheres and duties of life, his conscience is brought individually and directly into the presence of the Lord Jesus.

There is no thought of responsibility to a church, or of joint responsibility with other saints in a church, and, therefore, we get no rules for *church* organization or discipline. "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of the Lord" (Eph. v. 21), refers not to that rule which God has ordained for the oversight of the churches, to which Paul alludes in Heb. xiii. 17, but is qualified by the verses following: "Wives, *submit* yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord;" "Children, *obey* your parents;" "Servants, be *obedient* to them that are your masters."

Believers are, indeed, exhorted as members of Christ's church, as upon earth, but it is in connection with the *general membership* of "the *whole family* in heaven and in earth" (chap. iii. 15), and the unity they are to endeavour to keep is, "the unity of the Spirit." "Christ is the *head* of the church," even as "the husband is the head of the wife," and "He is the *Saviour* of the body."

We do not see Christ, as in Revelation, in the place

of judgment, calling His servants to account concerning their works; but we behold Him exercising a husband's authority and love, "nourishing and cherishing" His Church as His own flesh. As the risen Head in heaven, He gives "unto every one of us grace, according to the measure of the gift of Christ." "Some apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers." Though these gifts are in the Church, as upon earth, they come to it as united in relationship with its living Head, and are for "the *perfecting* of the saints, for the work of the *ministry*, for the *edifying* of the body of Christ, till we *all come unto a perfect man.*" As no thought of official responsibility, or of local churches, enters into this Epistle, those gifts are only mentioned which tend to the spiritual *nourishment* of the body, and, therefore, in addition to apostles, prophets, and teachers, we get evangelists and pastors.

In the Epistles to the Corinthians, on the contrary, where the Church is dealt with in the position of *testimony* in an evil world, the *government* of God's house, and *official responsibility* come in; and, therefore, in addition to apostles, prophets, and teachers, we get gifts of miracles, healings, helps, governments, and tongues—these latter being either for the rule of God's house or for signs to the world. (1 Cor. xiv. 22.)

These epistles deal with believers as the *servants* of Christ, *associated together* in this responsibility in local churches, or assemblies of saints. (I am not speaking of denominations, a thing unknown to Scripture.) Believers are addressed in them not so much as members of the general assembly, but as members *in particular* of that local assembly in which the will of God has placed them. The general membership is not set aside, but it is not the prominent thought. We therefore get in them the earthly organization, government, and ministry of God's house.

Whilst the church is responsible to the Lord Jesus,

each member has a joint responsibility in and to the assembly; hence, in matters of discipline, the Church has to judge and punish, and it is the Church which has to forgive and receive back again. As every believer has a personal as well as a corporate responsibility, so each local assembly (though forming part of "the general assembly and church of the firstborn") possesses its own local standing and personal responsibility to the Lord Jesus.

We shall find this to be abundantly clear if we examine these epistles. Thus, although Paul, in writing in the First Epistle—"To the church of God which is at Corinth"—reminds the Christians in it of their common calling as saints, "with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord," yet, when he addresses it, whether in praise, rebuke, or in matters of discipline, &c., he exhorts it as though it were entirely unconnected with all other churches on earth. If in chapter i. he thanks God that they were enriched with all utterance and knowledge, and came behind in no gift, it is concerning the church at Corinth *alone* he is writing. If, too, in chapter iv. he says, "Now ye are full, now ye are rich," and in chapter v., "Ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned," and again, "Put away from among yourselves that wicked person," surely he is not speaking about the Church of God generally, but only of the individual assembly at Corinth. As in Revelation it is "thee," "thee," "thee," so here it is "ye," "ye," "ye."

Mark, too, how the Spirit of God delights to commend what was of God in the church, before dealing with its failure and sin. As a golden candlestick, the church at Corinth stood on its own base. Paul does not occupy it, therefore, with the leaven which was working amongst the Galatian churches (he deals with that in the Epistle to the Galatians), but he occupies it with its own condition and responsibilities.

The evil condition of Corinth would indeed have caused deep grief to other churches, if made known to them, for the closer we live to Jesus the more deeply do we feel and mourn over the sin and shame of our brethren; still it was not the Church of God generally, the saints at Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, &c., who were called upon to mourn on account of the sin at Corinth, or to take cognizance of and deal with it, but the Christians in that particular church wherein the evil was manifested and allowed, even the Corinthian church.

God holds each church responsible to deal with evil, and maintain His authority. Each church possesses, in its locality, the standing and responsibility of the Israel of God; and even as God said to Joshua in Achan's case, "*Israel hath sinned . . . neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you,*" so Paul wrote to Corinth: "Ye have not rather *mourned*, that he which hath done this deed *might be taken away from among you;*" the rebuke and responsibility of acting *extending only to the Corinthian church.*

Christ desires that each church be occupied with Himself, His commandments, and His claims; and to that spirit which turns from our own personal responsibility, to occupy ourselves with the responsibilities of others, Christ's short and decisive rebuke is, "What is that to thee? follow thou me."

This local standing and responsibility of churches is denied by those who view only "one assembly" (or church), and affirm that "the idea of the members of an assembly is wholly unknown to Scripture." This view is supposed to be enforced by the manner in which Paul addresses the saints at Corinth, in 1 Cor. xii., in connection with "the one body," especially in the 27th verse, where he says, "Now ye are the body of Christ," &c., showing that the church at Corinth was so intrinsically one with the general Church of God

upon earth, as to preclude its having an independent local responsibility of its own.

In order to support this interpretation of the passage, it is necessary to lay emphasis on the word "the"—"Ye are *the* body of Christ." But, turning to the original Greek, we find that it has been inaccurately rendered in our authorised version, there being no article in the Greek before the word "body" (although the article is carefully added in verses 12, 14, 16, 18, 22, 24, 25, 28), and that therefore the correct rendering is, "Now ye are a body of Christ."

I believe the omission of the article in this particular verse is intentional, and that it possesses a forcible significance, corroborating the view I have been endeavouring to set forth concerning the church, when regarded in its position of *testimony* in the world.*

Having enlarged on important truths concerning the Church of God generally—the "general assembly"—as he says, *v.* 12, "so also is the Christ." Paul desired to make a special application of them to the saints assembled at Corinth; he therefore forces home these truths particularly upon them, saying, "Now *ye* are a body of Christ, and members in particular." The corporate standing and responsibility of the saints at Corinth was that of Christ's body, but their responsibility of membership was directly in connection with the assembly at Corinth, of which they were "members in particular." Indeed, had Paul

* The remarkable omission of the Greek article (corresponding to our definite article, *the*) is pointed out in several passages which have a bearing on this subject: "Ye are a building of God; "Know ye not that ye are a temple of God?" (1 Corinthians iii. 9, 16; also 2 Corinthians vi. 16.) "He that prophesieth edifieth a church." (1 Cor. xiv. 4; see also 19, 28.) In the same connection the use of the plural word *churches* is very marked: "So ordain I in all churches" (not in "the assembly," or church); "We have no such custom, neither the churches of God." (1 Cor. vii. 14; xi. 16.)

said, "Now *ye* are *the* body of Christ," he would thereby have excluded all saints, not belonging to the church at Corinth, from that blessed position, since the personal pronoun "ye" refers, not to people generally, but to certain persons particularly.

But some will ask, Why, then, the figure of "the *one body*," made use of in 1 Cor. xii.? Let us, then, shortly consider that chapter. Chapters xii. xiii. (in parenthesis) and xiv. form one paragraph in the Epistle, whose subject is spiritual gifts. Its object is to give gifts their right place in the church, and to order their exercise. Gifts had been abused in Corinth, having been exercised for self-exaltation, and not for edification. The gift of tongues had been especially thus abused, and was being coveted in a carnal spirit. This is clear from chapter xiv. 12-26, and therefore the conclusion concerning the exercise of spiritual gifts is, "Let all things be done to edifying." It is important to remember this whilst meditating on these chapters.

The subject is premised by Paul reminding the Christians at Corinth of their former low estate, led away to "dumb idols," and how deliverance came by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, since "no man can say Lord Jesus, but by the Holy Ghost." This puts them into their right place, as debtors to grace, owing all they are, and all they have, to the living power of the Holy Ghost.

Concerning spiritual gifts we learn that there are—

1st. "*Diversities of gifts* (mentioned *vv.* 8-10), but the *same Spirit*." The presence and living energy of the Holy Ghost in the church forms the key-truth in this chapter. The Lord Jesus, having ascended on high, has fulfilled the promise of the Father (Acts i. 4, 5), and sent down the Holy Ghost from heaven. The Holy Ghost is therefore on earth, dwelling in the church, and acting in living energy in the members of Christ. All gift, therefore, is by the power of the Holy Ghost. As Christ took the form of a servant

upon earth, so the Holy Ghost takes, as it were, the place of a servant in the Church. He distributes gifts indeed "according to His will;" but Christ is Lord (v. 5); the sovereignty of the Holy Ghost being an incorrect expression, the office of the Holy Ghost being to glorify *Him*, and to take of *His* things (the gifts are Christ's, Eph. iv. 7 and 8), and show them unto us. Still, we have to remember that all gift, knowledge, and power in the church are *by the same Spirit*.

2nd. Diversities of *ministries* (v. 28), but *the same Lord*. The apostles, prophets, teachers, &c., are *servants* (ministers, 1 Cor. iii. 5, and stewards, iv. 1) in the church of the same Lord Jesus. They hold an *official* place in the church for one common *Master* and *Lord*. This again indicates the character of this epistle. They are not lords over God's heritage, but servants for edification. Let us remember this concerning our gifts; we hold them under responsibility to serve Christ unto the edification of His Church.

3rd. "Diversities of *operations*, but the *same God* which worketh all in all." As there are diversities of ministries, prophets, teachers, governments, helps, &c., so each servant has in his peculiar ministry a special character of operation or working committed to him of God, which he is to wait on and cultivate without trying to imitate the operations of others. This also is of great practical importance to remember. There may be several prophets or teachers in a church. To one is given the fervent power of a Peter, to another the eloquence of an Apollos, to another the persuasive gentleness of the beloved disciple. Let each cultivate and use his own character of ministry, remembering that it is "the *same* God that worketh all in all," all sufficiency and increase being in God. (2 Cor. iii. 5; and 1 Cor. iii. 6.)

4th. "The *manifestation of the Spirit* [whether seen in gifts, ministries, or operations] is given to every man to *profit withal*." "All these worketh that one and the

selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will." This brings into responsibility each believer, and leaves no room for glorying. Each believer has a place of service, a gift in the Church of God, divided to him according to the will of the Holy Ghost, which place he is responsible to know, and to use for the *profit* of the church.

The human body, with its many and varied members, is used in illustration. Being many members—hand, eye, foot—it is yet one body. The whole body is not *one member, but many; yet being many, these members are one body.* "So also," says Paul, "is the Christ." Into this one body all believers have been baptized by the one Spirit, having been made to drink into one spirit.

This figure of the one body manifestly refers to the Church as in the world; the gifts, ministries, &c., being exercised on the earth. It therefore teaches concerning the church down here, that even as God has set different members in our natural bodies, all these members have special offices for the benefit of the body; so hath God set in the Church some apostles, some prophets, some teachers, &c., each to wait on and use the ministry God has committed to him for the profit of the whole. As there is no division in the natural body, but all the members work harmoniously for the whole, so in the church all should seek to use their gifts in harmony, seeking only the edification of the rest, having "the same care one for another."

This is true of the Church of God generally, and in one sense through the whole of its earthly history; for we in our day profit by the labours, sufferings, and faithfulness of the servants of Christ in past ages; and it becomes us so to watch and work, that the Church of God in the present and future times may be profited withal.

The members, or gifts, are in the body; hence, if baptized by the one spirit into the one body, I am a

member of the Church of Christ wherever gathered, and as such to be received by every church. If God has committed to me any ministry, whether of teaching or rule, and I am removed to another church, I am thus to be commended to it and received; yet not of compulsion, but according as they are able to recognize the gift of God in me.

This is, however, fully compatible with what we have previously noticed, that each church possesses an individual local responsibility to the Lord Jesus, and that the saints in each assembly are in an especial sense "*members in particular*" thereof. For, taking in illustration the human body, we not only find in it different members—a hand, an eye, a foot, &c., but there is the right hand and the left hand, the right foot and the left foot, &c., and each of these members, though in the body generally, possesses its own place in the body and its own local responsibility to the head. Again, we have not only a right and a left hand, but each hand is corporately composed of many members (the fingers and thumb), and these members, though in the body generally, are nevertheless members in particular of their respective hands, the thumb and fingers of each hand having an especial membership with and responsibility to one another.

Even so is it with the churches of God upon earth. Whilst there is a *general* membership binding the believer to the general assembly and Church of Christ, there is also a *particular* membership, which links him more immediately with that particular church in which he is placed of God—a local membership and responsibility, which pertains solely to him and the saints in his immediate locality, even those who constitute the Church of God in that place.

It is clearly according to this membership and responsibility that the saints in the church at Corinth are dealt with in the case of the fornicator. (1 Cor. v.) Thus Paul says, "there is fornication among you,"

clearly meaning among the saints at Corinth, and them only. "And ye are puffed up" shows the self-satisfied, carnal condition of the Corinthian church. "And have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you," the church at Corinth.

The local character of the discipline, as in connection primarily with the church at Corinth, is plainly expressed by the term "yourselves:" "Put away from among *yourselves* that wicked person." Paul does not say, "Put away from among *us*" as from the general fellowship of saints; nor yet "from *the church*" (or assembly) as from the whole Church of God upon earth; but he says, "Put away from among *yourselves*," *i.e.*, definitely from the saints assembled at Corinth. The Greek is yet more emphatic.

The saints all over the world were not implicated in the guilt of Corinth, but only such as were "members in particular" of the church of Corinth. *They* were called on, therefore, to mourn, and to put away the evil-doer from among *themselves*. *They* obeyed the command, put away the evil-doer, and sorrowed after a godly sort, and thus in all things they approved *themselves* to be clear in the matter. (2 Cor. vii. 11.)

There is one body—the general assembly and Church of Christ. All who are Christ's belong to this body; but its unity consists in all its members being made to drink into the one Spirit. It is a unity of members, not of churches; and to attempt a corporate unity of the churches is simply to endeavour to fuse into *one* the *seven* golden candlesticks. Such attempts are not according to the mind of God, and their evil tendency ever is to draw off the consciences of saints and churches from the Lord's judgment, and occupy them with the judgments one of another. The general membership of Christians is a doctrine to be acknowledged and maintained by the churches; but it can only be practically manifested by all saints drinking deeply into the

one Spirit, so that "the *whole* multitude of them that believe" may be of one heart and one soul.

I would now notice how Paul, in rebuking the church at Corinth for its guilt in suffering moral evil amongst it, deals with it after the manner in which Christ deals with Thyatira. Whilst the apostle sharply rebukes the church for disobeying his former epistle, "not to company with fornicators"—a guilt aggravated, too, by the heinousness of the crime tolerated in the church, "that one should have his father's wife"—he does not condemn the church as guilty of fornication, but rather for its disobedience, and for carelessness concerning the purity of the assembly. He calls upon the whole church to humble themselves before God; yet he puts a difference between him *who did* and those who *did not* the evil. Shame, rebuke, and humiliation fall upon the church generally, but the evil-doer must be delivered to Satan.

Turning to the Old Testament, we find that the ceremonial types throw great light on the manner in which God would have His people deal with outbreaks of evil amongst them. In Numbers v. 1-4, Israel is commanded concerning putting without the camp. Three kinds of ceremonial uncleanness (typical of the outbreaks of sin) are mentioned; viz., leprosy, an issue, and defilement by the dead; and such as were thus defiled were commanded to be put without the camp.

This passage is analogous to 1 Cor. v., according to which the church at Corinth was to "put away" any man called a brother who was either a fornicator, covetous, an idolater, railer, drunkard, or extortioner. God also instructed Israel more definitely concerning these cases of uncleanness; giving them "the law" of the leper (Lev. xiii. and xiv.); "the law" of the man with an issue (Lev. xv.); and "the law" of him who is defiled by the dead. (Num. xix.) A burnt-offering and a sin-offering were needed for the cleansing of the

first two; whilst for the latter the ashes of the red heifer were provided. To neglect or confuse these instructions would have been folly and sin in Israel even though the general precept in Numbers v. had been obeyed. This shows the deep importance of acquainting ourselves with the precepts as well as the principles of God.

In Lev. xi. we find another kind of ceremonial uncleanness. It was contracted by eating, or having to do with the carcasses of such creeping things and unclean animals as were forbidden Israel for food; they were commanded "not to make themselves abominable with any creeping thing," nor "unclean with them." If Israel had merely argued from general principles concerning such persons, they had doubtless brought them under the law of the leper, or the man with an issue, &c.; but turning to Scripture, we find special directions given concerning such persons; "they were, for their cleansing," to "wash their clothes in water," and "be unclean until evening."

There is, however, yet another form of ceremonial uncleanness to be considered. It is brought before us in Lev. xv., in connection with the man with an issue, and in Num. xix., in connection with those defiled by the dead. It resulted from a clean person having to do with such unclean persons as God commanded should be put without the camp. It may be termed *the uncleanness of association*.

We find in those chapters, that if a clean Israelite had to do with such unclean persons, he was thereby himself rendered unclean, and unfit to eat of the holy things (Lev. xxii. 1-5); and needed for his cleansing to wash his clothes, and bathe himself in water (indicating a deeper character of uncleanness than pertained to those who had partaken of unclean animals), and was unclean until evening. This teaches the corrupting, leavening nature of sin, and how necessary it is that the evil-doer be "put away," because of the con-

taminating influence he exerts upon such as *personally* have to do with him (not on the whole camp), defiling *them*, and rendering *them* unfit for communion with God.

We must mark, however, that whilst such as had to do with the unclean person (Num. v. 1-4), say a man with an issue, were thereby made partakers of his unclean condition, they were not so far defiled as to come under the law of him that had an issue, so that they also afterwards defiled all who had to do with them, *ad infinitum*; nor did they need a burnt-offering and sin-offering for their cleansing; they were simply commanded to wash their clothes, and bathe themselves in water, and were unclean until the evening. No; *uncleanness through association* was the penalty of having *personally to do with the original unclean person*.

God knows I do not desire to make light of the sin and danger of association with evil; for who can touch pitch and not be defiled? or who can take fire in his bosom and not be burnt? It is because sin has such a fearfully corrupting power that Paul so solemnly warns the Corinthian church that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." (1 Cor. v. 6.)

This passage, however, never teaches that all in church communion are immediately and simultaneously contaminated or leavened by permitting an evil-doer to break bread with them; such an idea seems to me little else than ritualism, or mysticism. It rather teaches us that even as a little leaven introduced and left in a measure of meal will work with more or less power until at last it leavens the whole lump, so the wicked example and practice of an evil-doer, who is suffered in a church, will assuredly exercise a contaminating, corrupting influence upon those who *have to do with him*, and thus upon the church generally, until at last the entire assembly may be leavened thereby.

This is true concerning both moral and doctrinal

evil. Such is the important and most practical lesson the apostle would enforce when he says, "Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, even as ye are unleavened." Discipline must be exercised that "others also may fear"—that "great fear" may come upon the church, so that none may dare to dishonour Christ by indulging in fornication, covetousness, railing, or drunkenness, or in whatever else is contrary to the gospel of Christ and sound doctrine. (See 1 Tim. v. 20; Acts v. 11-14; 2 Cor. vii. 11; and 1 Cor. xv. 33.)

A corporate responsibility therefore lies upon each church to exercise holy discipline. A corporate shame and guiltiness would also fall upon all the members of any church which neglected thus to obey and honour the Lord by "putting away" evil-doers. This is, however, a very different thing from that corruption in morals or doctrine which is the sure result of the church's first sin in *suffering* the evil-doer.

EVERLASTING KINDNESS.

ISA. liv. 8, 10.

"EVERLASTING kindness!" Hark, my soul, 'tis He,
Thy Jehovah Jesus, speaks that word to thee;
"Everlasting kindness!" speak the word once more:
O my soul, still listen, trust it, and adore!

"Everlasting kindness!" Since the world began,
Everlasting kindness through the ages ran;
Hidden oft in shadows, dim to human sight,
In Jehovah Jesus now it shineth bright.

"Everlasting kindness!" Feasting on that word,
Now my soul rejoices in its fulness, Lord;
But eternal ages, as they roll along,
Never shall exhaust that word so sweet, so strong.

"Everlasting kindness" never shall depart:
Well Jehovah Jesus knew my wandering heart—
Knew that loving-kindness, tender, true, and free,
Everlasting kindness only suited me.

“ASK WHAT I SHALL GIVE THEE.”

“*Ask what I shall give thee.*” Thus spake the Lord to Solomon, and thus He still speaks to His beloved and blood-bought people. Most wondrous words they are! Words which tell of the deep, full love which God has for us, and the open, bounteous hand with which He waits to gratify each longing of the heart that delights in Him. (Psa. xxxvii. 4.)

“No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.”

“Whate’er He has, His loving heart
Is ready to bestow.”

“The grace of our Lord is exceeding abundant.”
“He giveth liberally, and upbraideth not.” He gives, not indeed according to our deserts, but according to the love and grace which are in Himself—that love which passeth knowledge, that grace which has no bounds.

He has said, “If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.” “Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full.” “Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”

This is our blessed privilege; and who can describe the joy of such a portion? A quiet, humble walk with God, with a true desire to do His will, and a happy consciousness that, though we come short in every way, yet He is well-pleased with us, and accepts our poor, imperfect efforts to obey and serve Him. The light of His countenance shines upon us, and His loving voice whispers to our souls—“*Ask what I shall give thee.*”

We have confidence before Him, and know that He

will not only supply our need, and bless us according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus, but also minister to and help us in all the desires of our hearts. We find Him a present help, constantly heeding our prayers, and granting our petitions; and continual happy intercourse flows and re-flows between our souls and our beloved Lord. Our joy is full, and He sees of the travail of His soul, and so far is satisfied.

But ah, how often is it otherwise! How often are our petitions unanswered, and our desires unmet! How often are we straitened before the Lord! and wherefore, wherefore? Oh! is it not because our hearts condemn us, and thus we lose this happy, holy confidence before Him? We walk at a distance from Him—not, maybe, in wilful or open sin, but with cold, indifferent hearts. We venture to do our own will in *little* things, and are careless about seeking to please Him in everything, and thus a cloud comes over our souls, and we lose the joy of His presence.

We know He loves us still, and that He will *only* do us good; but our hearts condemn us. We feel He must be grieved with us, and instead of expecting the *caresses* and *comforts* of His love, we rather *expect* the rod (and, maybe, are conscious that we require it to rouse us from our carelessness, and restore us to a closer walk with Him), and therefore we have little or no confidence to apply to Him for help and guidance in little things.

Why, why should this be so? Why should we thus sink below our blood-bought, joyous place of happy fellowship and intercourse with Him? Has He not made provision for every failure? Is there not a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness? Does He not invite, yea, beseech us to come and confess the sins that burden us? and does He not promise that He will so forgive and cleanse us, that He will remember them no more? Does He not say of Himself, "I, even I, am He that blotteth out thy

transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins”?

Mark, it is for *His own sake* that He does it. True, we deserve it not. Our ways are often such that, even as His children, we forfeit every claim upon His goodness and mercy; but we cannot exhaust the fountain of love and grace which is ever welling up from His blessed heart. For His own sake He blesses us, because of the intensity of the love wherewith He loves us. He has undertaken for us. He has pledged Himself to meet our every need, and to perfect that which concerneth us; and He *will* do it. He is forming us for Himself, to gratify His own deep and full affections, and He has made and will keep us as His peculiar treasure to all eternity.

He took us up in our helpless and hopeless condition, well knowing the depths of iniquity that were within us. He foresaw all our cold ingratitude, our base returns, for all His love. He knew how perverse and wilful we should be, what wanderers we should prove. He knew that there was not only no power for good in us, but also that we should be obstinate and stiff-necked, and deal very treacherously. (See the parallel case of Israel—Deut. xxxi. 19–21; Isa. xlviii. 4–11.)

He knew it all, and yet His grace abounded; yea, more, it superabounded, and He made a covenant with us, ordered in all things and sure, in which He undertook—for His own name’s sake, that *it* should not be polluted—to perfect His own work within us, and bring us forth at last glorious and complete, unblameable and unrepvable in His sight. True, He may have to pass us through the furnace—heated maybe seven times—to purge away our dross; but still His covenant stands firm, and nothing will ever induce Him to forego His purposes of love, or stay the stream of His never-ceasing, over-flowing, lovingkindness and tender mercies toward us.

Why, then, should we distrust His grace? Is He

not at all times waiting to restore our souls? If we have wandered, does He not say, "Return, ye back-sliding children, and I will not cause my anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful, saith the Lord"?

How often has His grace abounded! Again and again, even amid our wanderings, has He surprised our conscience-stricken hearts by some unwonted favour, some special answer to some feeble, and perhaps unbelieving prayer, and thus has proved what His love would do, and how His gracious hand would pour its bounties forth, if we would walk with Him.

Surely, surely we have no reason for remaining at a distance from Him, or for distrusting His readiness to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think. He has never been a wilderness to us—a land of darkness. No, no; we have always proved that in Him we have a goodly heritage, a rich and pleasant portion. We have always found Him full of compassion, ready to forgive, and plenteous in goodness and mercy; yea, waiting to hear our cry, that He might again minister to us out of His own abundant fulness.

Well may He say to us, "Ye have not, because ye ask not." Oh, may His love constrain and enable us so to cleave to Him that we may have confidence in Him at all times, lift up our face to Him without fear, and hour by hour have the joyous consciousness that He is indeed saying to us—"ASK WHAT I SHALL GIVE THEE."
"OPEN THY MOUTH WIDE, AND I WILL FILL IT."

How rich a treasury of grace
In Jesus Christ we find!
Wisdom, and love, and truth, and might,
In Him are all combined.
Whate'er our thirsting spirit craves,
His fulness will supply;
His gracious ear is ever swift
To hear our faintest cry.
To Him we ne'er can come in vain,
How deep soe'er our need;
He freely gives us all, and more
Than that for which we plead.

THE DEATH OF CHRIST.

PART III.

HAVING considered the death of Christ as the triumph of Satan, and as the crime of men, it remains for us to view it as

III. THE AWFUL INFLICTION OF THE HAND OF GOD.

This is an aspect of that event as mysterious, and to mere reason as incomprehensible, as the previous ones were natural and intelligible.

That Satan and Satan's slaves should seek to destroy the One who overthrew Satan's kingdom is natural; that God the Father should seek the death of His well-beloved Son seems contradictory, and, apart from revelation, entirely inexplicable. And yet there can be no manner of doubt that the death of Christ may not only be viewed as God's act, but that, as God's act, it has its principal significance, its chief results, and its best and only true explanation.

The following passages speak of it in this sense—
 "It pleased the Lord to bruise Him." "He hath put Him to grief." "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord of hosts." "Thou hast laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness, in the deeps. Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and thou hast afflicted me with all thy waves. . . . Thy fierce wrath goeth over me; thy terrors have cut me off." "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" "The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against His Christ. . . . to do whatsoever *thy hand and thy counsel* had determined before to be done." "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

Our blessed Lord was thus the victim of deadly on-

slaught from all the powers of the universe—beneath, around, and even above. All the power of God, of Satan, and of men, at the same moment, was put forth in full force against the sinless sufferer at Golgotha.

The powers of darkness could have had “no power at all against Him, except it were given them from above.” But that it was given them from above, even by the very hand on which Jesus had ever leaned for support, was that which gave the cross its deepest agony, and filled up His cup of woe.

He in whom the fathers trusted, and who delivered them, forsook Him in the hour of His greatest need; nay, opened the flood-gates of His long pent-up wrath against a world of sin, and let forth its mighty volume in waves and billows of overwhelming power upon His unoffending head. “It pleased the Lord to bruise Him” at the moment that He looked up for relief and support under the cruelties of human malignity.

All was dark beneath, all was dark around. To the Father of lights He looked up, and lo! all was dark, thick darkness above. He bowed His head to the storm, and died—died at the hand of God.

In solving the strange problem of God’s judgment thus inflicted upon His beloved Son, we shall discover the reason why Satan and men were permitted to succeed in their designs against “the Holy One and the Just.”

Remember that, since the flood in the days of Noah, God had been permitting sin to overspread the world He made, without any signal interference against it. To any intelligence of another world looking on at the history of this earth, it would appear that God had altogether ceased to assert His rule, and surrendered the earth to the control of Satan—so dishonoured was His name, so defied His authority, and so spurned His laws.

Why was all this? Had God forgotten? Could He not see or hear the things that were done upon His

earth? Was He deaf to the desolate cry of His people in past ages?

“Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest thou thyself in times of trouble? The wicked hath said in his heart, God hath forgotten: He hideth His face; He will never see it. Arise, O Lord; O God, lift up thine hand: forget not the humble.” “O Lord God, to whom vengeance belongeth; O God, to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself. Lift up thyself, thou judge of the earth. . . . Lord, how long shall the wicked, how long shall the wicked triumph? Yet they say, The Lord shall not see,” &c. “Remember this, that the enemy hath reproached, O Lord, and that the foolish people have blasphemed thy name. Arise, O God, plead thine own cause.”

Thus even to His own people God appeared to have forsaken the earth, and ceased to guard His own holy name. One spot was visible in all the universe where God's will was not done as it is in heaven, and His angels beheld Him suffer it. A mystery for their wondering eyes to see. A God, a holy God, and Almighty upon the throne, and yet permitting His glory to be made light of, and His authority to be utterly despised—and this for ages. They had seen Satan and his angels justly judged without mercy. They had seen the world that once was overflowed with waters and the wicked perish, and had understood it. But this was mystery unfathomable; and in those pitiful appeals that came up from earth they could have joined; for there was a discord in the universal harmony by reason of this world's condition.

But God was waiting. Waiting to reveal Himself; waiting till occasion should bring out His highest characteristic; letting man go on his full length in his raging rebellion, that, when his wickedness was full, He might bring out His superabounding grace.

Love was at work. Not willing that any should

perish, He forbore for ages to inflict His judgment, till at last the time came to declare Himself. "He had pity for His own holy name" (Ezek. xxxvi. 21), so long maligned, and the fulness of time brought Him forth to action.

Sin must be judged in a manner worthy of God's holy throne, and all the universe must be satisfied that God is God. Will He sweep away the world from its place, and bury men in an eternal woe? That would not be sufficient; for that would not explain the ages of apparent indifference on the part of God to man's rebellion. That long silence must be explained. Sin must be judged, and in such a way as to show the full consistency of its not having been judged long ago. Conceive the watching myriads of loftiest intelligences awaiting the solution of the mysterious paradox.

If God still bear such insult, where is the righteousness of His throne? If He judge it, why has He delayed to judge it hitherto? "Why standest thou afar off, O Lord? why hidest thou thyself?" plead the perplexed saints.

And yet hear one question more. It comes from Calvary; it answers and it solves all the rest—"Eli, Eli, lama sabaethani?"—that which seemed of all wrongs the deepest wrong, of ages of inexplicable unrighteousness the most unrighteous transaction, the very pinnacle and climax of injustice, that the angels' God, the saints' Messiah, the holy and the harmless One, should be forsaken. This is the key to all the mystery, the righting of all wrong, the establishment of God's name and throne, and the harmonizing of all the discord that had marred the universal unity of the kingdom of heaven.

Because God loved men, He delayed to execute judgment upon sin heretofore; and now that judgment must be executed, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son to bear it, that all men through Him might escape it.

The worthy name of the Most High is cleared from the long imputation that had seemed to rest upon it; for sin is judged and justice is satisfied. And yet the manner of the judgment is so wonderful, that even in its execution the hands of mercy are untied, and infinite love has unlimited scope in the work of saving the lost.

The types in Leviticus xvi. of the two goats, the Lord's lot and the scape-goat, show the two great features of the truth. With the blood of the goat for the Lord's lot, atonement is made for the holy place, the tabernacle, and the altar; the other bears away to the desert the sins of all Israel.

By the first, the holy throne of God is justified under the inconsistency of its presence "in the midst of their uncleanness." (Verse 16.) By the other, the souls of men are "justified from all things" that had stood as a barrier impassable between them and an offended God.

In the great controversy there were two parties to be satisfied: God's name defiled had to be cleared; man's sin defiling to be purged away.

Judgment, promptly executed, would have done the first; but I am bold to say, no human thought, however high and bold its reach, could have conceived a means whereby these two great ends might both be gained. "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God," was the utterance of a wisdom, a love, and a grace surpassing the understanding even of those whose minds, long familiar with the revealed mind of God, have risen to the greatest height of spiritual and divine philosophy.

This death of Christ is thus the wondrous means devised by God that His banished be not expelled from Him (2 Sam. xiv. 14), which none but God could have devised.

With a view to this, He had suffered the manners of the ungodly for ages, not willing that any should

perish. To this, by prophecy and types, He had been pointing forward as the ground of hope since the world began. By their attitude in regard to this shall the fate of all men be ultimately determined, and around it, as a centre, all future ages shall be gathered; for the sufferer Himself, by the suffering of death, has earned for man this excellent glory, that all principalities and powers, in heaven, in earth, and under the earth, shall own this Man as their Lord, to the glory of God the Father, till the hour shall come when He shall give back the kingdom to God, even the Father. (1 Cor. xv. 24.)

The Lord's death is thus shown to be as truly the crime of man as the judgment of God; and not less the crime of man because it is the fulfilment of the will of God. (See Acts ii. 23; iii. 15; iv. 28.)

It affords at once a triumph to Satan, and it secures his eternal overthrow. It exhibits the fierceness of God's wrath, and the unmeasured depths of His love. It is the very sum and fulness of iniquity, and it is the cleansing of all iniquity.

It was the darkest of earth's dark days, and yet it is the dawn for man of the day of eternal sunshine. The upspringing of the river of endless pleasures is found in the agonies of that hour; for God therein has proved the greatness of His love for man better than if he had never fallen from his happy innocence in Eden.

"In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him." (1 Jno. iv. 9.)

'Twas then that He, who knew no sin,
 Stood in the sinner's place;
 Drank the fierce wrath of God, and felt
 The hiding of His face.

He, the Divine, Eternal Son,
 The Holy One of God,
 Was treated as a cursed one
 Beneath the sinner's load!

THE PERSON OF THE LORD JESUS.

THE Christian delights to meditate on the person and character of the Lord Jesus. To the believer He is precious. It is his joy to think over and call to remembrance the ways, words, and actions of the Beloved of his soul. When he can, he not only meditates upon, but talks about his Lord.

There is an apprehension of the Lord which is far more acceptable and pleasant to Him than the mere recognition of Him as Creator. The Socinian, Hindoo, and Mahometan in some measure acknowledge God as God, but the New Testament reveals to us God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself; and it is in this aspect that we exclaim concerning Jesus, "He is the chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely." In proportion as we behold Christ as God manifest in the flesh, so we arrive at the true beauty and power of God's way of salvation, and measure the height and depth of His unutterable love.

We seldom get nearer or more sublime views and thoughts of the Lord Jesus than when alone, we shut to our door, or when at the table of the Lord we commemorate His death. And I suppose that if mortal man were to have a very near sight of the Holy One, it would be too much for his mortality, and he would either have to be taken away from the earth, or have some heavy cross to bear, like Paul's thorn in the flesh, lest he should be exalted above measure.

The descriptions of the Lord Jesus in Cant. v. 10-16, and Rev. i. 13-16, and elsewhere, are so highly figurative that we are very slow in apprehending them, and the dull and laggard soul fails to soar above present things and fleshly thoughts, and to enter into the future unknown vast. How puny and unworthy is the best attempt to describe the undescribable glories and beauties of the King of kings, or to unfold the

glorious holiness which is manifested in the Saviour from sin!

One often tries to honour the Father by attempting to unveil the person and character of the Son; but the choicest of Scripture language, the purest symbols of earthly and heavenly things (so far as we understand them) must fall short of unfolding His holiness, His spotlessness, His purity.

The highest height that I have ever been able to climb has been to let the soul go out into rapture because of the possession of Christ, to grasp Him as my very own, and rejoice that I shall see Him as He is. His head, His locks, His eyes, His cheeks, His mouth; His hands, yea, His whole person is altogether lovely. Words fail to describe His charms; but here is the fact—He is *my* Beloved, *my* Friend. “I am my Beloved’s, and my Beloved is mine!”

This possession, this oneness with Him, brings to our comprehension what is beyond description, beyond compare, so that we can with supreme love and devotion bind Him to our hearts, and feel that, sinners though *we* be, we are one with Him—pure and spotless though *He* be.

There is amazing power in this apprehension of Jesus. It draws out the affections, and bends the will to the beloved One. It helps to break down the pride and self-will of the heart. It acts as a burning fire to consume all the dross within. It is an energizer of the mind, a quickener of the thoughts, and attractor of the affections. It is a purger of the conscience, and a wall of fire round the actions.

The language of the heart when thus delighting in Christ is, “My Beloved, how can I do this? How can I go there? What would He say? How would He feel? Ah! to grieve Him I cannot.”

“My Jesus!” not some one else’s; not one I have heard about; not a mere poetic fancy of the brain, nor a distorted thought about some hero-worship, but *mine*

own. Mine own to love, to keep, to use, to speak to, to wait on, whose smile will brighten the darkest night, whose help will bridge over the darkest chasm, turn dry places into pools of water, and make every wilderness blossom as the rose.

This apprehension of the person and character of the Lord Jesus is alike open to every class of Christian. The poor, in the depths of His poverty, can feel he has mountains of bread. The rich, surrounded by the choicest luxuries, can feel them fade and pale before Him. The queen drops her sceptre, the beggar his rags, and all are one in the person of Christ.

Those who have been taught in the school of Christ need no earthly teaching to enable them to understand the mysteries of His love. Those students whom kings have crowned are constrained to cast their diadems at His feet, whilst they gaze at God in Christ and His matchless plan of salvation for lost and ruined creatures.

The Lord Jesus is a *living* Saviour; ever present for His people's protection, ever thoughtful for His people's comfort, ever living to be their Advocate. Much of the Christian's joy and peace arises from a bright and vivid realization of this truth. How can he be doleful, dull, unhappy, or melancholy, who has the constant and enjoyed presence of Christ?

Sing, sing, sing,
Aged, sick, worn one;
Praise Him, bless His name,
He is the self-existing One.

Hark to His words of peace—

“Fear not; I am the first and the last.”

“Fear not; I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.”

“Fear not; I am thy shield.”

“Fear not; I have redeemed thee; thou art mine.”

“Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom.”

Ye doubters and trembling ones! go into the presence of the Lord Jesus and get renewed strength.

DIM SIGHT AND CLEAR VISION.

Read MARK viii. 14-25.

THE connection between the healing of the blind man and our Lord's conversation with His disciples concerning the miracle of the loaves is very striking.

The disciples had witnessed the miracle of the loaves (verses 2-9), but they had not learnt the lesson that it was calculated to teach; for when Jesus said to them, "Take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees," they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have forgotten to take bread"—not yet recognizing in the gracious One before their eyes the mighty God "who maketh the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man" (Psalm civ. 14); "who giveth food to the hungry" (Psalm cxlvi. 7); "who openeth His hand, and satisfieth the desire of every living thing." (Psalm cxlv. 16.) Having eyes, still they saw not.

Our Lord had opened their inward eyes at the lake of Galilee and elsewhere. He had taken them by the hand to heal them in the words, "Follow me." They had followed Him, and had learnt that He was their Saviour—"the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Thus He was precious to them, beloved by them. He was their Master, their Lord. They fully expected to enjoy a kingdom with Him by and by.

They had proved His miraculous power to save them in danger, and occasionally also to meet their need, as in the ministry of the loaves and fishes for the five thousand, and again for the four thousand. But how much blindness yet remained! They still failed to perceive what they *should* have seen before this time, that having *Him* they had all things. They had not yet learnt to rest on Him for daily supply. They could not say, even concerning natural things—things for the

body—"The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want;" for they had not yet discerned Him in this character.

They had seen His *acts* of grace in the past, and could recall them minutely when their minds were directed backward by Himself; but yet He had to say to them, "Having eyes, *see ye not?*" "Perceive ye *not yet*, neither understand?"

They were casting about in their minds as to where supply should come from, seeing only that food which they had provided for themselves, and which was far too little to meet their need, instead of calculating on His power and love. They even thought that their gracious Master was reproaching them for their exhausted resources, and their forgetfulness. How like some of us at this very time!

The next thing recorded in this chapter is the healing of a blind man; and very significant is the place given it by the Spirit of God, with whom is perfect order and most instructive arrangement.

Our Lord "took the blind man by the hand." "He giveth sight to the blind," and He alone; and for this blessed work among others, "to open the blind eyes" (Isaiah xlii. 7), He came into this world, the Sent One of the "Father of lights." (James i. 17.) Precious indeed was His work of mercy on the outward eyes of men, opening thus to their minds a world of light and beauty all unknown before. But how infinitely more precious and blessed the same work wrought on the souls of those hitherto blinded by the god of this world; those unable to see the light of the Sun of righteousness; unable to gaze on His person, and work, and ways; unable to see or enter into His kingdom, and the full inheritance in Himself to be enjoyed, first in measure here, and then fully to be known as it is laid up for them in heaven!

Every redeemed soul can say, more or less joyfully, "One thing I know; whereas I *was* blind, *now* I see." How often, also, is this gracious miracle wrought out

slowly, or, as it may appear, in stages, as with the blind man before us! And why is this? Perhaps because our blessed Lord will deal with us as reasonable beings, and lead us on intelligently; our mind, and heart, and will, *going with Him* in His work within us.

This man might have been made to see clearly at once, as some other blind ones were; and some souls appear to be fully enlightened at once—at once to enjoy the full blaze of day, while the transition of others “from darkness to light” is more slow. They pass through many doubts, and difficulties, and bewilderments. Not that our gracious Saviour would have it so surely; but we are so slow to learn, so prone to unbelief, and we so little *commit* ourselves to that hand which has begun the good work, and thus we prevent Him from quickly perfecting our vision. In this way we are hindered from enjoying to the full all that accession of blessing which a fully opened eye would at once perceive, and the heart consequently appropriate to itself; for “all things are yours.” “Ye have not, because ye ask not.”

And why do we not ask, we who are longing for far more than we have ever yet enjoyed? I mean, ask in faith—ask in such a way as to receive.

Is not the chief reason, because we only partially *see* the treasures laid up for us? Our vision is still dim; and though through the opened eye of faith we have seen, and do see the *light* of God in the face of Jesus Christ, yet how little do we know that blessed One Himself! How very little do we know Him in His various aspects and characters beside that of *Saviour*! Beyond that all is indistinct. We “see men as trees walking,” and we need the further putting forth upon our eyes the hand of the great Physician, that we may be able to see “every man clearly”—above all, to discern this blessed One, whom to *know* is life eternal.

Oh, let us then wait before Him, and, in such faith as we have, let us earnestly cry to Him, "Lord, that I may receive my sight," until we are able to see that He who has brought us out of Egypt's darkness, borne us on eagles' wings unto Himself, is fully able to meet the utmost need of the hungry soul. He desires that we should see this truth, so as through it to *rest in Himself*. He would have us regard Him, not as one who has in certain emergencies of our spiritual life met our need with a supply from His own hands, but as Himself the fountain head of life, and strength, and sustenance, and as ready to meet to the full *every* want as it arises.

We need *daily* bread. That which we fed on some time ago will not feed us to-day. Even the abundant "fragments" are distasteful, like the manna of old, which, when kept, "bred worms, and stank." Our souls crave sweet fresh supplies of the bread of life, and if we have them not we are lean, and weak, and unsatisfied.

But why should we be so? There is no reason at all for such a state of things, when the "true bread from heaven" is always within our reach, and offered freely to us with the pressing invitation, "Eat, O friends!"

The only hindrance is in ourselves, and our remaining blindness. Surely if we saw by faith that our loving Lord is indeed able to satisfy every want of our poor hearts, to fulfil our best desires, and to strengthen us for our walk with God, and our work for God, we should then cast ourselves upon Him without reserve, and, like Paul, count all things but loss for the excellency of that knowledge, and soon with joy find Him our "all in all."

What, then, is wanting in order that we may be able thus to enjoy our portion, and to feed with constant delight on the "living bread that cometh down from heaven"? Is it not to have clearness of vision added to the already opened eye, that we may be able to

“see with our eyes, and look upon the word of life” (1 John i. 1), and find Him “the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever”?

His word to us is, “What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee?” “Yet for these things I will be enquired of by them, to do it for them.”

DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCHES OF GOD.

(Concluded from page 56.)

I wish now to call attention to two points, concerning which, it appears to me, that great mistakes have been made in the matter of discipline.

The *first* point is, that the discipline of the church should only be exercised towards the *person* who *has done* the sin, or who *holds* the evil doctrine.

Scripture is very clear on this point. Thus it says (1 Cor. v.): “If any *man* be a fornicator . . . with such an *one*, no, not to eat;” and again: “Put away from amongst yourselves that wicked *person*.” So also in 2 Thess. iii. 6: “Note that *man*, and have no company with *him*;” and again in Titus iii. 10: “A *man* that is a heretic . . . reject,” &c.

As there is not a single passage of Scripture which commands that discipline be exercised towards a church (*i.e.*, towards believers collectively), we have no Scripture warrant for rejecting any one on the ground that he has come from any particular church; the only scriptural warrant for discipline being that the person has himself *done* the sin, or that he *holds* the evil doctrine.

As far as I can ascertain, the second and third chapters of the Revelation are the only portions of Scripture which imply the corporate rejection of churches. Christ threatens in them to remove the candlestick from Ephesus, and to spue Laodicea out of His mouth, unless they repent. This is assuredly the

Lord's prerogative, and is nowhere delegated to His servants, to whom it only belongs to deal with the individual, as to what he personally is or holds.

Of course, if a church (I do not mean a denomination) *professed* such evil doctrines as Christ hates (as a Socinian church does, professedly denying the proper Deity of the Lord Jesus), we could receive none from it; not, however, because they came from it, but because to be of it they must individually profess the evil doctrine. We should thus still deal with them according to what they individually held.

Though we may find it necessary to separate from Christian assemblies, because their ecclesiastical principles more or less practically ignore the Lordship of Christ, or the presence and authority of the Holy Ghost, or set aside the order of God's house, we must take heed to own what is of God in them, and to remember that God more or less recognizes them as His servants, and as forming part of Christ's church. We should therefore seek to help with them in service as far as we conscientiously may, and gladly welcome in the Lord's name those amongst them who commend themselves to us on personal examination.

The Lord has lately led many of His people to separate from such ecclesiastical positions as seemed contrary to His word, and to gather together simply in the name of the Lord Jesus, seeking to own the presence of the Holy Ghost in the church, to distribute gifts "to every man severally as He will." Are we, however, to think that Christ only owns such assemblies as His churches—as His body on earth? Has not Christ, from Pentecost till now, had churches, candlesticks on earth, which He has been owning, and amongst which He has been walking? Are we not, then, to seek to own what Christ owns, whilst we seek to be separate from all that which is contrary to the Word?

I believe that Scripture never warrants our imposing as a term of communion upon any *real child of God*,

blameless in walk, and sound in doctrine, that he first renounce the assembly he has been in fellowship with, even though we regard its church principles to be so far wrong as to hinder our having open communion with it. As a *child* we are to receive such an one into the family, as a member into the body, though it would, of course, be our duty to seek to instruct him more perfectly in the will of God.

But some will say, How long are we to continue to act thus towards one who continues to have fellowship with other such churches, but seeks at the same time occasional fellowship with us?

I do not see that the Scripture places any limits to our acting in grace to such an one, and seeking his edification. Ought we not rather to rejoice that our brethren are willing to come and feast with us on the fatness of the Lord? Faithfulness might, indeed, ere long require that we tenderly admonish, or it may be rebuke, such for inconsistency; still, I think we should not act in discipline towards them, because it is rather a matter of personal responsibility between them and the Lord Jesus; and to their own Master they would stand or fall.

To the church it only belongs to enquire concerning any, Is he of the household of faith? If so, to him belong the family table and privileges; whilst to him also apply the family laws and discipline, just because he is a member, and not at all on account of attainment or knowledge.

The *second* point is, that the evil-doer is to be "put away," not merely from the Lord's Table, but also from the *general communion of saints*, whether in the assembly, or the circle of private friendship.

Thus the command in 1 Cor. v. 13 is, "Put away," not from the Lord's Table, but "from amongst *yourselves* that wicked person." Of course, the commandment does apply to the Lord's Table, as that feast is the highest expression of Christian communion, but it

also extends to *all* acts of Christian recognition. Thus in verse 11 Paul again says, "I have written unto you *not to keep company . . . with such an one, no, not to eat*"—alluding, as the context clearly shows, not *alone* to the communion of the bread and wine, but also to the fellowship of Christian homes.

We must turn, in connection with this point, to another Scripture (2 John 10, 11), which I have not yet noticed, as it forms part of a private epistle, *i.e.*, one written not to a church, but, like the one to Philemon, to a private Christian.

It is held by some that this Scripture teaches, that if a person received one who brought false doctrine, he became thereby partaker of his evil deeds; so that other Christians ought to deal with him as they would with the one who held false doctrine; and also that this principle is applicable to the inter-communion of churches "*ad infinitum.*"

It appears to me that those who hold the above view have not only overlooked the general character of this epistle, but have also failed duly to weigh the words of the text. These verses form part of an epistle written by John, not as an apostle, but as an elder, to an individual—a sister. As its character, therefore, is *private*, it ought not to be used for regulating church action. It belongs to the family circle, being addressed to "the elect lady and her children."

This is rendered more emphatic by its being written, not to a brother, one who might possibly be a teacher or elder, but to a sister, one who could not therefore be in a position of authority in the church. Its object seems to be to enforce in private life our responsibility to honour the Lord in all things.

The Lord does acknowledge private rights (Acts v. 4), and the home circle with its own immediate relationships and responsibilities; but Scripture plainly shows us that, even in the family circle and more private concerns of life, we are the Lord's servants, responsible to

glorify Him ; so that an offence which at the first would only concern me and my brother, and ought not to go any further, may, if not repented of, ultimately become a matter for church action in the Lord's name. (Matt. xviii. 15-18.)

It would not become Christians to receive into family or social friendship one who had been "put away" for drunkenness, covetousness, or other moral evil. No, says the apostle, "with such an one, not to eat." The like instruction seems to be enforced in this epistle with regard to one holding evil doctrine, "Receive him not into *thine house*, nor bid him God-speed."

By receiving the holder of evil doctrine into her house, and bidding him God-speed, the elect lady would have set private friendship above her duty to Christ ; made light of his evil deeds, and become partaker thereof. The chief emphasis in the warning is, however, directed against "bidding him God-speed," an action which would imply a positive sympathy in his behalf, and furtherance of his evil course.

Those who do thus sin, like such as had to do with a man with an issue (Lev. xv.), become defiled, and partakers of his evil condition. We do not read, however, that they stand in the same place as the evil-doer, and under his condemnation ; such a conclusion is mere inference, and contrary, I believe, to the tenor of the Scriptures we have been considering.

I much question whether it would be right to deal in discipline with one who broke the injunction of these verses, because the responsibility of obeying them would lie rather between the individual and the Lord, than the individual and the church. The commandment, however, forms part of God's word ; it would therefore be right and fitting for his brethren, and especially the elders of the church, to solemnly admonish him in the Lord's name concerning his sin therein ; but having done so, further action (unless he was found to have embraced the doctrine) must be left to the Lord, who

will judge, even by death sometimes, such as refuse to judge themselves. (See Cor. xi. 30, 31.)

I note this because we need to guard so carefully against the encroachment of ecclesiastical authority over the private conscience; and it is a dangerous sign when men speak much of "*the church*," its decrees, and authority, &c.

The Lord has committed to every church the judgment of its members; even as Paul says, "Do not ye judge them that are within?" and this delegated authority needs to be faithfully maintained. It is, however, defined and circumscribed by the precepts of the Word, and it deals with sins of so presumptuous a character, that the conscience even of the evil-doer cannot but justify that action, whereby he is put away till he repent, as being fitting, and honouring to God. In all other matters we need carefully to maintain the exercise of the individual conscience before God.*

In putting away any from the church, we do not put him away vitally, *i.e.*, from the real membership of the body in its Ephesian sense, but we exclude him from having fellowship with us in the visible communion of saints, and in that blessed position of testimony for God which belongs to the churches upon earth.

The action of one church is only binding upon another so long as it is clearly according to the word of God. Each church is, therefore, bound to accept

* In dwelling upon this point, the author refers to a modern system of discipline which builds much (by misapplication and inference) upon these verses in John's second epistle; and he shows the want of consistency in the use of this passage. Though it is stringently applied to the Lord's Supper, a very partial obedience is yielded to it in *private* intercourse, and thus probably all who embrace this system are *de facto* excommunicated, as standing in the same place as the evil-doers! He appeals feelingly and affectionately to those who may be in this case, reminding them of Acts xv. 10 as one who has felt the burden, and can thank God for deliverance from it.—Ed.

the judgments of another church only in so far as this is the case. With regard to the Corinthian fornicator, his guilt was so manifest that he could not have been knowingly received anywhere, save in contempt of Christ's authority. This would have been equally true, whether the church at Corinth had judged him or not, because of the common duty which all churches owe to Christ. Had he presented himself to any other church, after he had been put away by the Corinthian church, in obedience to the apostolic command, there would have been no necessity for re-judging his case. His sin was so heinous as to leave no room for doubt concerning the necessity of exercising discipline towards him, and therefore the action of the church at Corinth would certainly have been endorsed.

As long as there can be godly confidence between churches, they should recognize, in the Lord's name, each other's deeds and discipline. It would, therefore, be very wrong to receive one who had been solemnly put away by another church, unless there was *very good ground* for setting aside its judgment.

We are not bound, however, to own the deeds or discipline of any church, as *of necessity* those of the Holy Ghost, *i.e.*, as being *infallible*. Failure and sin ever pervade even our holy things; therefore we must always weigh whatever man has to do with in the balances of the sanctuary.

We may be compelled at times to question or even disallow the action of another assembly, but it does not follow that we must therefore disown it as a church of God, indwelt by the Holy Ghost. No; we only recognize that our fellow-believers gathered there are, like ourselves, in the body, compassed with infirmities and temptations, liable to grieve and quench the Spirit, and thus (losing the sense of His presence) to fall into error in their judgment of spiritual things.

Surely one church is not bound to receive implicitly any discipline which it believes to be contrary to the

mind of the Lord, just because it *has been enacted by another church*? Look, for example, in John's third epistle, at the church, under the influence of Diotrephes, excommunicating the apostle John. Were all other churches bound unquestioningly to accept this discipline, simply because it had emanated from a church gathered in the name of the Lord Jesus? or would it have been a denial of the unity of the body when they refused to do so? Surely not.

Diotrephes not only did wrong in rejecting in self-will one who was an honoured servant of Christ, but he sinned further in the manner in which his blind zeal led him to extend the discipline, from the apostle John and those who were associated with him, to those who would not consent thereto; as it says, "But Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not . . . and *not content therewith*, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church."*

What evil! what sin! and yet there were many in that church blindly and zealously supporting him in this sweeping condemnation. What is the added exhortation? "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good." Truly, "it is good to be zealously affected always;" but let us see that it be "in a good thing." (Gal. iv. 18.)

Churches may be gathered, as all primitive churches were, only in the name of the Lord Jesus, and yet they may fall into such a carnal condition as to greatly mistake the guidance of the Spirit. No church can therefore rightly lay claim to its decisions being by the *absolute* authority of the Holy Ghost. If it be enquired of concerning its authority for acting, it can safely take the stand of *obedience*, and say, "Thus saith

* The discipline enforced by Diotrephes is the only thing which the author can find in Scripture analogous to that of the modern system referred to, which, however, goes further in being infinitely extended.—ED.

the Lord;" but any other position lands us at once amongst the assumptions of Romanism.

Say that two, or three, or more believers gather together in principle round the *name of the Lord Jesus*, and in the acknowledgment of the *presence and authority* of the *Holy Ghost*, does it therefore follow that they shall always so infallibly have the guidance of the Spirit that what they bind on earth shall be bound in heaven?

Scripture shows that primitive churches so gathered often fell into a carnal condition, and were then apt to entertain the higher opinion of their own spiritual attainment. How much more must it be so with us in the present time of failure and ruin! To be led of the Spirit we must be filled with the Spirit, and it is only in *proportion* as a church is thus filled with the Spirit that its decisions will be spiritual.

Though several churches may take different action on the same matter, it does not follow that one church must be right and the rest all wrong. May it not be that each church may have glorified Christ in a measure, and in a measure failed, either in the action taken, or in the manner of carrying it out? Or may it not also be that all the churches were walking so far from Christ as to have neither apprehended nor obeyed the will of the Lord? There is danger both on the right hand and on the left, and the opposite of one evil course is not necessarily the Lord's narrow path of obedience.

I firmly believe that whenever Christians gather together in the Lord's name, to exercise obediently and humbly that holy discipline which He has enjoined, that they may with faith look for Christ's presence in their midst, and the practical guidance of the Holy Spirit. They may also, without at all claiming infallibility for their decisions, surely expect to see the hand of the Lord confirming the action taken in His name towards the evil-doer; if he be not a sheep, making

clear that he is only one of the swine returned to its wallowing; but if he be indeed one of Christ's own, humbling him, chastening him, and bringing him to godly repentance, so that the church may have the joyful duty of comforting and receiving back again the poor wanderer.

When some such result does not manifestly follow the discipline of a church, it may well question whether there has not been failure, and whether what it has bound on earth has indeed been bound in heaven. It becomes us not to be high-minded, but to fear; remembering concerning spiritual things that now we only know in part and prophesy in part.

In exercising discipline, the church has not to legislate, but simply to deal with sin according to the instructions of the Word.* It must put away a drunkard, or a railer, because it is commanded to do so; yet who shall say whether there may not be many in a church on whom it may not exercise discipline, because they have not openly committed the sins with which it is commanded to deal, but whom the Lord may regard as being in an infinitely worse condition than the poor drunkard, seeing our responsibility and guilt are proportionate to our light and privileges?

Such questions belong to Him who searcheth the heart. It is for the church to judge the actions and doctrines of men. Therefore, in making a difference between such as have and such as have not evil, it has to distinguish according to their words and deeds; and its dealings must be strictly regulated by the wise, gracious, and holy instructions of the Word.

* To show the need of rightly dividing the Word, the writer alludes to another oft-quoted passage in 2 Tim. ii. 21, from which very much is frequently deduced, by perverting its meaning, as if it read, "If a man *separate* himself from these," &c. He remarks that the word "purge" in this verse refers to cleansing that which is *within the person*, not to separating from those without; and that the Greek word used, *ἐκκαθαίρω*, "I cleanse out," removes all doubt on this point. (See a paper on this passage, vol. iii. page 225.)—ED.

SATISFYING WATER.

SATISFYING water springs from that grace in the Son of God which reaches and *quiets the conscience*; and it is such that Jesus dispenses to the poor and needy sinner. Till our need as *sinners* is met and answered, we must be thirsting again, let us get what we may, because the soul is not at rest with God. But Jesus came to repair the breach in the conscience—to give rest before God, and in God, and thus to impart the satisfying water of life, through the Holy Ghost.

And when this is done in a great divine sense, the *end* is reached—God is glorified—the sinner made happy, and entrance into glory becomes a *necessary* result.

The *end* is beautifully shown in the Lord's exquisite and marvellous dealings with the woman of Samaria. (John iv.) She goes away with a spirit in deep refreshment because of conscious acceptance and life, and the Son of God Himself is so satisfied in the fruit of His own way, that He has had that which sets Him above the thirst He had been feeling and the food He had wanted. "I have meat to eat that ye know not of." It was as *manna* to Him. What a thought!—The Son of God comes down to our degraded earth to find *His* manna, His strange mysterious food and satisfaction of heart—bread which He could never have known in heaven—a joy that He could never have tasted amid the glories of His unfallen creatures. But here on earth, among sinners, He finds in the dispensing of the Father's grace the deepest and fullest answer of all the longings of His divine love.

When a sinner is happy in Him, His end is reached, and so is ours, and all that remains is to spend eternity in the glory that becomes such an end as this—His joy in us, and ours in Him, for ever and ever.

GETHSEMANE.

ALTHOUGH on many occasions during His life our Lord spoke explicitly of the dreadful prospect to which He looked forward as the term of His earthly course, it is probable that it was not until He entered the dark shades of the garden of Gethsemane that all the horror of what He must endure became fully known to Him.

That He should be betrayed He knew; that He should be mocked, and scourged, and buffeted, and at last be crucified and killed, He knew—and never for a moment flinched or turned aside from the path that led up to it all. But this was not “*the cup*” which His Father gave Him in Gethsemane. Of this He cried, when He saw its depth and bitterness, “If it be possible, O my Father, let it pass from me.”

It is not for us to say what that cup was. It was a matter entirely between the Son and the Father—no human hand interfered to place it in His. It came direct from above. No human lip ever did or ever can taste of that cup; and it becomes not human eye or mind to seek to fathom the depths of its dread significance. This only can we tell, because so it is revealed—

1st. That the suffering was other than that from the hand of man to which He had ever looked forward; and was, as we have said, distinctly from above, and from God.

2nd. That its intensity surpassed anything known amongst men before or since, causing blood to flow out from the pores, like sweat from His brow, in heavy drops.*

3rd. That it was not physical pain, such as He endured on the cross, but sorrow, exceeding sorrow, and anguish inexpressible. “My soul is exceeding

* There is some evidence of a case where strong terror produced somewhat similar effects.

sorrowful, even unto death." On these words Dean Alford observed: "Our Lord's whole inmost life must have been one of *continued trouble of spirit*. He was a *man of sorrows* and *acquainted with grief*; but there was an *extremity of anguish* now, reaching even to the utmost limit of endurance, so that it seemed that *more* would be *death itself*. Our Lord's soul was crushed down even to death by the weight of that anguish which lay upon Him."

To this we may add, that although the agony passed away then, we have every reason to believe that, when the hour for the blessed Sufferer's departure came, it was under the pressure of inward anguish that death ensued, before the time when physical causes would have accounted for it. Then it was the cup was emptied to its dregs, without even a momentary symptom of hesitation or retreat.

But I wish to ask attention to the prayer thrice repeated in the garden of Gethsemane, yet repeated with variations apparently so slight as, so far as I know, to have escaped the observation of Christians generally, yet such as unfold the beautiful perfections of that spirit which then entered on its final ordeal of suffering.

The first petition was thus expressed, "O my Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt," and implies the earnest desire and hope that the great object of His mission to earth might, if possible, be attained with some alleviation of the overwhelming burden of affliction which then oppressed Him. It was an enquiry, "Can it be that only at such cost the great end may be gained?" If so, "thy will be done;" but if otherwise, "take away this cup from me." (Mark xiv. 36.)

The Lord's prayers were always heard, and this was heard and answered too. Had He omitted the words, "Not my will but thine be done," and asked uncon-

ditionally; we know from His own lips that the Father would have presently sent Him twelve legions of angels to bear Him home to His rest above; but praying as He did, there appeared unto Him one angel only, a messenger of love from the Father to strengthen Him. (Luke xii. 43.)

No word he spoke, no sign he gave, of the answer sought; no message of deliverance he declared; he only strengthened Him. In that silence the Lord Jesus read His Father's will. It plainly said, "It is not possible." And yet how tenderly it spake, for the messenger who made it known was also a messenger of strength. Strength to receive, for the first and last time, His Father's denial of His earnest desire; strength to receive the proffered cup; strength to drink it.

He had said, "My burden is too heavy; if it may be, O my Father, remove it." The Father answers not, "Lay it down," but, "Lean on me."

Blessed Father! blessed Lord Jesus! We worship before this touching yet awful scene. It was for us, my fellow Christians—for me and you—that *we* might live and rejoice for ever! That is the explanation of the apparent harshness of the Father—of the quiet submission of the Son; *because He loved us*. Therefore it was not possible this cup could be taken from Him.

He rises strong and calm, seeks His disciples, and utters those words so expressive of His own case and of theirs: "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh (or the body) is weak," and returns to pray yet "more earnestly." But in what words does He now address the Father? "O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." (Matt. xxvi. 42.)

Observe and admire the beautiful change. Now no more does He seek the removal of the cup; but if it *may* not pass away, *thy will be done*. The words, "not my will," are omitted.

Here we see that perfect self-surrender, that entire submissiveness, that utter absence of any care for aught but the will of God, which, while it forms one of the most lovely ornaments of the perfect man, has secured also in its result our eternal salvation. "I lay down my life of myself; no man taketh it from me. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received my Father." (John x. 18.)

He prayed again the same words; for now He sought no more than that the Father's presence and strength might be with Him till the hour should come.

There is, however, one other utterance which, taken in connection with these, fills up the perfect picture of the passage of that spotless human mind and will from the desire of relief to entire surrender, nay, to the strong adoption of the Father's will as His own. It is in John xviii. 11, when Peter lifted his hand to avert by the sword the threatened danger to his beloved Master: "Put up thy sword; the cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?"

Indignantly almost He now spurns the very thought of seeking relief or alleviation of that lot of unutterable anguish and torture which was His by the Father's will.

First, then, we have the deep emotions of fear, uncertainty of God's will, hope, and prayer. Then the Father's tender and touching reply of refusal. Then *calm submission*, and that most exquisitely beautiful surrender of will and desire into the Father's hand. Then before men, to His ardent champion, the bold and indignant rejection of the slightest thought of self-defence.

The blessed Lord is thus the perfect pattern for all His people. God has made us with a separate and independent will: because He did so, man is what he is, a fallen creature. But, when redeemed and rescued, the saint has still the power of willing and wishing,

of purposing and devising; and God delights that he should exercise it. It is the glory of the God who made us, that having given us this lofty attribute of *willing* independently, we should, as the result of the new creation, *will* in harmony with Him.

He bids us make known our requests; that is, He encourages us to wish for and devise, and to seek the fulfilment of our aims. In ten thousand matters that concern us we know not what the will of God is. We seek, therefore, our own will, ardently, earnestly, nay, persistently (Luke xi. 8 and xviii. 1), hoping (till we know) that it may be God's will too. But when once the will of God is known, if it is found to coincide with ours, what joy within, what thanksgiving, what praise for answered prayer flows out!

But if indeed we learn that the will of God is not so as we have hoped and prayed, then our eyes have just seen the attitude that becomes us, and glorifies God. Then, “*Thy will be done, not mine,*” is not only the utterance of our worshipping lips, but the deep desire of our submissive heart. Then, however near the object of our former hopes and prayers may be, *we seek it not*, nay, we have learned to spurn it and reject it, because God rejects it. A sensitive spirit, easily touched, and a willing mind, obedient at a *hint* to the mind of our Father, may He in His great love grant us. For then it will be God who shall work in us both *to will* and *to do* of *His* good pleasure. The joy shall be ours, and the glory and praise shall be **His**.

“SING PRAISES TO GOD, SING PRAISES.”

“SING praises to God, sing praises. . . . Sing ye praises with understanding.” “It is good to sing praises unto our God; for it is pleasant; and praise is comely.” Yea, He Himself has said, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me.”

And wherefore so? Because praise is the outflow of a happy, contented heart; the utterance of one whose deep and varied need has been met; whose groans have been turned into songs; whose sorrow has been turned into joy, and whose weeping has been changed into laughter.

And who can do this for the poor and sorrowful but our blessed, gracious God? This is His grand prerogative, His great delight. He brings His exhaustless stores of love and mercy to bear upon the utter helplessness and ruin of the poor and needy sinner. He presents Himself to such as a *giver*; not as an exactor who demands His rights, but as One who has opened His boundless treasuries, and is ready to give them everything they need.

Do they require a sacrifice to atone for their sins? Behold His well-beloved and only Son, sent forth to give Himself a sacrifice, "The Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world." Do they need a Saviour? Behold the blessed, risen Jesus—the One who was dead and is alive again—travelling in the greatness of His strength, mighty to save! Do they need pity, compassion, love? Behold the love of God—that love which passeth knowledge. Gaze on the streams of mercy—those deep and ever-flowing streams. Ponder His loving-kindness, His patience, and His grace, and shall we not sing with rapturous joy, "Who is a God like unto our God?"

Nor is this all; but in the greatness of His love He has made with us a covenant, ordered in all things and sure; a covenant in which *He* is the *alone* doer and giver, and *we* are simply the receivers; a *new* covenant, in which He has foreseen, and provided for, every possible contingency that can happen to us.

"Not," as He says of Israel, "according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although

I was an husband unto them, saith the Lord; but this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. . . . For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.”

This is the covenant which He has also made with us, as clearly proved by Heb. x. 16, 17; and what a glorious covenant it is! There are no contingencies, no possibility of failure, no “ifs” nor “buts;” but the blessed God Himself undertakes and swears to do these wonderful things for us. The covenant rests on the eternal, unchangeable “*I will*” of the great JEHOVAH. It is sealed by the death and resurrection of His Son, who by His own blood hath entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption, and has thus become the Mediator of this better, yea, glorious covenant, which is established upon better promises.

He knew our desperate wickedness; He knew that we were obstinate, and our neck as an iron sinew, and that if anything were left dependent upon our faithfulness or obedience, the covenant must fail and come to naught.

He knew how slow we should be to hearken to His commandments, how prone to turn aside and do our own will, and therefore, because He is the holy God (and without holiness no man can see the Lord), He has undertaken to fit us for companionship with Himself, by putting His laws into our hearts, and writing them upon our minds. Yea, He Himself will work within us, patiently, lovingly, mightily. *He* will subdue our iniquities, and teach us to hate every false way, and purify the thoughts and intents of our hearts. “Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.”

If we forsake His laws, and walk not in His judgments; if we break His statutes, and keep not His

commandments; then will He visit our transgressions with the rod, and our iniquity with stripes. Nevertheless, His loving-kindness will He not utterly take from us, nor suffer His faithfulness to fail. His covenant will He not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of His lips.

Blessed, blessed God! Worthy, indeed, He is of glory, honour, praise, and power!

"Praise be His, all praise transcending,
Praise on earth and praise in heaven;
Praise through ages never-ending,
To our gracious God be given.
He alone our Saviour is,
Everlasting praise be His."

He knows how deeply the evil is rooted within us; how thoroughly it is interwoven with our every thought and feeling; and, alas! how often we love and cherish the things which He abhors. And therefore, in His exceeding mercy, He has provided the furnace of affliction to purge away our dross, to mould and form us to His own image, and bring us forth as vessels meet for His own use. And shall we not sing, with triumph sing, since such a God is ours?

True, we may have to weep and mourn because of our own rebellion and sin. The chastening hand of our God may be sharp and heavy upon us; but what love and mercy this is! He will not suffer us to continue at a distance from Him. He loves us so well that He will pursue and bring us back.

He has predestined us to be conformed to the image of His Son. He will not forego His purpose. In faithful, patient love He bears with our perverse and wilful ways, and yet so deals with us that we gradually learn that the way of transgressors is hard, and that it is an evil and a bitter thing to depart from Him—the living God, the fountain of all joy and blessedness.

If we are willing and obedient, we eat the good of

the land, and prove the exceeding happiness of *abiding* fellowship with Him; but if we refuse and rebel, our souls must be starved, and we shall learn by painful experience the exceeding bitterness of sin. Thus He teaches us to abhor that which is evil, and to cleave to that which is good.

Oh that we were wise, that we understood these things, and considered our latter end!

Our blessed God keeps *His* eye upon the end. *He* never forgets His eternal purpose concerning us. He labours constantly for this one object, and all His dealings with us, whether great or small, are devised with the most consummate wisdom and love, that they may all work together to perfect that which concerneth us. And shall we not sing, “sing praises to God, sing praises,” yea, “in every thing give thanks,” and be satisfied to leave all our concerns in His hand, and let Him do with us as seemeth good and right to Him?

“Sing when thy strength is firm,
 And sing when it decays;
 When comforts come, or comforts go,
 For *both* give equal praise.
 From God’s unchanging love
 They both alike proceed;
 His perfect wisdom fits them all
 Exactly to thy need.

No creature of His hand
 He loveth more than thee;
 Let no one sing its tribute song
 With heart more glad and free.
 Then sing His countless gifts,
 And sing for sins forgiven;
 Sing that the Highest calls thee son,
 And sealeth thee for heaven.

He traineth thee for song,
 For endless song above,
 To lead heaven’s burning seraph choirs
 In ecstasies of love.
 Then learn thy lesson well,
 And practise now to praise;
 In joy and sorrow, storm and calm,
 Thy thankful raptures raise.”

THE JUDICIAL ASPECT OF THE PRIESTHOOD OF CHRIST.

WE are all familiar with that aspect of the priestly office of Christ which presents Him to us as the merciful and faithful High Priest who is ever touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and we rejoice in the assurance that He ever standeth on our behalf before God.

There is, however, another aspect of the same High Priest, wherein He stands on behalf of God amongst us, which we are prone to forget; and this onesided contemplation of the priesthood mars most materially our conception of the whole.

It was the priest that looked on the healed leper, and pronounced him "clean" (Lev. xiv.); but it was the priest also who had previously looked upon him and pronounced him "unclean." (Lev. xiii.) Both these acts are judicial; and this feature of priesthood is strongly marked in the name given to the breastplate—"the breastplate of judgment."

In later times, when the Urim and Thummim breastplate was gone, the power of judgment was also wanting, and consequently the power to discern who belonged to the priestly class and who did not was also lost; and those priests who could not prove their genealogy were, as polluted, put from the priesthood. (Ezra i. 62, 63.)

It was the prerogative of the priesthood to pronounce the divine sentence in all that was brought to God for judgment; and hence one of the prominent features of the Aaronic priesthood was its judicial character; and therefore Malachi writes: "The priest's lips should keep knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts." This is what Christ is to us, as the Apostle and High Priest of our confession.

Of this judicial feature of priesthood we have an important illustration in Numbers xxv. Israel had sinned in the matter of Peor. God had come down in judgment, and Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, takes the javelin in his hand and vindicates the honour of God, and slays Zimri and Cozbi. "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, hath turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was jealous [not zealous] *in my jealousy* [see margin] among them, that I consumed not the children of Israel in my jealousy. Wherefore say, Behold, I give unto him my covenant of peace: and he shall have it, and his seed after him, even the covenant of an everlasting priesthood; because he was jealous for his God, and made an atonement for the children of Israel."

Notice here the word "jealous." God is a jealous God. Love is jealous; and the true priest is jealous for his God.

This jealousy characterizes Christ. When on earth the zeal or jealousy of God's house consumed Him. (John ii. 17.) He is ever faithful to God in all which concerns us—fulfilling God's purpose, and maintaining the needed communion between God and His people; but He is also ever jealous for God, ready to vindicate God's honour, jealous *in His jealousy*, and for His sake acting according to the word of the prayer—"Hallowed be thy name."

Notice also the connection between jealousy and peace. The covenant of peace is maintained by the jealousy of love, and hence this covenant of peace becomes the covenant of an eternal priesthood.

In this light let us turn to Revelation i., and see our great High Priest in His judicial glory walking amidst the seven golden candlesticks. But lest we should be overwhelmed by this revelation of Him, the chapter begins by putting those blessed words into our lips: "Unto Him that loves us, and that washed us from

our sins in His own blood, and made us a kingdom and priests unto God and His Father; unto Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

Oh, how sweetly do these notes fall on our ears as we behold this great vision, which turns our comeliness into corruption, as it did the prophet of old, even though he was "greatly beloved." (See Daniel x. 8.) We need to lay hold on this assurance of His infinite love whenever we contemplate His judicial relation to us. His perfect atonement gives Him power to maintain this relation *in grace*, and gives us assurance under its exercise.

Some seem to dread all thought of judgment as if it undermined the groundwork of salvation by grace. It takes us, however, only to the other side, and shows us another feature of salvation. We need to recall to our recollection such passages as—"If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." Yes, we must never forget that "judgment begins at the house of God," and will be carried on till we all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, after we are caught up to meet Him in the air.

Our God is a God of judgment, and He will not fail in the vengeance that is implied in it; and therefore Paul says, "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." The Lord Jesus is here presented to us as walking in the midst of the churches as the Judge who "standeth before the door" (James v. 9), and says, "I know thy works."

The following is the apostle's description of Him before whom he fell as dead: He "saw one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps with a golden girdle. His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; and His eyes as a flame of fire; and His feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace;

and His voice as the sound of many waters. And He had in His right hand seven stars: and out of His mouth went a sharp twoedged sword: and His countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength."

Each of these features might occupy our thoughts profitably; but we can only notice what is said of the eyes, the feet, and the mouth, as bearing particularly on the subject in hand.

His eyes as a flame of fire speak of One whose omniscience meets all, sees all, knows all. He looks into and discovers everything in the midst of which He walks; for "there is no creature that is not manifest in His sight;" for "all things are naked and opened before Him with whom we have to do," or "with whom is our account." (Heb. iv. 12, 13.)

The priesthood of Christ is connected with an account to be rendered, in the full consciousness that His eyes of fire look into all the thoughts and intents of the heart. All is laid bare; and it is this that makes the judicial character of Christ's priestly service so unspeakably precious; for with the priestly judgment that wounds, there is the full efficacy of priestly intercession and atonement that again makes whole.

The eyes of flame are the eyes of Him who loves us still, and we learn afresh the lesson of John xiii.—that blessed chapter of priestly washing—that, "having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end." Nothing that He sees can take Him by surprise. He knew it all before He loved us, and therefore we are well content that He should see all; for He changes not.

His feet were as burning brass, walking in undefiled holiness amidst the defilements that surround. As sinners "we require a High Priest who is holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners."

"Out of *His mouth* went a sharp twoedged sword." It is forgotten sometimes that the same feature that marks His advent when He comes to destroy the con-

federacy of the beast and the false prophet marks His presence in His own Church. We are too prone to divide the person of Christ. What He is, He is, wherever He is seen; and evil finds a twoedged sword wherever He meets it, whether in the Church or in the world, whether among His own followers or among the followers of Antichrist.

It deserves our solemn notice, that the twoedged sword of which we read in Rev. xix., we read of also here in Rev. i. As Christians, we are in danger of separating the righteousness from the grace, in God's dealing with us. We see that both harmonize in the cross of Christ, so that "righteousness and peace have kissed each other" there, but forget that the same combination has to be realized *in the experience of our own souls*. This is characteristic of the discipline of God with each; it blends and harmonizes truth and grace, and develops in the tried child of God that which makes the true Christian character so peculiarly saintly; it stamps the image of the refiner upon the refined.

Here, then, in Revelation i. ii. iii., Christ stands, as in Malachi iii. 3, as "a refiner and purifier of silver; for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap." The eyes of fire, the feet like burning brass, and the mouth with its flaming sword, are presented to those whom Jesus loves, whom His precious blood has washed, and whom His grace has made a kingdom and priests to His God and Father, to keep alive in their hearts the remembrance that He is "of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look upon iniquity."

In the judicial character of Christ's priesthood we learn His care for the honour of God. The same truth is taught us in the case of Levi, "who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children;" and the result was that Levi was to "teach Jacob *God's judgments.*"

Let us not forget God's judgments, which are "a great deep," but out of which the soul can gather its richest blessings, like Joseph, who passed through waves and billows, but to whom was given "the precious things of heaven," and "of the deep that coucheth beneath." "The sun and the moon," "the ancient mountains," and "the everlasting hills," all poured their blessings and their fulness on the head of him that was separated from his brethren; of whom it is said, "Until the time that His word came, the word of the Lord tried him" (Psalm cv. 19); that is, until the time of promise came to pass, God's appointed discipline refined him.*

Thus was it with Job; for God's eyes of fire saw what Satan could not see, and what Job knew nothing about; and "the end of the Lord" with Job, as with Joseph, was to give a double blessing, and to make him see that the holy discipline of God proved Him to be "very pitiful, and of tender mercy." That perfect and upright man had thought far otherwise while passing through the trial; and though his faith in God never failed, he was terribly sifted by Satan's sieve; but, when he came forth, he could thank God that much of the chaff of self, in its will and pride, had been left behind; and he found himself in his true place "in dust and ashes" before his God.

He whose eyes are as a flame of fire was leading Joseph and Job in a path that they knew not. *He* knew it; and they found in the end, when "the end of the Lord" was gained, that they had been led by a *right way* into a city of habitation.

The judicial character of Christ's dealings in His

* There is a beautiful distinction in the two words in the Hebrew, which are here both rendered *word*. The former is דבר, and signifies the thing that has been spoken, the promise; the latter is אִמְרָתוֹ, and signifies that which God says, commands, or appoints for us, referring here to His appointment in the pathway that led Joseph to the dungeon; for "He sent a man before them." (Verse 17.)

Church are frequently brought before us in the Word. In the Corinthian church, for instance, evils had come in in reference to the abuse of the Lord's Table; and in regard to it Paul writes, "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep; for if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; for when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord (as children), that we should not be condemned with the world."

Bodily infirmities, sickness, and death itself, are here spoken of as the result of this judicial acting of the Lord; and well would it be for the saints of God to ponder over this subject; for in it might be found the healthful solution of the often unravelled mysteries of God's dealings with them. Many would thus find the cause of much that happens, which now they seek to bear patiently, but into the cause of which they seldom seek to enquire.

Sin in the believer is of a twofold character, latent or manifest. *Latent* it will be to the end, and in this we are not responsible; for we were born in sin, and shapen in iniquity; and very much of the training through which we are brought has to do with this, and must on no account be looked on as punishment. It was the consciousness of this that led Paul to cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

Manifest it need not be; but for this we are responsible; and by "manifest" I mean mainly to ourselves; for Paul could write, "I am not conscious to myself of anything [in English Version, I know nothing of myself], yet am I not thereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord."

Here, then, we find our need of Him who can judge, and who can judge in grace, as our merciful High Priest, "who was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He knows when the honest heart is blinded; He knows when the eye is not single,

and we act in culpable ignorance ; and He knows when the sin is presumptuously committed, on which a righteous retribution must sooner or later fall.

Let us thank God we have such an High Priest, who cannot suffer sin upon His brethren ; for though sin is penally pardoned, it is, nevertheless, personally judged, of which David's after-history is a solemn witness.

Let us now for a while trace the steps of Him whose feet are as fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace, as He walks amidst the Seven Churches of Asia. He gives the result of His investigation that we may learn what His thoughts are, and that we may remember that, as He then fulfilled His promise when He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age," by walking up and down in the church ; so He does now, noticing alike the condition of those who were defiled, and of the few who had kept their garments.

EPHESUS.

Ephesus represents a church of unblemished orthodoxy. They could not bear evil ; they tried false pretensions ; they laboured ; they fainted not. But He who "held the stars in His right hand" bore witness to the deepest declension. Their first love was left, and the call to repentance is followed by the warning word, "or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place."

What a word of priestly indignation and reproof against a cold orthodoxy, whose love was ebbing out ! and that in the very church which had learnt from Paul of its heavenly calling some forty years before, and had so soon fallen from heaven to earth, from life to death. Alas ! heavenly theories will not keep the love kindled, nor will lifeless truth keep things right before God.

Surely it becomes us deeply to ponder the judicial estimate that our great High Priest makes of what He found in Ephesus.

If any make their boast in their gifts, be they what they may, let them remember that, if *love* be wanting, they have become in the eye of the Lord nothing more than "*sounding brass, or tinkling cymbal.*" Though they understand all mysteries, and have all knowledge, if *love* be wanting, they are "NOTHING." And though there be all liberality, and the body given to be burned, if *love* be wanting, it shall *profit nothing*. God is Love, and if love fails all fails. The Lord has brought the balance of the sanctuary to bear on this condition, and we read His verdict—*vanity*.

SMYRNA.

The Lord now walks up and down in Smyrna, and here we read of little but *poverty* and *tribulation*; but they were reckoned rich by Him who is "the first and the last, who was dead and is alive again." The devil was sifting; but the word "*fear not*" comes in to comfort, and without the addition of that oft-repeated word "*repent.*" They pass under the Lord's inspection, and having met His holy approval, He ends His visitation with those strengthening words: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

"Poverty and tribulation," "the thorn in the flesh," and "the messenger of Satan," are God's helps to the gracious soul to keep it in its right place—humble and contrite; and to such He will say, when Ephesus' boasted candlestick is withdrawn, "Thou art rich."

PERGAMOS.

Pergamos next passes under review. The condition of the church was in the main healthy; for they held fast Christ's name, and had not denied His faith; but they were remiss in allowing among them those who held Balaam's doctrine, and sought the introduction of the world into the church.

In Israel's case the immediate result was that

twenty-four thousand men were slain, and the ultimate consequence was the Babylonish captivity. In Israel Balaam prepared the way to Babylon (whence, probably, he came), and his name is prophetic of the place, and signifies, "He swallowed up the people."

To Pergamos the Lord's call is—"Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and fight against them with the sword of my mouth;" for the seeds of Babylon are sown in the church. Christ tells them Achan is among them, and must be purged out—Babylonish garment, wedge of gold, silver and all; and, in contrast to these, He tells of *the hidden manna*, the *white stone*, and the *new name* which are promised to him who overcomes.

THYATIRA.

He whose "eyes are as a flame of fire, and His feet as fine brass," now brings Thyatira into judgment.

His grace bears witness to their love, service, faith, and patience; but corrupting influences were at work, for Jezebel was allowed to teach and seduce. Well may the ears of many tingle when we read what is written here, and compare it with the ritualistic and rationalistic teaching that is allowed in so many places which profess to be churches of Christ. The teacher and the scholar, the deceiver and the deceived, shall be destroyed together, and great tribulation shall come upon them.

But while we read the terrible warnings in these verses to all implicated in this apostasy, how gracious is the word to the few who have not this doctrine, although among those that have, He says, "I will put upon you none other burden; but that which ye have already hold fast till I come." That is, He lays upon them the burden of no longer allowing Jezebel's teachings among them, and for themselves to hold fast what they had.

This non-allowance of false teaching is of vast importance in this latitudinarian age, when the devil

seeks to destroy all the ancient landmarks, and calls intolerance of heresy, bigotry, and an earnest contending for truth once delivered, uncharitableness. Let us remember that a word wrongly spoken and an act wrongly done shut out Aaron and Moses from the promised land. There is a severity in God's holiness but little understood; for He is "a jealous God."

SARDIS.

Sardis now comes before us; and "He who has the seven spirits of God, and the seven stars," lays bare the condition of things as they met His eye. To man there was a great name. They had a name for the very thing they had not; and He who saw beneath the surface writes, "Thou art dead." Profession had been mistaken for reality, and the stir and bustle of an outward activity had come in and deceived. This veil of deception the High Priest rends asunder, and says, "Be watchful, and strengthen the things that remain."

He tells them, "Remember how thou hast received," as He tells Ephesus to remember how she had fallen. They must return to the truth that they had once heard. There was nothing new to which to direct them, and this it is important to remember. In seeking to set our feet straight, we have to go back to the word of the beginning. In Malachi God sends Israel no new revelation, but says, "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb."

Times change, but God's directions to us remain the same. There is no alteration or change there; and man's pride in seeking something new to meet the new circumstances has to learn the humbling lesson that there is nothing really new. In essence all is the same—man is what he was, and God is the I AM. The progress and development is only in manifestation.

In Sardis there were a few worthy ones with undefiled garments, and their position would be to walk

with the Lord in white, and their names, written in the book of life, would be confessed before the Father and His angels.

PHILADELPHIA.

How different is the condition of Philadelphia!—a church in many respects like the poor, yet rich, church of Smyrna. As there so here, there is no note of blame, no call to repent.

“The Holy” and “the True” held the key, and had given them an open door; for they had “*a little strength.*” They kept His word; they did not deny His name. Weakness kept them close to the strong One for help. They could glory in weakness; for when they were weak then were they strong.

Like Smyrna, they were troubled with those who claimed to be of the true Israel, but were not—who called themselves Jews, but were liars. They had not been deceived by them; they were separate; they stood like the “feeble Jews,” the true men under Nehemiah, who would have nothing to do with Sanballat and his fellows. They would not accept their help; they feared not their anger. They stood alone; they built and fought for their city and their God.

So the Christians in this church stood fast for God, and got the promise of being delivered in the hour of the world’s great temptation, when the dragon, the old serpent, shall send the man of sin to try them that dwell on the earth. While Smyrna is warned of the advent that is to sift the professing church, Christendom, with the sieve that shall prove its vanity (Isa. xxx. 28), the advent here spoken of is the coming of the Lord to gather and to crown His chosen ones, when they shall stand as pillars in the temple of God, and have on their brow the name of the God whose they are, of the city where they dwell, and of the new name given in resurrection to their risen Head and Lord.

LAODICEA.

Lastly, Laodicea stands before Him "who is the Amen, the faithful and true witness." As the High Priest of the God of truth, the Amen God (see Isa. lxxv. 16), He is, as a witness, faithful to us, and true to God.

Here, He unveils hypocrisy. The church stood thinking she was rich and increased in goods, and needed nothing. She was rich in spirit, and not poor in spirit. The gifts and calling of God had filled the heart with pride, but had not broken it. They had satisfied the unbruised spirit, and fed the unhumiliated soul, and therefore had prepared the way for the deepest of all delusions—a fictitious self-complacency. Their Christianity had missed the initial steps of denying self, and taking up the cross. They had begun at the wrong end, and pride, self-sufficiency, and highmindedness, had ruled, when lowliness, self-abnegation, and brokenness of heart, should have reigned.

Theories of objective truth had satisfied; but truth received in subjective realization can alone give balance and stability. Righteousness and peace had not kissed in their experience. Their peace was not "the effect of righteousness" inwrought and laid down deep in a heart that God had broken up.

They had got over the wall some other way, and never entered through the door of fellowship in the death and resurrection of Christ. There were still some among them who were loved and chastened; but most of them professed a life that had never known death, and wore a crown that had not been preceded by the cross. Their gold had never passed through the fire; their garments had never been washed white; and their eyes had never been anointed to see. They were blind men, whose gold was all dross, whose garments were all defiled, and insufficient to cover their nakedness.

There was still time to repent; hence the call and the counsel. The Lord was still standing in grace knocking at the door. The Judge was still waiting to see whether they would listen to His call, and judge themselves with His righteous judgment. To each one who does so His gracious word is, "I will sup with him," with any one who stands as faithful amid the faithless and the hypocrites; and to all who overcome He promises a place on His throne hereafter, and a seat at the Supper of the Lamb.

Those who know most of their own hearts and its labyrinths, and most of the present condition and past history of the professing church, know best how deeply important these three opening chapters of the Revelation are to the people of God.

We need to recall to mind the prayer of David: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Into that eternal pathway of glory and bliss does our Priestly Head seek to lead us; and no sincere and earnest seeker after the way will be led wrong; while those who are either not sincere or not in earnest will certainly miss the path, and all the directions given to the single eye and the undivided heart will be misread* and misinterpreted by such to their own confusion.

Again, we may remind ourselves that judgment begins at the house of God; and, if we would not be judged, we must judge ourselves.

Let none be troubled who are trembling before the Lord. *They* will hear the loving voice of the blessed, priestly Saviour say, "Fear not; I am the first and the last: He who liveth, and was dead, and am alive for evermore, and have the keys of hell and of death;" and *they* will know that underneath are the everlasting arms. The Lord direct our hearts unto Himself.

THE CHURCH, THE CITY.

OF the various figures under which the Church of the Firstborn is described, the last is that of the City, and is presented to us in Revelation **xxi**.*

The main thought suggested by the figure of the "Bride" appears to be the chaste simplicity with which the believer should cling to and follow Christ in an evil world.

The "Wife" shows the still closer union, into the joys and blessings of which our souls may enter.

From the "Body" we learn the living membership of believers with the Head, and their consequent individual and corporate relationship to Him and to each other.

The "Temple" instructs as to the presence of the Lord in and with His people, even though two or three only gather together in His name.

The "*City* set on a hill, that cannot be hid," manifests the relative position of the Church towards the world, or of the churches of Christ in their varied stations as lights in the midst of darkness. From our union with Him who is "the Light of the world" and "the Light of life," we are to be channels of light and life to all around us.

Approaching by night a manufacturing town, especially if set on a hill, how its numerous factories, with the light streaming from their many windows, "at work all night," evince man's busy toil and skill in labouring for that which satisfieth not, but perishes in the using.

The greater the number of such buildings with their lights brightly burning, giving light to the darkness outside, the greater the prosperity, activity, and gold-producing power of the trade of that city.

* Though this chapter presents the Church in its future and eternal glory, the characteristics described therein should also be manifested by the saints of God upon earth now.

Often has the writer watched such buildings; some in the full blaze of light from every window, from ground-floor to roof; some half lit up; one, it may be, with but a few lights; another in the silence of darkness, "working not," and therefore "shining not."

A spiritual contrast as to the churches of Christ readily presents itself—what each one would be if His presence and power were known, and, alas! what we too often see, but the imperfect shining of a light here and there. In some cases a professing church seems to be, in the silent gloom of the darkness of death, shone upon, perhaps, by some light near, but its own darkness only thereby brought out into bolder relief. Light falls upon the outside of the building, but the inside is not reached. Death, silence, the savour of the tomb, alone is there!

"Her light, like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, *crystallizing*," clear as crystal itself, reflecting from its many facets the sparkling light from God. The precious stone, a living aggregate of living stones, crystallizes all around it, enlightening with its own lustre all within its radiance.

As in a building *each* light must be burning to light up the whole, so that the work may go on in every part, so in a church each Christian has light from Christ, and each must let that light shine, or the brilliancy of the whole is marred, and the work of God injured, and eternal loss sustained.

As the light from the candlestick is to light all *in* the house, so that from the City seems to be more for the world outside, the holding *forth* the Word of Life to the unsaved around, disseminating the precious seed, diffusing the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ to the *Christless* ones within reach, presenting *HIM* to the dark hearts and unenlightened minds, that in ignorance and unbelief yet know *HIM* not.

In short, a church that is *not* an evangelizing

church, that has *no* active sympathy with Jesus in His love for the lost, and is *not* co-working with HIM for their salvation, is a dead church, a city in the dark, with little light and little life, producing but little fruit to the glory of God, adding but little gold, silver, or precious stones, to the great heap accumulating for the judgment-seat of Christ, however correct its formularies may be, however sound its doctrine, or scriptural its outward formation.

It is like a clock not wound up, it tells not of passing time; an alarm-bell without a clapper, it soundeth no alarm; a lighthouse without a light, it fails to warn hell-bound voyagers of their danger; its watchmen are asleep, its energies for Christ paralyzed, and itself in danger of being removed altogether out of its place. Soul, what art *thou* doing, and what is *thy* church doing, for Christ?

In verse 11, before we read of the light of the city, she is described as "having the glory of God." As "all have sinned and come short of the glory of God," so "God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, has shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ;" and each believer, and each church, so far as they are in Christ, "has the glory of God" even now.

In Exodus xxviii., we read that conspicuous on the high priest's garments for glory and beauty stood the breastplate, affixed to the ephod by the two chains of gold attached to the shoulder-pieces above, and fastened by the lace of blue below to the girdle, so that it might *not be loosed* from the ephod. The names of the children of Israel were thus borne on the fore-front of this garment of glory, as also on the shoulder-pieces, and were inseparably connected with it: if the one were laid aside, the other must be also. Such and so great is the glory of the cross.

The redeemed are the great glory of God in heaven, borne up before HIM by JESUS, the Priest for ever after

the order of Melchizedek. The Church forms an integral portion of His glory, and cannot be dissociated from it.

While she is His glory there, HE is her glory here; hence His name, His person, His glory, should be her *first* object in the daily struggle of life. To display His character, wear His virtues and perfections, be clothed with His light, and meekness, and lowliness, to walk as HE walked, by union with HIM, is the object for which each soul is saved, as surely as it is to share His glory at His coming.

From the beginning Satan's object has been to mar the creation of God, and man has been the great instrument in effecting his purpose.

In Christ we are reinstated in God's presence, brought into a more excellent glory than that of Eden; and should not the language and purpose of each heart be—"Arise, shine! for thy light is come, and the glory of the LORD is risen upon thee"?

My God, in me Thy mighty power exert,
 Enlighten, comfort, sanctify my heart;
 Sweeten my temper, and subdue my will;
 Make me like JESUS: with Thy Spirit fill.
 I want to live on earth a life of faith;
 I want to credit all the Bible saith;
 I want to imitate my Saviour's life,
 Avoiding lightness, gloom, and sinful strife.
 I want to bring poor sinners to Thy throne;
 I want to love and honour Christ alone;
 I want to feel the Spirit's inward power,
 And stand prepared for each eventful hour.
 I want a meek, a gentle, quiet frame,
 A heart that glows with love to Jesu's name;
 I want a living sacrifice to be
 To HIM who died a sacrifice for me.
 I want to do whatever God requires;
 I want a heart to burn with pure desires;
 I want to be what Christ, my Lord, commands,
 And leave myself, my all, in His dear hands.
 O Lord, pour out Thy Spirit on my soul,
 My will, my temper, and my tongue control;
 Lead me through life to glorify Thy grace,
 Till I in glory see Thee face to face.

THE SCHOOL LIFE.

I SAT in the school of sorrow,
 The Master was teaching there ;
 But my eyes were dim with weeping,
 And my heart was full of care.

Instead of looking upward,
 And seeing the face divine,
 So full of the tenderest pity
 For weary hearts like mine,

I only thought of the burden,
 The cross that before me lay ;
 So hard and heavy to carry,
 That it darkened the light of day.

So I could not learn my lesson,
 And say, " Thy will be done ;"
 And the Master came not near me
 As the weary hours went on.

At last in my heavy sorrow
 I looked from the cross above,
 And I saw the Master watching
 With a glance of tender love.

He turned to the cross before me,
 And I thought I heard Him say—
 " My child, thou must bear thy burden,
 And learn thy task to-day ;

" I may not tell the reason ;
 'Tis enough for thee to know
 That I, the Master, am teaching,
 And give thee this cup of woe."

So I stooped to that weary sorrow :
 One look of that face divine
 Had given me power to trust Him,
 And say, " Thy will, not mine."

'Twas thus I learnt my hard lesson,
 Taught by the Master alone ;
 He only knows all the tears I shed,
 Who on earth did weep and groan.

But after those tears shone a brightness,
 Straight from the home above :
 So when our school-life here is ended,
 In each cross will be seen His deep love.

CHRIST OUR SACRIFICE.*

1. THE TRESPASS OFFERING. (Lev. v.)
2. THE SIN OFFERING. (Lev. iv.)
3. THE PEACE OFFERING. (Lev. xii.)
4. THE MEAT OFFERING. (Lev. ii.)
5. THE BURNT OFFERING. (Lev. i.)

THE Lord Jesus Christ has satisfied every claim on behalf of His people. They learn, but gradually, their need of Him as meeting and satisfying every claim by the gospel wherein "the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith." "To him that hath (profited) shall more be given." As we learn our need, so we learn His fulness.

In providing for man's salvation God foresaw, and in Christ, provided for, every possible contingency; for He knew what man was, and what man as a sinner needed. "God is greater than our hearts, and knoweth all things."

As we walk in the light with Him, in conscious, honest obedience to His precepts (so far as we know them), so do we find out things about ourselves, hidden sources and motives of evil, we never imagined. Instead of finding our nature gradually improved through the effect of believing in Christ, we often experience the very contrary, and cry out, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Satan then suggests that our conversion was all imaginary, and that since we have found ourselves so bad, even while professing to trust in Christ, it is no use trying to lead a holy life—that the gospel is a fiction.

We must not confound things that differ. The work

* The offerings are here looked at in the order in which the young believer usually apprehends them; and the simple truths presented by the various aspects of the "one offering" of Christ are elucidated by New Testament scriptures.

of Christ *for* us on the cross, and "the power of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus" *in* us, are distinct, and the effect or result of the latter must never be trusted in, in the place of the former.

Let us consider the work of Christ *for* us as meeting our every need, as able to satisfy the soul's righteous hunger. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Wittingly and willingly we have transgressed His known will. Innumerable are our trespasses in thought, word, and deed. When convicted by God's Holy Spirit of our actual and open transgression, and its penalty is realized, we are led to cry out, "Can God forgive?" The woman in Luke vii. seemed thus to feel her sins, and came to Him repentant. She heard Him say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee."

How may we *know* that there is forgiveness *for us* with God? By listening to His word. "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." "The Lord hath laid upon Him the iniquities of us all." "He (Christ) is the propitiation for our sins." "He (Christ) was wounded for our transgressions." "Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." "His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree."

These Scriptures point to the Lord Jesus as the TRESPASS offering, satisfying the believing soul's *first* hunger, its *first* felt need. To know our own trespasses and sins all forgiven, to be satisfied concerning their just removal, is the first happy experience of those who believe in Jesus.

Some bring forth fruit thirty, some sixty, some an hundredfold. Some rapidly advance in the Christian life, others more slowly. While the head knowledge of truth may oftentimes be quickly attained, the heart experience and the heart enjoyment of it may be of slower growth.

There are those who live, and those who die, in the

differing stages of Christian experience and of heart apprehension of truth.

As we grow in the knowledge of God's ways, it gradually dawns upon us (often to our utter amazement and horror) that, instead of being better, our hearts are just as full of evil as ever, if not more so, and we cry out, "How is this?" The light has manifested the darkness that existed always. The True Light now shineth, and revealeth the true state. Our cry was that we might grow in grace; His answer was to show more of the hidden evil of the heart. We longed, according to the course of the new nature in us, for holiness; God caused us to see our utter unholiness. Not only do we find we are sometimes sinful, but that our whole nature is "corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;" that "in us dwelleth no good thing;" that the tree is corrupt as well as its fruit; that "the flesh is flesh," and that it ever "lusteth against the Spirit."

Who is sufficient for these things? God has settled this question too; for "He hath made Him to be *sin* for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and *for sin*, condemned sin in the flesh." "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from *all sin*."

May we not here view Christ as the *SIN* offering—God's sin offering. God has condemned "sin in the flesh"—in Him, the Holy One. This aspect of Christ as our sacrifice meets and answers the *deep* soul-hunger, and fully sets at rest every question concerning our sinful nature.

The new-born soul breathes out after God, "As the hart panteth for the water brooks."

"Rivers to the ocean run,
Nor stay them in their course;
Fire, ascending, seeks the sun—
Both speed them to their source.

So the soul that's born of God
 Pants to view His glorious face,
 Upward tends to His abode,
 To rest in His embrace."

To abide in His tabernacle—to enjoy His presence—or at least, speaking practically, to walk with and before Him, enjoying His peace (which passes all *understanding*)—is the soul's desire. Yet how to arrive at such a stage—how intelligently to grasp such a position—may be little known; and the soul, which has been satisfied concerning the complete forgiveness of and judgment on sin, hesitates concerning its own individual and personal acceptance with God.

Looking within for evidence of acceptance, and seeking for some reason of the ground thereof, on account of a higher walk than before, fails to satisfy. The soul still hungers; it wants to soar higher, to feel at ease (if I may so speak) with God.

What can supply this need? Has Christ but died to remove our guilt? Has He not done more? Has He not risen again for our justification? Is He not our Peace? Has not God made "PEACE by the blood of *His* cross"? Are we not "accepted (therefore) in the Beloved"? Are we not "complete in Him"? "Being justified by faith," have we not "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ"?

Truly Christ is our PEACE offering. Raised with Him, by faith of the operation of God, "as He is, so are we in this world." Blessed is that Peace-maker. He is indeed the Son of God. (Matt. v. 9.)

We who sometime were far off from God are now "made nigh by the blood of Christ; for He is our Peace." He hath incorporated us with Himself, and brought us nigh, so that we may have perfect confidence and access into the grace wherein we stand. For the God of Peace—that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that great Shepherd of the sheep, *through the blood of the everlasting covenant*—has purposely raised us up as new creatures in Him, to

give us the position and confidence of dear children; to make us perfect in every good work to do His will; to work in us that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ. (Heb. xiii. 20, 21.)

Thus again is the longing soul satisfied as it finds that God has made in Christ this further provision to satisfy its cravings. And God loves His children to enquire, and to satisfy their enquiries; for "He *satisfieth* the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."

Yet another step Godwards, and as we rise, God comes down to meet us. His gift is as a precious stone—whithersoever it turneth it glisteneth. (Prov. xvii. 8.) Manifold may be our needs; infinite is His fulness; and "in Him (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

We have become the servants of God to do His bidding; yet in our very holiest service, our best endeavours, we find sin, mixed motives, unholy tempers, failure. Be the service what it may, there is nothing we can call holy or fit for God's acceptance. Having done all, we are but "unprofitable servants."

But there was One who *delighted* to do God's will, whose "meat" it was, of whom it could be said, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." In Him the "fine (even) flour" of perfect service was to be seen. Anointed with (the oil) God's Holy Spirit without measure, He ever "went about doing good."

When in our own service we find failure and sin, let us look unto the wondrous atonement of Him who "through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God," that our consciences may be purged through His blood from dead works to serve *the living* God.

Truly He is our MEAT offering. Through Him alone can any service we may render be acceptable; for He had no "blemish" or "spot." "Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift."

Thus do we find Him to be our all in all. Yet once more we gaze, and see Him as God's supreme delight. Wholly was He unto God a BURNED offering. If fragrant in His life, His garments "of myrrh, aloes, and cassia," how much more in His death, when He gave Himself for us "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour!" Truly, then, it might be said, "The Lord smelled a sweet savour." Bruised by man, bruised by Satan, bruised by God, He offered up Himself to God, fulfilling His Father's commandment, and laying down His life for us, to take it again, and share it with us for ever. And thus we may see the varied needs of the sinner met by the perfect Saviour, and adore God's "wisdom and prudence" (Ephes. i.), wherein He hath abounded to us.

If sin abounds in us individually, grace to meet it much more abounds. Not that we should continue in sin that grace might abound. God forbid! But that we, "being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness."

We have but looked at a few of the varying aspects of Christ's work for us. May the Holy Spirit lead us to ponder the corresponding effects or purposes of His work by His Spirit in us, so that we may truly bring forth "fruit unto holiness," and glorify Him who doeth (and hath done) wondrous things, living here to represent Him, holding forth (as lamps do the light) the word of life—*Laus Deo*.

THE ALTAR, THE TEMPLE, AND THE WALLS OF JERUSALEM.

THE altar, the temple, and the walls of Jerusalem, as brought before us in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah, abound with typical and spiritual teaching. May the Lord enable us to gather up a few of the precious truths which these subjects unfold.

Many of the children of Israel returned at different

times from the captivity of Babylon to their own beloved country Judea. The first party consisted of more than forty thousand people, and one of their first acts after they were settled in their own land was to gather themselves together as one man to Jerusalem, to worship the Lord their God.

The city was in ruins, the temple was burnt to the ground, the altar was broken down, and their enemies were round about them watching to destroy them. The Jews had come together to seek the Lord their God; they had no time to lose, for their danger was imminent; so in their zeal, and stimulated by fear, they rose up quickly and builded the altar of the Lord, set it upon its bases, and offered burnt offerings thereon. (Ezra iii. 1-7.)

Thus far all was right. This was the first step, and they could return to their own houses with the happy consciousness that the Lord had accepted them, and would bless and prosper them.

So is it now. Looking at this in a gospel aspect, the *first* need of the sinner is personal forgiveness through the precious blood of Christ. His *first* right step is to look to Christ—the one altar and the one sacrifice for sin—to accept HIM as the propitiation, and confide in HIM as the One Mediator between God and man. This gives peace to the conscience, and enables the sinner to draw nigh to God through that rich atoning blood. The true and perfect altar is set upon its bases; the soul apprehends somewhat of the value of *His* infinite sacrifice, and is able to rejoice with exceeding joy, because of the present forgiveness of sin, and possession of eternal life.

We cannot overvalue the blessed truth that Christ is the one altar, the one sacrifice, the one priest. The altar must *precede* the temple. It was so with the patriarchs; it was so in the wilderness (see Exodus xxiv.); it was so in the land (see 2 Samuel vii.); it was so after the captivity; and it is so now.

As individuals we come *first* to Christ the altar, and having learned somewhat of His value as the one sacrifice, it is our privilege to go a step further and learn God's purpose of grace towards us as unfolded in the temple. The temple cannot save us, and association in or with the temple will be valueless, unless we have first used the altar.

These Israelites were not satisfied with having restored the altar; they desired to see the temple and the city rebuilt; and after giving freely of their substance for this object, we find them soon afterwards regathered in Jerusalem to lay the foundation of the house of the Lord.

“Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.” He is not only the Saviour of our souls, but also the foundation of that glorious temple which God is building as an eternal habitation for Himself; a temple formed of living stones, stones which have been dug out of the pit of corruption, even out of nature's death and darkness, quickened together with Christ, cleansed by His precious blood, indwelt and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and builded upon the one foundation—Christ—to grow up into a holy temple in the Lord.

This is God's eternal purpose concerning us; and now, as His redeemed and blood-bought people, He would have us enter into and have fellowship with this His blessed will. He would not have us contented to abide as units, individual stones, preparing for His glorious temple above; but He desires to see us *builded together* even now, compacted by that which every joint supplieth, united by the bands of love and grace, and gathering together around our blessed Lord, to “worship God in the spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.”

The *one* foundation is Christ, and we must add nothing to it. If we would form a temple well-pleasing to Him, our *one* bond of union must be that

we belong to Christ—that we are stones who have come to Him, and have been quickened by Him, and therefore seek to be built up *together*, “a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” (See 1 Peter ii. 3, 4.)

Poor and puny indeed was the work of these few oppressed Israelites. They could not attempt to imitate the glory of Solomon’s temple. Their work was contemptible in their own eyes, and bitter was the weeping of those who remembered the former temple in its glory. (See Ezra iii. 8–13.) The hindrances were many, their enemies were very strong, and again and again the work was hindered, and even stopped.

But listen to the words of God, His blessed words of cheer to His faint and weary people—“Yet now be strong, O Zerubbabel, saith the Lord; and be strong, O Joshua, son of Josedech, the high priest; and be strong, all ye people of the land, saith the Lord, and work: for I am with you, saith the Lord of hosts:” “my spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not.” “I will fill this house with glory, saith the Lord of hosts.” “And in this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of hosts.” (Haggai ii. 1–9.)

These words prevailed; the Israelites regained their courage, and led on by Zerubbabel and Joshua, they rose as one man and returned to the work; “and they builded and finished it,” and “kept the dedication of that house of God with joy.”

How greatly this history should encourage and strengthen us! Poor and puny indeed are any efforts which we can make to build the temple of the Lord. Contemptible indeed is the result of seeking to gather the children of God together in one. Well may we say, as we look back to the days of Pentecost, “the glory is departed.” But still, amid all the failure that abounds, the Lord abides true and faithful, and He has promised, that “where two or three are gathered to-

gether in my name, there am I in the midst of them." He will never fail to meet with and bless any of His people who prepare their hearts to seek Him; but He fulfils this promise in a very special manner to those who gather to Him as the one foundation, and seek to form a habitation for God through the Spirit.

Yes, there He is, and His word to us, as to these feeble Jews, is, "*Be strong and work; for I am with you*"—with you to enrich and bless; with you to give light, and gladness, and joy, and honour. "*My Spirit remaineth with you;*" with you to help your infirmities, and lead your worship. "*I will fill this house with glory*"—His own manifested presence, satisfying the desire of every longing soul, and filling every hungry soul with good things. "*And in this place will I give peace*"—His own peace, so deep, so full, so free, flowing forth from Himself, causing rest of soul amid the turmoil which is around. "When He giveth quietness, who then can make trouble?"

Further on in this portion of their history we find them busily occupied in repairing the walls and gates of the city, which had been broken down.

This was an arduous and dangerous task, and the particulars connected with it in the book of Nehemiah are full of instruction to those who seek to gather together unto Christ, and amid the confusion around them to form a habitation for God, where He may come and manifest Himself, and receive the praise and worship of His people.

"This is the law of the house . . . the whole limit round about shall be most holy." "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, for ever." But as with Jerusalem the walls were broken down and the gates thereof were burned with fire, so the enemy has come in and broken down the wall of partition which should separate the Church—the holy people—from the world; and the gates of admission into the fellowship of the saints are so marred and destroyed that Chris-

tians, and, alas! in many cases the unconverted also, come in and go out as they please, and every one does pretty much what is right in his own eyes.

The repairing of the wall was an individual and yet a collective work (Neh. iii. iv.), in which each band of workers repaired their own piece of the wall; and it is very interesting and encouraging to mark how the Lord measures and records the special work of each.

So it must be now. Each Christian must build, or help to build up his own piece of wall; and the breaches will never be fully repaired, unless each one accepts the standard which our blessed God has defined in His word, and seeks to raise his own wall of personal separation from evil to the required height.

One or two bands of workers, however diligently they might have laboured, could never have succeeded in repairing the whole wall. The difficulties were very great, the enemies were very strong, there was much rubbish to be cleared away, and the work was large and extensive. But "*the people had a mind to work, so much so, that when it was needful to be prepared at any moment to fight, they still laboured on, either with a sword girded by their side, or with one hand holding a weapon, while they wrought in the work with the other.*" (Read Neh. iv.)

Oh, for the same spirit of earnestness and unity now! Nehemiah mourned before the Lord because of the affliction of Jerusalem; he felt the shame and reproach of its ruins, and strengthened by the Lord, he stirred up the people to the work.

And is there not great reason now, to mourn because of the worldliness of the Church of God? Is not this the canker-worm which destroys so many buds of promise, and blights so many feeble saints? The Church has mingled with the world, and the world has crept into the Church. The walls are broken down, and confusion is the result, so that in many cases it is impossible to discern the true children of God from the

professors with whom they are mingled, and in whose ways they are walking.

Dear brethren, shall these things continue so? If we cannot repair the walls of the whole Church of God, let us begin, each one, at our own houses (Neh. iii. 23, 28, 30), and stir up our fellow-Christians to do the same; and then, banded together as the people of the holy God, let us seek to manifest His holiness and grace in the midst of the evil round us. And though the enemy may revile, and say, "What do these feeble Jews? . . . That which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall;" yet the Lord will surely accept and prosper our work.

Let us not rest satisfied with having received Christ as the one Sacrifice for sin, the Altar where alone atonement is made, but, gathering together unto HIM, let us seek to be built up a holy temple in the Lord, where He may delight to come, and meet with, and bless His people. And then, as thus builded together, let us see to the walls and the gates: exhorting one another to come out and be separate, and not touch the unclean thing; helping each other in the arduous work of setting up the holy wall which should surround the people of the living God; and when the wall is built, we shall find it an easy thing to set up the gates in their places. (See Neh. vi. 1.)

In Nehemiah xii. we read of the dedication of the wall, and the great joy that accompanied it.

So will it be now, if we will fearlessly and faithfully carry out the Lord's directions concerning His house, and return to the good old paths which are clearly defined in His precious word. He is the holy God. He cannot have fellowship with iniquity; and if we desire to *enjoy* His presence, whether individually or collectively, we must seek to cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit.

THE ONENESS OF CHRIST AND HIS PEOPLE.

THE oneness of Christ and His people is a delightful truth. It is great consolation to the people of God to know that "in all their afflictions He was afflicted;" and so intense and deep is His sympathy that He has said, "He who toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye." This is not mere figurative language; it is most precious truth.

Our salvation was obtained through the sufferings and death of Christ. He atoned for our sins in His sufferings on the tree; and God imputes all the value of His sufferings to us. In His incarnation and death our sins were laid upon Him, His sufferings were accounted ours.

Our sins are, in one point of view, debts; but our sins are not only *debts*, they are *crimes*. And so, when Christ suffered for our sins He not only paid our *debts*, He also removed our *crimes*. In becoming our Substitute, He took our nature, that He might thoroughly stand in our place. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death." This was necessary. The character and law of God required that He should truly represent us, and therefore "He was numbered with the transgressors." Our guilt thus became His in such a manner that we are said to suffer when He suffered. And as truly as our crimes were imputed to Him, His righteousness is accounted ours. "He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." (2 Cor. v. 21.)

This is a glorious view of the gospel. Although Christ Himself was innocent, yet as standing in our place He was accounted guilty. It was thus the Father viewed Him when He "made Him to be sin for us,"

Hanging on the accursed tree, the Father viewed Him clothed in all our guilt, and put Him to grief because He was dealing with Him for all our sins.

In like manner Jehovah views all the redeemed as they stand related to Christ, and clothed in His pure and spotless righteousness—the righteousness of God—He sees no iniquity in them. Thus Christ shall present them to Himself, in the day of the Lord, a glorious Church, without spot, wrinkle, or blemish. (Eph. v. 27.) And “they shall walk with Him in white” throughout eternity in the heavenly courts; “for they are worthy” in virtue of this union. (Rev. iii. 4.)

We are, therefore, not merely treated as if we were forgiven, we are viewed in Christ as completely righteous. We have died in Christ, and in Him have given full satisfaction to the law of God. Complete in Jesus, we want nothing, and hence are blessed for evermore.

This glorious gospel explains all the types and shadows of the Mosaic law. It is the sum and substance of them all. Their very design was to point it out. It fulfils them, and unfolds and satisfies all the attributes of Jehovah.

The Church also shows forth this blessed truth in the Lord's Supper. The true nature and design of this institution is the remembrance of Jesus. But, beloved, if we were not in Jesus, what could we have to remember concerning Him? It is as our Representative, our Substitute, our Head, our all, that He is presented to us in the breaking of bread. It is thus true fellowship is enjoyed. “The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?” Mark, beloved, the expressive word “communion.” It is “fellowship,” “oneness,” consequently enjoyment. The Lord Jesus is not merely present; He is in us, and we are in Him. We are one with Him, and He is one with us, and so we enjoy fellowship together.

Let us, then, see to it that we eat “discerning the

Lord's body," and thus have real communion in the Lord. And let us take care that when we separate from our fellow-saints that our fellowship is kept up at the throne of grace. Our citizenship being in heaven, let us live as the children of God, without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. May the Lord enable us to do so in His grace.

MANASSEH AND EPHRAIM;

OR, FORGETFULNESS AND FRUITFULNESS.

GENESIS xli. 50-52.

JOSEPH is presented to us in this passage like Paul in Philippians iii. He stands out from the place of death, and in his high and lofty place in the cleft of the rock, stretches out to know Christ and the *power* of His resurrection, "forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forth to those that are before, pressing toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

Though hated, despised, and rejected of his brethren, cast down into the pit, and sold for a price, yet in the very place of his bondage, and in the land of his captivity, he was "the man sent" before them to make provision for them. His "feet were hurt with fetters: he was laid in iron: the word of the LORD tried him, until the king sent and loosed him, and made him lord of his house, and ruler of all his substance: to bind his princes at his pleasure; and teach his senators wisdom."

Here we behold him in the fulness of his power, ruling in wisdom and peace, making provision in the days of plenty, and in the time of famine satisfying the poor with bread. Yet in all his prosperity he was still separated unto God, and had no intercourse with the Egyptians, *save for their profit and blessing*. To the end he retained his pilgrim character, and at his death "gave commandment concerning his bones."

He was named by Pharaoh "Zaphnath-paaneah"—"Revealer of secrets" (Coptic), "Saviour of the world" (Egyptian)—and in these titles we see a foreshadowing of Him who was to come, whose wondrous names were foretold. (Isaiah ix. 6, 7.)

In due time, as the "sent one" of God, he became the saviour of Israel, supplying all their need, and filling them out of his fulness, and was thus in measure like unto HIM who is "the fulness of the Godhead bodily," who "filleteth all in all."

During the time of his rejection by his brethren and separation from them, a Gentile wife was given him—a wife to share his heart's affections and partake of his glory—and in this particular also he foreshadowed HIM that was to come.

The name of the bride, too, and her connection, is significant. Asenath, the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest of On.

"Asenath," peril, misfortune.

"Poti-pherah," that scatters.

"On," pain, force, iniquity.

Of this union, "before the years of famine came," were two sons born to Joseph, "and Joseph called the name of the firstborn MANASSEH (forgetting): for God, said he, hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house."

Forgetting "things behind" in communion with HIM who was his comfort in adversity, his solace in the prison, his rescuer from both the pit and the dungeon, and from the death his brothers at first designed for him, he pressed on in the knowledge of HIM, was made wise in HIS wisdom, and strong in HIS strength. He had learned the lesson set before the bride in Psalm xlv. 10: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house."

In the power of that opened ear, and with a heart to consider HIM, the past was forgotten. *All* his toil,

and *all* the evil of his father's house, was remembered no more; so that when his brothers fell into his hands, instead of rendering evil for evil, and railing for railing, he dealt with them in rich grace, and with wondrous divine compassion and skill he led them to confession. He was thus a labourer together with God in restoring their souls, and was an instrument in His hands to bring about His matchless purposes of grace and goodness to the seed of Abraham.

Surely he reaped the blessing described in Proverbs viii.: "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors." Hearing, watching, waiting through many an hour of sadness, many a year of gloom, in trials perhaps greater than any except those of "the man of sorrows" Himself. But in the end, with Benjamin restored to him, and himself clasped in his father's arms, he has the wondrous place of blessing given to him that, like Christ Himself, he had the glorious opportunity of forgetting and forgiving all the injury done to him, and became the sole sustainer in life of those who had sought his death. Truly he might say, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

"And the name of the second called he EPHRAIM (fruitful): for God hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction."

Rachel, in naming her son Joseph, "adding," little thought of the "fruitful bough" God had given her in him; and in the blessing of Jacob, and in that of Moses, before their deaths, this characteristic of Joseph's career forms the main theme of the prophetic strain. In Jacob's blessing of the two lads, we find that he named the name of Abraham and Isaac with his own upon them, and thus the blessings and promises made unto the fathers were entailed upon them.

Thus God honoured Joseph's "patient continuance in well-doing." "Now, these things are examples, and are written for our admonition upon whom the ends of

the ages have come." How blessed to the tried and feeble child of God thus to watch His ways! Grace, mercy, and peace are *multiplied* to the one that studies HIM, who *considers* the Apostle and High Priest of his confession, Christ Jesus, "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever."

On the breastplate of the high priest's garments, for glory and beauty, as well as in the order of the camp of Israel, the name of Ephraim (fruitful) is set before Manasseh (forgetfulness), even as Jacob had prophesied. This is the divine order. After the flood "God blessed Noah and his sons, and said, Be fruitful."

After the cross, and *because* of it, God hath highly exalted Jesus, and given Him a name which is above every name. And Christians—Christ's own—are blessed with *all* spiritual blessings in the super-heavenlies *in* Christ.

Blessing first, and then fruitfulness, linked with forgetfulness of the darkness of the past because of the True Light which now shineth. We are crucified with Christ, and thus we become a heave-offering of sweet savour in Christ to God. But then there must be crucifixion to sin, self, and the world, to all which the old Adam nature is the slave.

Hence the primary necessity of *realizing* union with Christ in His death and resurrection, in order to be mighty through God to the pulling down of the strongholds of Satan, casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.

In these last of the days when iniquity (lawlessness) abounds, and the love of many waxes cold, and the masses are lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, rapidly pursuing the downward course; when societies that should be Churches of Christ have become semi-religious and semi-political organisms, the *reality* of the cross of *Christ* and its true glory (Gal. vi. 14) and

separating power need to be grasped more firmly by every true child of God.

The Father is deepening His work in many by chastening mercies and trials, there being little open persecution for Christ's sake in these days. With a Laodicean Christianity the offence of the cross and its power alike cease; and while there is a name of Christ and a wearing of the cross as an ornament, there are few to be found of whom it may be testified, "They have been with Jesus." Everything around bears witness to the need of an attentive ear, an eye fixed on Jesus, a willing mind, and prayer in the Holy Ghost, as the daily habit of the obedient child. All these were ever found in Him. He always used the Word—the sword of the Spirit—by which He overcame the evil one. Redeemed to the "obedience of faith," "the just shall live by his faith." If the word of the Lord be forgotten, and the eye taken off Him but for a moment, we sink like Peter.

May the noble, godly, steadfast walk of Joseph with God, be prized by us, and may each hear the voice, "Go and do *thou* likewise."

Lord Jesus, Day-star from on high,
Help me on Thee to fix my eye,
Behold Thy beauty, near Thee lie,
Thy much loved presence ever nigh.

DECLENSION.

DECLENSION is a very subtle thing. It generally creeps over the soul in a very specious way. Some small command is disobeyed: at first may be timidly, fearing the rod, or thinking some trouble may follow; but the Lord does not smite; He merely reproveth, or perhaps is silent, and no longer speaks to the soul as was His wont. His reproofs are unheeded—His silence disregarded. The disobedience is repeated, the conscience becomes dulled, and the soul wanders further

and further from the Lord, until it becomes like one that has been long dead, and possibly forgets that it was once purged from its old sins.

This gradual declension is very marked in the Old Testament histories, which are written for our learning, that we may avoid the snares into which many holy men of God fell.

Look, for instance, at Solomon's history, of whom we read that God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore, and yet how terrible his fall! He was undoubtedly a saved man; for God had promised that He would not take His mercy from him; and we may gather from Ecclesiastes that he was probably humbled and restored before he died; but yet how sad his case! how full of warning to us!

Solomon's first wrong step seems to have been sending into Egypt for horses. This was expressly forbidden in Deut. xvii. 16. It may have been a sin of ignorance; but if so, it arose from the neglect of another command in the same chapter, viz., that the king was to write him a copy of the law, and read therein all the days of his life, &c.

This command appears to have been seldom, if ever, obeyed, and much of the failure of those kings whose hearts were right with the Lord may be traced to this cause. And is it not often thus with us, beloved in the Lord? Are we not oftentimes ignorant of the Lord's desire and will concerning us? *culpably* ignorant, too, because we do not take sufficient pains to search out and acquaint ourselves with His word? He has given us His word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. We are passing through a dark and dangerous world. We are surrounded by pitfalls and snares, and Satan is ever watching to ensnare or trip us up, and we need the bright light of His word to preserve us from slipping, as well as His own mighty arm to uphold us.

His commandments are not grievous. There is nothing harsh or oppressive in them. They are the tender, gracious counsels of our loving Father, who knows the dangers which surround us, and desires to keep us from all the power and devices of the devil, that cruel enemy who is always seeking to harass and oppress us.

Solomon may have thought it a little matter to send to Egypt for horses; but in so doing he did his own will, and sought not counsel of the Lord. He also provided the kings of Syria and of the Hittites with horses and chariots; and we know what fearful havoc was thus brought upon Israel in after days, and thus his disobedience (unwitting though it might have been) brought forth its crop of bitter fruits.

How watchful we need to be! How careful to obey the Lord in *everything*! Nothing is too small to seek His guidance in. We are not our own. He has bought us with a price, and loves us with such a love, that He desires to give us the greatest possible amount of *present* as well as eternal blessing and happiness, and *therefore* He has marked out a path for us—a good and a right path—in which He can *walk with* us, and load us with continual tokens of His love and favour.

Our true and proper portion, as the redeemed of God, is “fellowship with the Father and the Son.” We are not only “reconciled to God,” most blessed and glorious as that reconciliation is, but higher, higher far, He has called us “unto the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord,” even to walk with Him, and to receive out of His fulness continual and abundant supplies of everything we need. “It hath pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell,” and He is given to us as our portion, that we should enjoy and use Him, and prove His all-sufficiency to sustain, and enrich, and gladden us.

It is a high and lofty path; but He can make our feet like hinds’ feet, and cause us to walk upon our

high places; and if we cleave to Him, His grace will be sufficient for us, and His strength will be made perfect in our weakness, so that we shall be more than conquerors.

Satan's great effort is to hinder this fellowship. He seeks to rob us of this joyous portion—the *company of Christ*—to draw us away from Him, and induce us to walk at a distance from Him. He delights to cast us down from our high places, and to lead us into something contrary to Christ, so as to separate us from Him; for “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” And thus we rob our own souls of blessing, and also rob Christ of the joy of satisfying us with His favour, and filling us with the good things of His house.

Another grievous failure into which Solomon fell was “multiplying wives,” which is also forbidden in Deut. xvii.; and, worse still, he loved strange and idolatrous women, who turned away his heart from the Lord.

Poor Solomon! how did his glory fade! how did his wisdom perish! The flood of evil with which he had surrounded himself was too strong for him. He was unable to resist the current, and we see him carried helplessly down the stream, dashed against the rocks of idolatry and sin, and making shipwreck of all his former devotedness and love to the Lord.

A sorry spectacle indeed! and oh, what a warning to us to cleave to the Lord with purpose of heart, and fear to swerve in the least from any of His commandments! His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace. “Great peace have they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them;” and blessed, doubly “blessed, is the man that feareth the Lord, that delighteth greatly in His commandments.”

PARAPHRASE OF HEBREWS XIII. 7-14.

REMEMBER the words and doctrines of those who have been your guides, who have spoken unto you the true word of God, seeking to build you up in the faith of Christ; whose faith follow, imitating them closely in all things—considering, weighing well the object of all their endeavours, as well as the whole tenor of their teaching and life: “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever.”

They have sought to lead you unto Him in all things, that you may find all concentrating in Him, who is the Head, who never changes, abiding the same, faithful and true—“the same to-day as yesterday; the same throughout the ages.”

Be not carried about, like clouds before the wind, with everything you may hear, but carefully ponder all you hear, trying the spirits whether they be of God. Be not moved away from the simple and unchangeable truths you have learnt of Christ by the doctrines of man, who would either add to or subtract from the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, substituting divers and strange doctrines; telling you, ye must observe certain rites and ceremonies “in meats and drinks,” and such like, which are but a shadow. The body, the substance, the marrow of the truth of God is this, that in Jesus Christ, the crucified and now risen Saviour, all your salvation is comprised, and that you want nothing more than Himself as Saviour.

Therefore be not moved by what others may tell you contrary to this; “for it is a good thing that the heart be established”—be firmly settled—in this elementary truth, that His grace is sufficient to meet every want.

If the heart is occupied with “meats and drinks,” as modes of acquiring spiritual strength, it will never be established. His grace alone can nourish and sus-

tain. "Meats" may profit the body, but they cannot afford sustenance to the soul, nor can they convey strength nor impart blessing. If you are occupied in these things, you will be self-occupied; whereas you should be wholly occupied with Christ, the fulness of God.

And you know (for I speak to you Hebrews, who know the law and the sacrifices connected therewith) that we have the very same truth typified to us in the sin-offering on the altar; for of that offering those who serve the tabernacle *cannot eat*. Of other offerings they may partake, as God has appointed; but this one is peculiar; and this one illustrates what I want you to learn concerning Christ in His offering Himself as the sacrifice for sin; "for the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin are burned without the camp," and are not partaken of by those ministering in the tabernacle. The offering, like atonement for sin, is made unto God. Man cannot share it, though he may partake in the benefits wrought thereby. "Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered (as the great Sin-offering) without the gate." "By one offering He hath (once and) for ever perfected them that are sanctified." The work needs no repetition.

It is well for you, beloved, to remember this, that you may be strengthened by this His proof of grace, and not be vainly endeavouring by eating "meats," in observance of some self-made ceremonial, to perfect yourselves, instead of being satisfied with His perfection. Those who have been so occupied have not been profited thereby in any way. They have lost, not gained, and are tossed about instead of being quietly established in the faith.

Now the Lord Jesus has entered into heaven itself with His own blood (of sin-offering), having obtained eternal redemption. Shall not His precious blood purge

your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? Let us not, then, be occupied with what men say, even though it bear the stamp of age and custom.

Let us, therefore, go forth unto Jesus without the camp, being content to bear His reproach; for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come. So as strangers to the ways, and customs, and religion even of this world let us live; for "our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour—the Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us go forth to Him, content, yea rejoicing, to suffer reproach for His name, knowing that in the city to come we shall reign with Him, that He shall then accredit our ways below, as seen in the light of His truth.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON EXODUS XIX. TO XL.

THE law is delivered, and the covenant, of which the law is made the basis, is solemnly dedicated; and thus the people of Israel become debtors to do all that the Lord by this law demanded; for by such obedience they are to stand in their present acceptance with God, and consequent enjoyment of blessing. (Exod. xix. xxiv.)

This one great action between the Lord and the people was completed, and the covenant rested upon the basis of *human obedience*. But the Lord God knew well that something else was needful. He knew what was in man. He knew (however Israel might boast that "all that the Lord said they would do, and be obedient") that they could not stand to the terms which they had accepted. He knew what would be the end of this present covenant from the very beginning of it, and accordingly He at once provides and settles relief for all this, and gets ready *that grace* which must be the people's only resource; and this relief He communicates to Moses, while the

people are still abiding in the covenant of the law. (Exod. xxv.—xxxv.)

We then find that it happens according to this divine anticipation—the people lose *everything* on the terms of their own covenant. (Ex. xxxii.) We next get a view of the people themselves—that they cannot look upon the glory of mount Sinai any longer—that they cannot sustain the light of the legislator's unveiled face—that they must take the place of *convicted* sinners, and look out for relief quite beyond and outside themselves. (Exod. xxxiii. xxxiv.)

This conducts the mystery onward, still very simply ; for having reached this, we have only to see the Lord opening His *already prepared relief*—that secret of grace which He had already been showing to Moses. And the people, already convicted of sin as we have been seeing, are equally ready to receive it. With willing hearts they enter into the Lord's counsels. This is *their faith and His revelation*.

He commands by Moses all that they are to prepare and do for the sanctuary, and they follow accordingly, and the golden sanctuary is the fruit of all this. That sanctuary which revealed the remedy for one convicted of sin, implied reconciliation, and the precious ways of mercy—the way whereby man, unequal to obtain blessing by his own acts and virtues, can get it through the grace of God and the rich provisions of His covenant.

They met the Lord in this place. With willing hearts they bring all that was commanded them. This is faith, to *meet God in the tabernacle of testimony, and not on mount Sinai*. The law was *proposed* to them *there* ; it is *kept and honoured* for them by Jesus, the true Ark of the temple, *here*. This was rejoicing in *God's covenant*, and not, as they had done before, in *their own*. This was standing in the law of faith, and not in works before God ; it was a total change in their attitude.

They were now indeed in such a place and character that the Lord descends to be among them without filling them with fear and terror. His glory can now come down and seat itself in this sanctuary of peace, leaving its fiery place and terrible aspect of death on the top of Sinai; and He could now speak, not words of righteousness, which could work in them nothing but death, but words about offerings and sacrifices (Lev.), and the like, which would be the means of maintaining the worshippers in His *sanctuary of peace* in life and joy before Him. (Heb. xii. 18-24; Exod. xxxv.-xl.)

A WORD OF COMFORT TO THE SICK AND WEARY.

How true is it that God's ways are not like our ways! We who are sick and afflicted are often tempted to wish we were strong and able to do some active work for our heavenly Master; but He has willed it otherwise; and can we not feel there is a "needs be" for our present "lull in life"? If we were permitted to be as actively employed as we desire, we might not perhaps cleave so closely to our Saviour. In our hours of pain and suffering we may find Him so dear, so unspeakably precious, and feel so safe beneath the everlasting arms, as we could not otherwise do.

Dear suffering friend, let us seek to realize that all is sent in love! God makes no mistakes, and He knows that we can better serve Him by suffering than by doing. "They also serve who only stand and wait." This has often comforted me, and I trust it may comfort many others; for we can do much for our loving Father on our beds of languishing.

A bed of suffering may seem a narrow sphere, but the loved ones who tend us so carefully and affectionately are surely watching our Christian life, and taking knowledge of us if we have been with Jesus, with Him in close communion. It is hard sometimes to check

the murmuring thought, or stifle a groan, when in acute suffering; but Jesus will help us if we look up to Him; and if we bear pain patiently and cheerfully, we are burning and shining lights, manifesting that we are really God's children.

If shut out from seeing friends and acquaintances, we have still the great privilege of prayer. Ah, do we value it? Every soul is worth pleading for; and should we not feel really anxious for the eternal welfare of those dear friends who have not yet "passed from death unto life"?

How terrible their danger! and how great their present loss while they reject salvation, and turn away from that tender, loving Shepherd who alone can bless and satisfy their souls, and who will never leave nor forsake one who really flies to Him!

How many beautiful verses the Lord has written especially for the consolation of the weary and afflicted! "The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing." "My grace is sufficient for thee." "Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness;" and many, many others.

Each afflicted one is privileged to take these beautiful words for his or her special comfort. None need be disheartened; but each is permitted and entreated to lay hold of and enjoy the truth and power of these precious promises, which are "Yea and Amen" in Christ Jesus.

It is Thy hand, my God!
 My sorrow comes from Thee;
 I bow beneath Thy chastening rod:
 'Tis love that bruises me.

Here my poor heart can rest,
 My God! it cleaves to Thee;
 Thy will is love, Thine end is blest,
 All work for good to me.

THE MORNING STAR.

“We have also a more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts.”—2 PETER i. 19.

“And I will give him the morning star.”—REV. ii. 28.

“I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star.”—REV. xxii. 16.

I. It is evidently full of design, that whilst to those with Jewish hope Christ is presented at the end of the Old Testament as “the Sun of Righteousness,” here at the close of the New Testament He refers to Himself, in His appeal to the church, as “the Bright and Morning Star.” If we compare with this the parallel between the same prophet Malachi’s address to Israel, and the conclusion of the exhortation in the epistle to the Hebrews to come inside the vail, the contrast is still more vivid. In the prophet we read of those “who feared the Lord, speaking often one to another.” In the epistle the believers are charged to “exhort one another, the more as they see the day approaching.” Then follows the allusion in the prophet to the Lord’s advent, and to what it will resemble; whilst in the epistle we are told, that after we have “done the will of God, we shall receive THE promise.” And what that promise is the next verse makes plain: “For yet a little while (as little as may be) and the coming One shall come, and shall not delay.” The symbol is varied, with a distinct purpose; because the church’s calling and hope are not identical with Israel’s. Wherein they differ, these very symbols declare—that is, to those who have hearing ears.

II. What is the difference of teaching in the final symbolic words of the two Testaments? Clearly that the church’s hope is for her Lord at His coming, *at a period certainly anterior to Israel’s*. His first advent was in two stages, to wit, Bethlehem and

Calvary. So His second advent will be first for His heavenly people, to receive them to Himself; and subsequently, for the succour of His earthly people, then sorely afflicted. And whilst all may behold the Sun, since there is nothing hid from the heat and light thereof, so in the day of His appearing every eye shall see Him; and before His work is then completed, every human being that has ever lived shall have had to do with Him. But unless you are a watcher during the night; unless, ere the gray of morn arrives, you are on the look out, you behold not this Star arise. They that sleep, sleep in the night. But we, the church, who believe in our Lord Jesus, are not of the night. We yearn for the day; and to them that are on the tip-toe of expectation (*τοῖς ἀπεκδεχομένοις*) for HIM, as we, His loved ones, all must long to see Him, He will appear the second time without sin unto salvation. (Heb. ix. 28.) The others are satisfied with the darkness and coldness of this world.

III. Yet this, His lesser glory at first—Star rather than Sun—is only in reference to this world. The symbol says nothing of what He is up yonder. So, too, when the Lord's majesty is elsewhere spoken of in its relation to this world, *e.g.* of His countenance, then it is as the Sun. (Rev. i. 13.) But when a representative of those called with the heavenly calling beholds Him, then he sees "a light from heaven, ABOVE the brightness of the Sun." (Acts xxvi. 13.) The Morning Star, in its *heavenly* lustre, only will shine for a season, ere the Sun of the millennial kingdom arises. Compare Matt. xvii. 2—in part a picture of the future, Matt. xiii. 43. Specially see 2 Sam. xxiii. 3-4; and Israel's hope, "the dayspring from on high." (Luke i. 18.)

IV. Now we, His heavenly people, are all to be associated with Him in His unearthly, I mean His

heavenly glory. So, in Rev. ii. 28, He guarantees to the overcomer, "I will give him the Morning Star"—that is, He will present Himself to such an one as the Morning Star. Such shall be associated with Him, not only in the coming day, but in the glory of bringing it on. A similar sentiment is couched in 1 Thess. v., "But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief." And why not? "Ye are ALL the children of light, and the children of the day." When the Sun appears, the sunbeams will appear simultaneously. As the sunbeams cannot wake up and find it then mid-day, so neither can we. We, through our union with Him who is the Sun, go to make the day. "When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory." (Col. iii.)

V. But first He arises "in the heart." (2 Pet. i. 19.) As the Morning Star is Christ coming for the saint, so the starlight now is the hope of that coming. We have the *lamp* of prophecy, by which we discern the darkness, specially the religious darkness of this world. Heeding that lamp, the Day Star will arise in our hearts; for, awe-struck with the gloom deepening all around us, we shall look upwards. We shall perceive that we have nothing to look for by way of amelioration until He come.

VI. Now the night is far spent—the day is at hand. Our worship and our feast assume this fact. It is, when scriptural, a supper, "the Lord's Supper." Here you must not walk by sight, but by faith. That is to say, you must not argue, since it is a supper, therefore it should be celebrated at night; and therefore the hour of worship may be driven into any corner, and the sermon and the preacher be to the front. No; conversely, God gathers His children to a feast, groups them all around Him at His table, and teaches them

thus to understand that since He whom they love most they see not, therefore it is night—be the time of day whatever it may, whether cock-crowing, mid-day, afternoon, or even.

VII. But the Morning Star at one period is the Evening Star at another. Read the account of the fourteen generations before Christ in Matt. i., and consider that from Abraham to David was dawn to noon, *typically*; from David to the carrying into Babylon was from noon to midnight; and from the carrying into Babylon unto the birth of Christ was midnight to morn. Then the people that walked in darkness saw a great Light. But He was rejected, crucified. This wondrous One set in clouds, and night closed in upon us. The moon, the church, waned and soon ceased to shine. A few stars have been visible here and there (Phil. ii. 15), but they serve only somewhat to relieve the darkness. But now again the morn is breaking. Verily the Lord is at hand; and first, too, in this peculiar and blessed and heavenly manner.

VIII. So twice here the Lord presents Himself in Rev. xxii. to the affections of His people: and twice His Church replies. First He says, "I am the root and the offspring of David." But Israel is silent: it has no heart for Him. Then He continues, "I am the bright and the morning star." The instant and gladsome reply by the Church in the Spirit follows: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come." Also the individual believer who has heard so as to obey the words of this prophecy—he also gladly cries, "Come." The other two invitations in this verse are by Christ to us; as if to say, "Ere I come to you, come ye to me." The four clauses of this verse (17), if read beginning with the last up to the first, exhibit, as in a spiritual thermometer, the growth of the souls of those called by the Lord. And the first two clauses

are marked as proceeding from a different mouth to the last two, by the word “say” therein. Then, in verse 20, the Lord again presents Himself thus: “He who testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.” And again His people reply, “Come, Lord Jesus.” (The words “even so” should be omitted.)

IX. Lastly, whereas the angels had looked out on the old creation, “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy” (Job xxxviii. 7), Christ looks out on the new creation, which shall be stable, because depending not, as the old did, on the goodness of the creature, but on the goodness of God—on redemption. The tyrant of Babylon, and before him Satan, had claimed to be the sun of the morning and LUCIFER: but Christ affirms that He is the Star, the bright and the morning one (*cf.* Isa. xiv. 12 and Ezek. xxviii. 14 with Rev. ii. and xxii.)

W. L.

“LET THE CHILDREN FIRST BE FILLED.”

“LET the children first be filled.” This is God’s order, and blessedly meet and right it is.

There is bread enough and to spare in our Father’s house—full and abundant provision for all. “Thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.” “Thou openest thine hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.” “He filleth the hungry with good things.” “Wealth and riches are in His house;” “treasure to be desired, and oil;” “yea, all pleasant and precious riches.”

He gives liberally, and upbraideth not; His hand is open wide to supply every need; He disperses abroad; He gives to the poor, and is always waiting to hear and answer the cry of the needy.

If Pharaoh says to Moses, “Intreat the Lord that He may take away the frogs from me, and from my people,” the prayer is heard; and though the Lord

knew that as soon as Pharaoh saw that there was respite he would again harden his heart, yet He granted his request, and removed the plague. (Exod. viii.)

If Jeroboam entreats the prophet to pray for the restoration of his withered hand, the cry of distress is heard, and the desired blessing flows down from the God of all grace. (1 Kings viii.)

If Ahab but humble himself in sackcloth and ashes, because of God's threatened judgment, the judgment is stayed. (1 Kings xxi.)

If the men of Nineveh give heed to the preaching of Jonah, and humble themselves before God, the city is preserved, and mercy abounds. (Jonah iii.)

Such is our God—our blessed, gracious God—so full of compassion and tender mercy, so ready to forgive, so slow to anger, so quick to answer the cry of distress.

But while His grace thus abounds towards a world which is lying in the wicked one, and upon which eventually His judgments and His fury must be poured forth, what are His thoughts and ways of peace towards His own redeemed and blood-bought children, His sons and His daughters, who have been born again of the incorruptible seed, and who are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His well-beloved and only begotten Son?

Ah, who can tell His love to them?—a love that passeth knowledge!—a grace that none can measure! Well may we say with one of old—"Many, O Lord my God, are thy wonderful works which thou hast done, and thy thoughts which are to us-ward; they cannot be reckoned up in order unto thee; if I would declare and speak of them, they are more than can be numbered." "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God; how great is the sum of them!"

Yes; God has a family upon this earth; a heaven-born, blood-bought family, which He is training for Himself; a family which He is leading about, feeding, instructing, humbling; a family in whom He delights,

upon whom His affections are set, whom He keeps as the apple of His eye, and for whom He has made the richest and fullest provision in every way; and it is of them He says so tenderly, “Let the children first be filled.”

We need to remember this. His love abounds towards poor lost, ruined sinners; but His children have the *first* place. The blessed tidings of salvation through the precious blood of Christ should be proclaimed both far and near; but His children must *not* be neglected. He has spread a table for them, where He loves to gather them around Himself; a table prepared for them in the very presence of their enemies; a feast of fat things full of marrow, of wine on the lees well refined; a feast of love, where they may come and feed abundantly upon Christ—eat His flesh and drink His blood, and be satiated out of His fulness.

It is to His table that the Lord invites His people. He knows our weakness, and knows how oppressed and weary we grow because of the way; how disheartened and cast down; how faint and feeble; and, therefore, He spreads this table for us. He calls us around Himself, and lovingly says—“Eat, O friends; eat of my body which was broken for you; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved, drink of my blood which was shed for you. Eat, and renew your strength; drink, and forget your poverty, and remember your misery no more.”

The Lord appeared to His disciples on the day of His resurrection, the first day of the week, and again on the first day of the next week, and on that day the early disciples came together to break bread; and week by week our Lord would have us thus gather together to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him.

“Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us,” and our God exhorts, yea, commands us to keep the feast, and we cannot neglect it without suffering real loss to our souls. There is a very solemn word in connection with

the passover which we should do well to remember: "The man that is clean, and is not in a journey (or hindered by unavoidable circumstances), and forbeareth to keep the passover, even the same soul shall be cut off from among his people: because he brought not the offering of the Lord in His appointed season, that man shall bear his sin." (Num. ix. 13.)

Yes, that soul is cut off from the enjoyment of present fellowship with the Lord and His people, and the Holy Spirit is grieved by his indifference and cold-heartedness. We remember the case of Thomas, how on the resurrection-eve he neglected to gather with the other disciples, and how much he lost. Not only did he remain in doubt as to what had become of the Lord he really loved, but he also lost that blessed greeting of "Peace be unto you," with its accompanying promise, which so gladdened and refreshed all who were gathered in that upper chamber.

Should not our souls long, yea even faint, for the courts of the Lord—our heart and our flesh cry out for the living God? Should we not thirst to come and appear before God? yea, greatly value the privilege of gathering together to feast with our Lord? to eat the lamb roast with fire, and pour out our hearts in grateful adoration and praise before Him?

Our blessed God desires to receive an offering at our hands, and He has said, "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me." He has given us His own well-beloved Son, as the sacrifice for our sin, and also as the continual food of our new-born souls; and He delights to see us enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. He would have us take and drink the cup of salvation, call upon His name, and pay Him our vows (the natural outcome of our grateful hearts) in the presence of His people.

"Let the children first be *filled*"—filled to the full; not fed with scanty fare, but satisfied; "satisfied with favour, and full with the blessing of the Lord."

Rich and varied food is provided for us; the fulness of Jesus flows forth, His grace abounds. His flesh, His blood, His tenderness, His patience, His love, all spread out for us to feast upon. His glory, His majesty, His wisdom, His power, His eternal counsels, His purposes concerning us, yea, all He is, and all He has, the whole Lamb is presented to us, and we may feed, and feed to our hearts' content.

Thus will Satan lose his power to tempt and draw us away from Christ; his dainty meats will be spread in vain before us; for “the full soul loatheth an honeycomb.” His baits will not attract, because of the goodly portion we have found in Christ.

Ah! is not this the great secret of all our weakness? We neglect to feed abundantly upon Christ. We turn away to other things, and eat of Satan's dainty meats, and then our souls grow sick, and lose their appetite. “Eat and drink, saith he to thee, but his heart is not with thee: the morsel which thou hast eaten shalt thou vomit up, and lose thy sweet words.”

“Let the children *first* be filled.” We need to remember this in connection with any service which we seek to do for the Lord. Our souls must be *well* fed, if we would minister acceptably to others. Our service will be dry, and cold, and heartless, unless it flow from the power of communion with the Lord.

We do not go forth to what requires natural strength and energy without *first* taking care to refresh and strengthen our bodies with food; and how much less should we neglect to feed our souls before going forth to the terrible conflict which we are called to wage with the powers of darkness.

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh,” and our service for the Lord, of whatever kind it may be, should flow forth from glad and happy hearts—hearts which have received their strength by waiting upon the Lord, and which have been afresh filled with the love and grace of Christ. Thus will the

truth which we utter be warm and gushing, fresh from the Fountain-head; and we shall not only be free and happy ourselves in our service, but there will be an unction and power from the Lord about it, which will tell upon the souls of others, and be calculated to draw sinners to Christ, or to build up His people in their most holy faith.

"Let the children first be filled." May the Lord grave these words upon our hearts, and show us the deep importance of them, both as regards our individual walk and ways, and also as regards our testimony for Him.

"I WILL BE AS THE DEW UNTO ISRAEL."

"I will be as the dew unto Israel: he shall grow as the lily, and cast forth his roots as Lebanon; his branches shall spread."—HOSEA xiv. 5, 6.

WE will not enter into the applicability of this passage to the future state of the lost tribes of Israel, when they shall be restored to their own land, and again become a glorious nation, but will rather view it as portraying the work of the Holy Spirit in the heart and life of every child of God.

Travellers tell us that, if we would know what the dew is and does, we should visit Eastern countries, where the drought lasts so long and is so disastrous in its consequences that trees, plants, and herbs of every kind would become parched and dried up under the scorching rays of the sun, were it not for the gentle influence of the refreshing dew. It revives and restores all nature, making it fresh and fruitful, so that what would otherwise become a "desert is made to rejoice, and blossom like the rose." (Isa. xxxv. 1.) Beautiful illustration of the work of the Spirit!

It is silent in its operation.—In the work of conversion He speaks to the heart of a sinner—it may be by the soft and gentle influence of love, or by the sharp stings of conscience and the keen darts of the Word—

yet silently and surely the sinner is called out of darkness and transformed into a child of light. “The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.” (John iii. 8.) “My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, as the showers upon the grass.” (Deut. xxxii. 2.)

This silent working of the Holy Spirit is typified in the building of Solomon’s temple, where every stone was prepared, chiselled, and polished before it was brought to the place of building, so that no sound of hammer, or axe, or any tool of iron was heard: the work proceeded noiselessly. (1 Kings vi. 7.) So the spiritual temple is raised; every stone is gathered from this world’s quarry, and prepared for its allotted place by the great Master Builder.

We have it also prefigured in that immortal allegory which was the delight of our childhood, and oft the joy and comfort of our maturer years. In the house of the Interpreter, Christian is shown a fire, which a man endeavours to extinguish, but the more water he pours on, the higher and hotter the fire burns. When he asks the meaning, he is led to the back of the wall, where he sees another man, who is pouring oil secretly on to the fire, thus counteracting the work of the destroyer.

It is effectual in operation.—Can the tree or plant resist the influence of the life-giving dew? Neither can God’s word, by the power of the Spirit, fail to accomplish its appointed work. “My people shall be willing in the day of my power.” “I will work; and who shall turn it back?” “It is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” Wherever the seed of life is sown, and watered and nourished with the dew of heavenly grace, there it will fructify and bring forth much fruit. Christian

labourer, fear not to sow beside all waters; for great and glorious is the promise—"My word shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."

We have the *effect* of the Spirit's work on the life and character of the Christian brought out in the latter part of the verse, where there are three kinds of growth specified as the result of the dew being upon Israel.

First. *Upward growth*.—"He shall grow as the lily." Fitting emblem of the Christian life, which is ever upwards and onwards! He strives to become more pure, more holy, more Christlike, more meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. With the apostle Paul, his constant endeavour is, "If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection from the dead." "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The apostolic injunction is ever the rule of his life, "Giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity;" so that he may neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter i. 1-8.)

While thus striving with the Spirit's help and guidance to grow upwards like the lily, we too, like that lovely plant, have little or no root on earth; for our conversation is in heaven, "our affections are set on things above, not on things on the earth." "The time is short: it remaineth, that they that have wives be as though they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it." (1 Cor. vii. 29-31.)

Second. *Downward growth*.—"He shall cast forth His roots as Lebanon." Watered by the dew and the rain from heaven, the cedar drinks in through its roots

the food which it requires to make it live and grow. Little by little the moisture spreads through every root and branch and stem, and the tree becomes beautiful to behold, “even as the goodly cedar trees.” The storms may sweep over it, the cold and the frost may blight it, the sun may scorch it, but it will brave them all and stand secure, for the roots are cast forth. As in the natural, so in the spiritual life. It is in communion with God—in daily living within the veil—in close, secret dealing with the living God, that the Christian finds nourishment for his soul; that he feeds on the word of life, that he may be strengthened, matured, perfected. It is in the quiet recesses of his chamber, where none but God is nigh, that he grows; it is there he enjoys fellowship with the Father, and speaks to Him with all the confidence of a loving child; it is there he gains strength for the conflict, knowledge to enable him to overcome the enemy, armour to aid him in the fight; it is there he finds the blessed promise fulfilled, “They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; they shall walk, and not faint.” (Isaiah xl. 31.) No one can go into that presence, and leave it as he went. No one can spend his time there, and not come forth, like Moses, with the reflection of God upon him; or like the apostles, when men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus.

“Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in Thy presence will prevail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take!
What parchèd ground refresh as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seems to lower;
We rise, and all—the distant and the near—
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear.
We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others, that we are not always strong;
That we are ever overborne with care—
That we should ever weak or heartless be—

Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer;
And joy, and strength, and courage are with Thee?"

Christian reader, in these days of religious profession, we want to live more within the veil; we want more of this secret walking with God—this abiding with Jesus, that we may be enabled, through the gracious influence of the dew of His Spirit, to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Third. *Expansive growth.*—"His branches shall spread." Christianity is ever diffusive. It sheds a grateful and refreshing influence around it—an influence that is felt in the family circle, the parish, the mart, the sick chamber, or wherever a Christian may be found. With the power of the Holy Spirit upon him, he seeks by his life and conduct to impress others with the blessedness of a mind at peace, a heart free from anxious care, a faith which can implicitly place its all in a loving Father's keeping; and thus endeavours to bring sinners to Jesus, that they, too, may know the joy which nothing earthly can give or take away. Turn to the New Testament for illustration. When Andrew had been led by the preaching of John to unite himself with the followers of Christ, his first thought was to seek his brother Simon, and tell him of the Saviour he had found, and then we are told "he brought him to Jesus." Philip, too, when called to follow Jesus, obeys, and then goes forth to find a needy one to bring to the Saviour, and answers all Nathanael's doubts with the loving invitation, "Come and see." The woman of Samaria, taught by the loving words of Jesus her need of the living water, and where to find it, rushes through the city echoing the same cry, "Come and see."

Beloved in the Lord, let this be ever our cry. May the name of Jesus so fill our hearts with peace and joy, that it may be the constant expression of our lips!
JESUS, AND JESUS ONLY!

MUTUAL SUBJECTION AND INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY.

EVERY truth has its counter-truth, and heavenly wisdom consists in the ability to assign to each its proper limits; and the worst forms of error are truths driven into extremes. God has so tempered all truth together, that we can only hold truth effectively as we hold it in the harmony of the whole.

The sense of individual responsibility is essential to all efficient service in the field of Christian labour. It has its foundation, not in the will of the individual, but in his obedience to the revealed will of Him whom he is called to obey. This was claimed by Peter and John when they were commanded to forbear preaching in the name of Jesus. (Acts iv. 19, 20.) God had commanded them to tell what they knew, and to witness to what they had seen and heard, and accordingly they laid down the golden rule of their responsibility to God alone, in all that He had commanded to be done.

Subjection to man in the things ordained of God has been enforced by tyranny on the one side, and submitted to by indifference on the other side. Whenever *life* comes in conscience regains her sway, and a sense of individual responsibility takes the place of a blind submission. And well is it that it should be so. But just here lies the danger; for that which begins under a legitimate sense of responsibility to God may end in subjection to the will of the individual himself, which is as far from subjection to God as is blind submission to another in the things of God.

Subjection to God in all things is the Christian's rule; and this involves subjection in three distinct spheres of Christian life—the world, the family, and the Church—and in each according to rules laid down

in the written word, "that the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished to all good works."

Resistance to authority is the feature of man's natural rebel will, and submission to it is one of the essential objects of God in all the discipline of the way. It is *the will* that has to find, in every sphere of life, its place of submission to God; and to God none the less really, although it may involve submission to others in the world, in the family, or in the church, according to the several appointments of God. In each sphere our subjection is based on the highest of all grounds, that in *them* we "serve the Lord Christ."

We will make a few remarks on these spheres in which our submissiveness of spirit has to be exercised.

I. First, in that which concerns *the world*, and our relation to the powers that be. Here the principle laid down is sufficiently clear—"Submit yourselves to every human ordinance for the Lord's sake; whether it be to the king, as supreme, or unto governors." As freemen in Christ it is true, but not using the freedom for a cloke of evil, but "as the servants of God." (See 1 Pet. ii. 13-17; Rom. xiii. 1-7.)

The Christian, as a pilgrim and a stranger, is placed in the world as the believing Jew was in Babylon, who was enjoined to seek the good of the city and the peace of it, till the command should come to flee out of the midst of it. On the one hand, not seeking after its honours, its emoluments, or its power; on the other, willing to minister in any way to its well-being, remembering that in the peace thereof the people of God were to find peace.

There is no small danger of a hyperspiritual pride that would get rid of responsibilities to the world in its general weal, on the ground of our having a heavenly citizenship. This does not free us from the responsibility of the claim the world-power has on all

who benefit by its rule, and enjoy its peace and protection. We have a debt that must not lie unpaid. To render unselfish service and to give unrequited labour is the privilege of those who would let their light shine in a way that can be understood by such as have no eyes to see and no power to discern that higher spiritual light, which is to them as darkness.

It was in this that the spotless character of the holy Daniel shone out so brightly for God, that, amidst the usurpation and self-seekings, the treachery and wrong by which he was surrounded, no fault could be found in him, save in what concerned the law of his God. His light shone as did others' after him, whose light shone in Cæsar's household, where, though man's slaves, they were Christ's freemen.

Again we would give a solemn word of caution against all seeking after that which the world seeketh after. Still let not obligation be neglected. The path is a narrow one, in which a very single eye is needed; otherwise the name, position, power of the world become an object selfishly sought, robbing the soul of its freshness and of its joy, and the dead fly of corrupt self-will causes the ointment to give a stinking savour.

II. Let us now consider our relations in *family life*. In all these, whether as servants, as children, or as wives, we have the one general precept, "Be subject." This, in one form or other, embraces the far larger proportion of the family of God; and we have also the universal command, "Yea, all of you, be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility."

All life's relationships have divinely appointed obligations, in subservience to which is to be found real subjection to God; and as if to give additional weight to those ties, it is said of the blessed Lord that "He went down with them" (Mary and Joseph), "and was subject unto them;" and for eighteen years we hear no more of that holy life, save that He increased in wisdom

and stature, and in favour with God and man. This subjection of Christ to the family ties that surrounded Him, cannot be too much dwelt upon; for it was the very exhibition of that which God seeks to have marked in those who, in obedience, learn to show forth heaven's blessed law of subjection.

In all human ties there may be very much that will make subjection no easy task, for the froward has to be obeyed equally with the good and gentle. The conviction, however, that God has so appointed it, and that the power to rule hereafter will depend on the power to obey Him, will make the rugged path smooth, and call forth the divinely-taught prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," with the hearty response, "Even so, Father."

How often do good men violate the obligations of domestic life, under an idea that they can be set aside for a higher service! These ties in life, once formed, can never be set aside, nor their duties ignored for any assumed path. The instructed soul will at once see God's veto placed on entering any path if it cannot be walked in with due regard to family claims.

Here many have made shipwreck of their usefulness, and of their spiritual peace, for no supposed direction can ever involve the setting aside of positive precept, and hence a due consideration in these matters is essential to a right judgment as to what we may feel led to undertake. Hence the absolute necessity of subjection according to the word of God in domestic life, if we would avoid the dangers of a self-appointed warfare.

But here again is a danger and a snare (see 1 Cor. vii. 33, 34); for instead of giving family claims their due place, there are those who sacrifice every claim to that of the family, and making *that* their idol, forget, some the claims of the world, some the claims of the church, and some all claims whatever. The true harmony of Christian character blends all the claims together, and rightly adjusting each in its proper place,

leaves not the one undone because there is something else to do likewise.

III. This leads to the last sphere in which we have to harmonize subjection and individual responsibility, and that is *the Church*.

Rule and subjection are as much the order here as elsewhere, and a divinely appointed eldership and oversight has as much to be recognized as government in the world, and paternal control in the family.

The New Testament abounds with rules for our guidance in this most important matter, the details of which we cannot go into here. As government in the family is an appointment of God, flowing out of certain relations, so appointments in the Church of God get not their sanction from a human ordination, but from a divine adaptation, from which flows a double responsibility—on the one hand, in those who possess it to exercise it, and on those who bear testimony to it to submit.

In this matter conscience, rightly exercised before God, is the only human tribunal before which the decision has to be made. We have no apostolic succession and no church authority on which to fall back; we have the spirituality of the spiritual, to which all the gifts and appointments of God address themselves, and to which the spiritual will bow, hearing in them the voice of God—a voice behind them that says, "This is the way," when they turn either to the right or to the left.

Weaned hearts will hear, and those having a single eye will see, and God promises guidance to none other. It has ever been the few who guide the many, and if the few are spiritually-minded, harmony and peace will pervade the whole assembly. If, on the other hand, a Diotrephes spirit gain the ascendancy, it will end either in anarchy or despotism; and God's rule in the Church is as far removed from the one as from the other.

Subjection to a spiritually recognized rule is as essential to the healthy development of the saints in their spiritual growth, as it is in the family or in the world. This is our theocracy; and as in Israel there were rulers of tribes, of thousands, of hundreds, and of tens, so are there now in the appointment of God among ourselves. When in Israel subjection failed, each man did what was right in his own eyes; and the result was uncontrolled license and proud self-will, which ended in the kingship of Saul, the one who, head and shoulders above his brethren, stands as the type of the rule of the flesh in the kingdom of God, which man ever seeks to substitute for God's rule in the spirit, and thereby forestalls His government under the true David. All such attempts must end as did Saul's kingdom on the battlefield on Mount Gilboa.

The rulers in the churches are variously styled "bishops," *i.e.* overseers, επισκοποι, as in Ephesus and Philippi (see Acts xx. 28; 1 Tim. iii.; Phil. i. 1); guides or governors, ἡγουμενοι (Heb. xiii. 7; xvii. 24; compare with Matthew ii. 6), among the churches in Judea; and rulers, προϊσταμενοι, in the epistles to the Romans and Thessalonians (Rom. xii. 8; Thess. v. 12, rendered "are over you"). The most generally used word is elders, and to them Peter writes exhorting them to *take on themselves* the oversight of the flock, not as an appointment by men, but under responsibility to God and to His Church.

Rule necessarily involves subjection, and perhaps in nothing is subjection more needed to be enforced than in regard to God's service. How many an unsent man would never have gone, had he sought only to go in subjection to his brethren.

Their judgment might not always be right, but long and patient waiting would then be called for to make it manifest that they had mistaken the mind of God. Absolute subjection can never be claimed; but it is a

fearfully solemn thing to set aside the voice of the church as expressed in the opinion of those whom God has appointed overseers in His house, and "rulers over His household."

Here, again, we must harmonize the responsibility of the individual with the subjection of one to another in the fear of God, the action of the one with the judgment of the many. Would that there were more mutual dependence as between the many members of the same body. There would be then more harmony, more fellowship, and fewer mistakes.

May the Lord enable us all to see how to harmonize our responsibilities in the three spheres of the world, the family, and the Church, and to walk in each to the glory of Him who has appointed them. May we ever set before us the example of Jesus, who submitted to God's appointment in the world, in the family, and in Israel, and has given to us *obedience* as the rule of our daily life, as the great antidote to self-seeking and self-pleasing. Let us remember also that oftentimes we never please ourselves more than in our self-appointed ministries, in which God and the Church are alike set aside.

H. G.

THE LORD JESUS AS MINISTER, AND SERVANT.*

"The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister—and to give His life a ransom for many!"—MARK x. 45.

THERE is a distinction between the whole life-work of our Lord and the work of atonement, perfectly "finished" through His death.

He came "to minister" first. "A sower went forth to sow." He brought down heavenly seed, and sowed it on earth. He repeatedly speaks of Himself

* The writer of this paper was interested in an article in the January number of the *Golden Lamp*, entitled "The Son of Man," and adds, "Many important lessons are taught by the Lord Jesus in connection with Himself as thus revealed: *all* are precious, but I desire to consider one of them."—Ed.

(in the gospel by John) as "SENT" from the Father. He came in His name, filled with the Spirit, and having "all power" delivered unto Him. (Matt. xi. 27.) He came to "minister" in human form, though infinitely pure and holy, the Father's gifts to man.

The word here used is *διακονεω*, implying that something was committed to Him to minister. He came full-handed. We find Him providing wine at a wedding feast; feeding the multitudes, and leaving bread to spare; giving sight to the blind; hearing to the deaf; strength to the lame; healing to the sick; life to the dead! He came in the Father's name, invested with authority and power, "sealed" and accredited by the Father as the true centre and distributor of ALL BLESSING.

He was the "Lord" of whom David "in spirit" speaks in Psalm ciii.: "Bless the Lord, O my soul. Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases." We find Him casting out devils; giving liberty to the captive; proclaiming "the acceptable year of the Lord."

He well called Himself "the Son of man;" for He walked as the perfect man among sinful men. He brought down the love of the Father so near to man in His own person, that this heavenly love might be seen, felt, and heard by all whose eyes, hearts, and ears were opened to accept the "glad tidings."

He had open arms for infants, soft words for a child ("Talitha cumi," an expression of endearment), tenderness for women, forbearance and strength for all in need. We read many heart-stirring accounts of those who came to Him, but never of *one* sent empty away! Truly, He came to "minister" as "Son of man." He gave freely as God, royally as a king. His heart was ever ready, as were His hands and feet.

If a look was at the time the most precious love token to recall a timid, wandering disciple, "Jesus turned and looked." If tears were the softest and

sweetest balm in the hour of bereavement, "Jesus wept." "Never man spake like this man," was the testimony given concerning His words—"He speaks as one having authority," was that concerning His preaching. And well might it be so, for He ministered the words and works of the Father. (John viii. 26-28; xiv. 10.)

He was the living person in whom the whole character of God, as revealed in the Scriptures, was told out. Himself THE TRUTH; in Him the life of Love breathed, lived, and moved! Wherever He was, the gifts He brought down were also.

Thus lived "the Son of man," the first who ever trod this earth to do the same work. In Heb. xi. we have a list of some who lived and died "in faith." Throughout the Bible we read of teachers, leaders, prophets, priests, and others, who desired to live to the glory of God, and who served their generation; but was there ever one before our blessed Lord whose single, whole, ceaseless object and definite purpose was "to minister"? I trow not. Many had been called to live wonderful lives; yet, was there ever such a life as His?

But, as is always the case with the gifts of God, the sweetest drop in the cup comes last. Thus in the close of His ministry our Lord leaves a most precious legacy. He cheers His disciples with a promise—the coming of the Comforter; and a possession—"Peace I leave with you." This "peace" was the fragrance He would breathe into the hearts that loved Him, the trace that He had walked this earth. This was the silver track ever glittering in the sunshine silently to mark that He had trodden the stormy sea. Never had these words been authoritatively pronounced by other lips than His—"My peace I give unto you!" spoken by anticipation, as He knew that within a few hours His own priceless blood would seal this inheritance to every believer in Him; and also that the Holy Spirit would in after

years testify, "Having made peace through the blood of His cross." (Col. i. 20.)

These words seem the connecting link between the two parts of the verse we are considering. "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister—and to give His life a ransom for many." Here the scene changes. He is not now seen going about full-handed to speak the words and do the works of the Father, but as the obedient Son, passively enduring, bound to the altar, the willing sacrifice for sin! Here the great transaction is between the Father and the Son.

We read the language of His heart in Psa. xl., "Lo, I come: I *delight* to do thy will, O my God!"*

He is brought as a Lamb to the slaughter. But why? This was the crowning work, the finishing of His mission to earth!

It was not His wonderful words nor mighty works which purchased our salvation. His public ministry on earth did not accomplish this. So we find Him speaking (John xii.), "What shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but *for this hour* came I into the world. Father, glorify **THY NAME!**" How? By manifesting His glorious name—**LOVE**, in the gift of His own Son.

And so we read in Phil. ii. that Jesus "took upon Him the form of a *servant*." Here the word is not *διακονος*, but *δουλος*, *slave*. Actively obedient to the Father through His whole life, He would now glorify Him by passive obedience. In John xii. 23 He says, "The hour is come that the Son of man should be glorified;" and further on (verse 28), "Father, glorify **THY NAME.**" Then came there a voice from heaven,

* There is an exquisite harmony of truth in the three times this word is used—"It *pleased* the Lord to bruise Him" (Isaiah liii. 10), the same word as our Lord uses in prophecy, "I *delight*," &c., and the result, so glorious, "It *pleased* the Father that in Him should **ALL FULLNESS DWELL.**"

saying, "I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again."

The Lord Jesus had *lived* entirely to the glory of the Father. God had marked ONE in a world like this whose every thought, intent, word, and deed had been perfectly free from the least taint of sin; ONE in whom His own pure eyes could behold "truth in the inward parts;" ONE of whom the Holy Spirit could testify, "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth;" ONE of whom even the unclean spirit could testify, "I know thee who thou art; the Holy One of God." (Luke iv. 34.) And now the name of the Father was to be glorified in the *death* of His beloved Son.

So we see from these two verses that the *only* glory the Lord Jesus would accept on earth as "Son of man" was the twofold glory of living and dying to be the personal manifestation and exponent of the Father.

Well may the Spirit testify, "God was in Christ." Moral glory was shown through His whole life; but the greater glory shone out in His death, when (having been sold and bought by man at the price of the lowest slave), taking the lowest place between two thieves, suspended between earth and heaven, He could truly say, "I have overcome the world." "Now is the Son of man glorified." Yes, amid the thick darkness, the agonizing cries, the inexpressible awe and gloom which penetrated many hearts, even then THE WORK was being accomplished that shall bring in a glory which the world has yet to see. For to THAT ONE then nailed on the cross "every knee shall bow," every tongue shall confess that He is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Phil. ii)

In this way two verses are explained which have been found difficult. One verse is, "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again." (John x. 17.) I believe the *first* aspect of our Lord on the cross to be toward the Father. "God is love." "All have sinned." Love

would save, but how? Not at the expense of the attributes of God, but in harmony with all. In divine love there is no reserve. (John iii. 16.) Jesus came to manifest this love. "Hereby perceive we **THE LOVE** (there is but one love), because He laid down His life for us." (1 John iii. 16.) The way was found; there was but one way: "Lo I come!" and Jesus came! Thus alone could **LOVE** be manifested in Jesus, and in His death.

When He bare our sins in His own body on the tree, He cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" Yes, sin, our sin, must meet the wrath due: and God, as Judge, must punish. "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquities of us all." (Isa. liii.)

No answer was heard from heaven to that tremendous question. The answer will yet be given in the *multitude* of redeemed ones.

Wonderful truth! "It pleased the **LORD** to bruise Him; **HE** hath put Him to grief:" therefore He utters that piercing cry. But "it pleased the Father that in Him should **ALL FULNESS** dwell." So He exclaims (again holding to His sonship), "**FATHER**, into thy hands I commend my Spirit." Never did the Father's love rest with more infinite complacency on His Son than when He laid down His life. "Therefore doth my Father love me."

It seems as if every drop of that priceless blood as it trickled down proclaimed the Father's love to man. That blood was the full price of redemption, paid to the utmost, freely given. Here was the measure and manifestation of love. **ALL** done that could be done; **ALL** given that even God could give!

"He spared not His Son!"

The other passage, explaining the willingness and obedience of the Son, is John xiv. 31: "But that the world may *know* that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence." He went straight to be crucified.

Here is the full explanation of the love of the Son to the Father. Love was the heavenly life which moved our Lord willingly to resign His earthly life, to consent to a death of agony, that the world might know that He loves the Father.

“Reproach hath broken my heart.” This was the *real* death of the Saviour. Man did his worst, Satan did his best; but all these could not take away His life. “No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father.” (John x. 18.)

Thus the love of heaven has lived and breathed on this sin-stained earth in the life of ministry and the death of agony of the Lord Jesus. But He became OUR ATONEMENT in His death. “Without blood there is no remission.” The song of praise will be to Him as “the Lamb”—“the Lamb that was slain!” His becoming obedient unto death was the greater work. His life-blood was the greatest gift. He was the minister of other gifts, but His LIFE was His own free gift. “All that a man hath will he give for his life,” says the accuser; but Jesus could say, “I lay down my life.”

Thus have we seen our beloved Master through those years of toil and suffering, pleasing not Himself, content in the place of willing subjection to the Father to “minister” that which He tells us He received from the Father; thus showing forth in His own person His words and works.

His last ministry was to His disciples on the way to Calvary, and then He who is the free giver gives *Himself*.

“His is love, 'tis love unbounded,
Without measure, without end;
Human thought is here confounded,
'Tis too vast to comprehend.
Praise the Saviour:
Magnify the sinner's Friend.”

“Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift!”

The practical teaching in connection with this passage is remarkable.

We are told in Matt. xx. 20, that the *mother* of Zebedee's children came to Him; in Mark x. 35, that James and John came, mother and sons alike filled with ambition. The ten were filled with indignation, showing the same feeling in their hearts; none wished another to be higher than himself.

What a picture for the meek and lowly Jesus to contemplate! Twelve disciples, each wishing to be greatest. Here is human nature, weak through pride. But the Master, with that unspeakable dignity which attended all His works and ways, calmly bears with their folly, and uses the occasion to bring forth out of His treasury a lesson of deep heavenly wisdom. "Whoso will (or wishes to) be great, let him be your *minister*" (*διακονος*, servant at table). The greatest took this place—"I am among you as He that serveth." "But if any desire to be *chief*, let him be your servant" (*δουλος*, slave). Then follow the words we have been considering. As the Master took the lowest place, and will yet have the highest, so the place nearest to Him must still on earth be the lowest. Jesus bore the cross, and "He shall bear the glory!"

Yes, Thou beloved of the Father, filled with the Spirit, beloved by all thine own redeemed ones, thou shalt "REIGN for ever and ever!" Thou shalt come, not to be "despised and rejected," but to be "admired in all them that believe!" Light shall surround Thee, joy shall be Thy companion, melody shall follow Thee in the one new song of the countless myriads of saved sinners, while all creation shall fill in the endless harmonies in which Thy piercing cries on the cross have resulted!

Oh, dear friends, may it be ours to be joyfully content to take the low place now, and, on the coming "morrow," to see "the King in His beauty," and praise Him eternally!

C. A. H.

BABES AND MEN.

HEB. v. 12-14.

Two illustrations are made use of in this passage, differing in appearance, but the same in idea: the pupil, who, had he availed himself of his opportunities to the full, would have been fitted for a teacher's post; the babe in knowledge, who, had he used his developing powers and eaten the offered meat instead of indolently swallowing the ready-prepared food which had nourished the first months of life, would spiritually have passed from the infant into the man of full age.

In this passage as in so many others in the Scriptures how strikingly the sense of responsibility is pressed home, and the fact that Christians are to be not merely recipients, but active, diligent, users of grace—taking the whole armour of God, building, running, holding forth our lights, growing in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We must not quietly sit down in soul-laziness, content with what falls into our hands because our inert life enables us to exist on only a little food. Far indeed from this. We ought to be stretching forward, upward, daily finding out new wants, for which there is abundant supply, our increasing powers needing and receiving increasing support—a real feeding on the unbounded fulness of Christ, that in its turn necessitates the outcome of growth.

Let us glance at the second figure used by the apostle. What is the fitting nourishment of a new-born babe? Milk assuredly, so easily received, so admirably adapted to its peculiar wants. But time goes on. The little one thrives apace, month after month fresh powers are developed, the age of infancy is fast passing away, and childhood, youth, and manhood are advancing in succession. What of his diet now? **Meat, first tender**

and in small quantities, gradually increasing in amount and strength according to the growing demands of the young frame; this is what he craves until the man's full measure is reached, and well-strung bone and sinew, active brain, and hand and foot, amply supplied with healthy blood, testify to the wisdom that has guided him through the successive stages from utter weakness to mature strength.

But if the child were indolently or perversely to refuse to change his food, and would touch nothing else than milk, what then? Life might be preserved, no doubt, but in what a miserably shrunken feeble body; what a useless one to others; what a burden to itself; forced in self-defence to remain inactive from sheer inability for work; mentally, bodily dwarfed, or, it might be, grown out of all sort of proportion into deformity! With the powers which had been so culpably neglected and weakened by disuse year after year the unhappy man, even if roused to a consciousness of his error, and desiring to repair it, would find that it was too late, and that the lost opportunity could not be regained.

Something of a counterpart to this in spiritual matters was in the apostle's mind. Those to whom he wrote had been fed with the sincere milk of the word; they had received the gospel of life in Christ Jesus, and it had nourished them duly; but when, as time went on, growth in spiritual knowledge, corresponding with increasing spiritual age, was naturally looked for, it was found wanting: they had "become such as had need of milk, and not of strong meat."

Alas! how sadly *we* need reproof in this matter. What babes we persist in remaining. How we shrink from the labour of partaking of the strong meat so abundantly provided for us. How we satisfy ourselves with infants' food, and then plead infantile weakness as an excuse for the half-done or wholly neglected man's task that we are called on to perform.

Strong Christians—feeble Christians—which do we

oftenest meet with in the present day? Who can deny that the true answer to this question is emphatically the latter? Why is this?

Many reasons may, no doubt, be offered. The deadening spirit of the age, worldliness, ease, degeneracy, these or some other equally patent evils, one or all perhaps may be suggested, but should not these be recognised as *effects* rather than *causes*? The real and humbling solution of the mystery is—Bible truth little lived though well known, or, Bible truth little known and equally little lived.

The food is ready for us, food adapted for all stages of development, all possible requirements. Some of us know a great deal about it, some scarcely anything. Who amongst us really and truly, diligently and honestly, avails him or herself of the rich provision—systematically, and not by fits and starts, sharing a Father's loving care and wise provision, and consciously reaping the reward of obedience in being nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine?

Knowledge is certainly not wanting to many in the present day; if such a thing were possible we have it in excess. The making of distinctions where there is really no difference, a kind of refined hair-splitting, above all, a craving for new views of truth, as they are termed, shows this unmistakably. On the other hand, ignorance is no less general. Gather any average group of Christians over the Word and it is more than probable that painful proof of this will be afforded, proof that will only too sadly explain why hands hang down and knees are feeble.

Let us use the apostle's figure to make our meaning thoroughly plain. A large household is under the care of a wise and tender father. Children of all ages, from the new-born babe to the man in years, depend on him for their support, and his table is supplied with all that each one requires—milk for those who need it, and strong meat for those who need it.

Suppose one child, naturally quick and intelligent, busies himself with analysing the various dishes and describing their excellencies instead of eating. What should we think of such a wisely foolish one, starving in the midst of plenty, fancying himself able to advise and instruct others, while his emaciated face and meagre frame too manifestly prove his folly? Another poor dull child stares vacantly at the feast, and never ventures close enough to the table to discern and choose food fit for his wants; while another indolent one shrinks from the least exertion, asks no questions, and scarcely takes enough to sustain life.

Such an anomaly we never find in natural things, but, alas! how common is it in spiritual things.

Which of the three do we each one most closely resemble? or are we of the happy number for whom the wisely-ordered table is not spread in vain? Can we make up our minds to be thoroughly honest with ourselves? Not merely using those general confessions, those wailings over weakness, and declension with which we so often try to satisfy ourselves, so vague, so lightly uttered, so superficial, the talk of the lips that tendeth to spiritual "penury."

Let us not seek unto those who have on hand a supply of salves for their own and others' hurts, salves that heal slightly, that give momentary ease, and are therefore so eagerly caught at and used by so many, while deep below the falsely smooth surface the evil lies festering, untouched, and further from cure than ever. Oh, for a little brave endurance of wholesome pain! for a steady standing face to face with our real condition! for that unflinching self-judgment of which the apostle Paul speaks!

There is need for all this, sore, pressing need; and not one can hold him or herself free from responsibility in regard to it in the sight of the Master.

"If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." We cannot escape our corporate duties, any more

than we can forego our corporate privileges as the Church of Christ.

From this seeming digression let us return, and seek to draw a few earnest, practical, personal lessons from the apostle's figure.

"Born again," "born from above," to what age ought we to have attained?—to what age *have we* attained? What ought to be our present stage of growth, experience, knowledge, power, maturity, as Christians?—at what stage have we actually arrived? For the time ought we to be men?—are we men? Let us, by the grace of God, put aside false humility, and everything else that would come between us and the simple positive truth, as we take these questions and answer them.

"The sincere milk of the word," the simple gospel, which even children can take in, nourished our infancy. It is enough for the earliest stage of Christian life. Have we not seen men in all the prime of mental vigour, when first brought to the knowledge of Christ, dwell with the simplicity of the very babe on that one thought, "Jesus, *my* Saviour," as if the opening spiritual intellect could not go beyond that all-sufficing idea.

There is a wise and beautiful order in this, as in all the arrangements of our Father, and it is well when the haste and officiousness of man does not step in to mar, rather than help in the work. Copious draughts of milk—these are needed; and let not any fancy that by giving stronger food, quicker advance in spiritual things will be made.

But what is the proper nourishment for the next stage of the Christian's life?

Jesus Christ, in all His attributes, in all His fullness! JESUS HIMSELF! No mere doctrines about Him, no words of men, no finely-wrought theories, but JESUS HIMSELF, as revealed in the Scriptures. Old and New Testament truths corroborate and confirm each other, and

build up the framework of the soul, solid, well-rounded, well sustained, in every part, such as it will become by this process and no other.

How often do we see Christians suffering from imperfect development in this matter. One truth fully grown into, as it were, and supporting that side most efficiently, while on another a truth is only in the germ, or little advanced beyond it, and everything is thrown out of proportion. One side is paralysed, a foot is crippled, or the vision is weakened to a most lamentable degree. Second-hand supplies of truth are specially perilous at this stage. How many of us have to deplore the lessened powers which such imperfect nutrition in our own earlier days has caused. Scripture truth must be based not on "he says" or "they say," but on "it is written." That is what we want; and this alone will build up healthy, sound, vigorous Christians, such as are needed in the present day for the help of the Lord against Satan.

What is the next stage—or is there any? Can we ever really go beyond this one? Christ the beginning, Christ the end, Christ the all in all to His Church! All that He is to us, and all that we are in Him!

"Strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age." This truth, not held in the head merely, but lived *on* in the soul, lived *out* in daily, hourly life—this is what the apostle speaks of; this, in ever-increasing supply, with ever-increasing capacity for using it, is what we need.

What a thrill goes through the whole inner-being when some truth, unrecognized before, it may be, is opened clearly before us in our study of the Word; and then can we not often trace a loving Father's care and guidance, when some unlooked-for incident, some unexpected meeting, draws on this new-found treasure of strength and wisdom? Thus is our appetite developed, and we learn the special way in which the newly-acquired power is to be exercised.

And yet, amid all our maturing spiritual manhood, our need of strong meat and capacity for its use, our childish appetite for the pure milk that nourished our infancy, will be as keen as ever. The simple gospel word, "Christ my Saviour," will be ever fresh, ever new, ever more and more full of living power and sweetness.

Let us, then, make sure that we are not amongst those who accumulate stores, and from idleness fail to use them; nor yet of those who, from the very same cause, only displayed in a different way, trust to their own all but unaided resources, and have little result to show.

On God's part "all things are ready;" but we must "come." Prayerful, diligent study of the Word will unlock the storehouse and all its varied contents, give us a seat at the table, and teach us how best to make its rich provision our own.

Prayerful, diligent study, we would repeat, is needed; not desultory reading, not critical hair-splitting, but that which has been aptly termed "feeding on the Word," making it our very own, absorbing it into our spiritual being. Then shall we do credit to the rich fare so amply provided for us, by the steady growth of the inner man, and also by the ever-deepening testimony of outward walk, and word, and influence.

WORSHIP AND MINISTRY.*

WORSHIP and Ministry are distinct the one from the other.

In Israel there were priests and Levites, the one distinct from the other. Priests entered into the holy place as *worshippers*. Levites were occupied with *service*, and thus priests were superior to Levites. They worshipped in the more immediate presence of

* Extracted from "Worship and Ministry," by Rice T. Hopkins. Price 2d. Yapp and Hawkins, 70, Welbeck Street.

the Lord, whilst Levites were outside serving. We, as Christians, are typified by both these, and therefore as priests we are called upon to worship the living God, whilst as Levites we seek to serve Him.

Let us turn to a few passages which bring out the priestly position of *all* saints. In 1 Peter ii. 5, the apostle speaks thus of believers—not of some believers, but of all—“Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an *holy* priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.” There is worship, worship on the part of priests. And in the ninth verse, “Ye are a chosen generation, a *royal* priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light: As *holy* priests we go *in* before the Lord and worship; whilst as *royal* priests we go *out* to the world, showing forth His praises. So also in Heb. xiii. 15, 16: “By Him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name.” That is worship. And then the service that should flow out as the result: “But to do good and to communicate forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.”

The one we may, in Old Testament language, call our burnt-offering; the other our meat-offering; both resulting from our having been at the altar (of which we have right to eat), there to feed upon Jesus, our Peace-offering; and if we do not thus feast upon Christ, as the priests ate of the things with which expiation had been made, we shall not be able really to worship.

In Rev. i. 5, 6, at the very mention of the name of Jesus the apostle bursts into a song of praise: “Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.” And then, following the song, you get this solemn testimony to the world:

“Behold, He cometh with clouds.” In other words, again service follows worship. The Lord help us to realize the blessedness and privilege of being made priests, that we may offer praise unto Him, and also the responsibility of our position as Levites.

The “teacher” is one who is *gifted* of God, and then *given* by Him to the Church. The teacher is one sent by God with words from God for the believer. The worshipper is one who looks away *to* God, and gives out to Him the praise and worship of his heart. In the one act—teaching—God is giving to his people; in the other—worship—they are giving to Him.

When a teacher, in exercise of his gift, is unfolding the Word, we are receiving from God. I do not say that whilst we are listening to him we cannot worship; but I do say that worship is a very different thing; for in worship we give unto Him—He receives from us. What a thought—the Holy One receiving, and that with joy, from His people! Surely, if ever we give to Him that which He can accept, we have to say, “Of thine own have we given Thee.”

What a privilege to come together to praise Him for what He is, for what He has done! “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth God.” But worship, to be acceptable, must be in “spirit and in truth.”

In Luke xv. we see the Son of man *seeking*; in John iv. the Father is also seeking. The Son seeks for lost sinners, and rejoices as He takes them on His shoulder. The Father seeks for worshippers, and equally rejoices when He finds such as worship in spirit and in truth. He can only accept such worship as ascends to Him in connection with sacrifice. Incense was never to ascend to God apart from *fire*—fire, moreover, that had satisfied itself upon a victim, an offered sacrifice.

Leviticus x. shows us that Nadab and Abihu sinned, in that they offered incense with *strange* fire apart from the only thing that could give it acceptance with God,

and their worship was akin to that of Cain's. His was an altar apart from blood; theirs was incense apart from altar-fire; and what is the so-called worship of the religious world now but the same thing? Was God displeased with Cain, and did He judge Nadab and Abihu? So is He displeased now, and by and by will He judge those who, apart from blood, apart from Jesus, pretend to worship Him. Knowing His righteousness as well as His holiness, may we be found as redeemed ones approaching into His presence with boldness to worship Him; but ever let it be in spirit and in truth.

The *place* of worship under the past dispensation was not chosen by Israel, but by Jehovah for them; and in that, as in all else pertaining to worship, the commands of the Lord were most minute. Deut. xii. 5: "Unto the place which the Lord your God shall choose out of all your tribes to put His name there, even unto His habitation shall ye seek, and thither thou shalt come;" and verse 13 adds a solemn warning, "Take heed to thyself that thou offer not thy burnt offerings in every place that thou seest: but in the place which the Lord thy God shall choose in one of thy tribes, there thou shalt offer thy burnt offerings."

Thus worship was to be in the place chosen of God, and in that only. And further, in verse 8, it was not allowed to them to do: "Every man whatsoever is right in his own eyes." Thoughts and ways of man must be laid entirely aside, and the Word be their alone guide. And if thus important that Israel should act only in accordance with the commands of Jehovah—should take His way and not their own—is it of less importance when we consider worship in connection with the Christian? Have we, as they had, a place of worship chosen for us by the Lord Himself? for if so, it becomes us to know where it is, that in it we may worship before Him. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh, *let us draw near.*" (Heb. x. 19.)

We often hear certain buildings spoken of as places of worship; but taking Heb. x. as our guide, we find that we have a place of worship—"the holiest of all." We may assemble together upon earth, but if in spirit we enter not *there* by the new and living way, we cannot worship Him. It needs that we should say to the flesh as Jesus said to His apostles, if I may so use it, "Tarry thou here awhile, whilst I go yonder to worship." We can only approach "by a new and living way." Through Jesus, as the crucified One, the veil is rent, and no longer keeps the sinner at a distance from God; but it is alone through the atoning work that it is so. None can worship Him apart from redemption.

None but saints can worship: only those who have been "redeemed, not with corruptible things, such as silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ;" and true worship supposes a soul at happy liberty in God's presence. Heb. x. 22, therefore, not only says, "Let us draw near," but, "Let us draw near with a true heart in FULL ASSURANCE *of faith.*" Christ has borne away sin, cleansed us from defilement, and made us fit for God's presence. He has also bestowed upon us the Holy Spirit, who gives a consciousness of our acceptance with the Father, and our oneness with Christ; and in the power of that communion which He gives we are enabled to worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

So far, in speaking of worship and the place of worship, it has been in a way that may apply to saints when gathered together, but equally applies to them as individuals. If one were alone, away from all Christian fellowship, he would still be privileged to worship in the holiest. But though saved as individuals, we have been saved out from the world that we might be asso-

ciated together in Church fellowship. "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body" (1 Cor. xii. 13), of which Christ is the living head (Eph. i. 22), and for which He will ere long come into the air, "that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." (Eph. vi. 27.)

Now whilst these and kindred passages present to us Christ building for Himself a Church, a body, we get other passages, such as 1 Cor. iii., 2 Tim. ii., Acts xx., showing that the *Church* was responsible as to those brought into outward Church fellowship. They sought, then, to receive those only whom they believed Christ had received. *They* were responsible to keep out *leaven*; or if it came in or manifested itself, then they were responsible to *purge it out*. (1 Cor. v. 7.)

I would desire, having spoken of worship and the *one* place of worship, to speak of the *name* in which we are gathered together by the Holy Ghost. "Where two or three are gathered together in *my name*, there am I in the midst of them," said Jesus. We are gathered, then, not in the name of a man, or a doctrine, great and precious as God's doctrines are. We are gathered by Him and in His name.

What was it that showed the Corinthians were *carnal*? "For *while*," says Paul, "one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not CARNAL?" (1 Cor. iii. 4.) In other words, those teachers among them *figured* by Paul, and Apollos, and Cephas (1 Cor. iv. 6), were put out of their place—out of the place which God had given them. They were not content to receive and value *all* the gifts God had in grace set amongst them; but some made one teacher their centre, whilst others selected another.

Though still outwardly *one*, they were really divided. It was the spirit that led to the outward and manifest divisions that soon arose, and still exists amongst the saints of God. Paul saw this would be the result, and

the Spirit of God judged it most strongly at once through him.

JESUS alone must be the centre, as He alone is the head; and seeing that He is the head, we are gathered not only in His name, but with Him as the head or president in our midst. It is the Lord's table to which we are gathered, as it is the Lord's Supper of which we come to partake.

We know that He presided at His own table when He sat down with His disciples. Has He ever given up that place to another? Did He tell Peter or John to take that place amongst the saints, as though He were to be absent? No, beloved; we rejoice to know it is not so. "There *am I* in the midst," He said, and so He is now. "We walk by faith, not by sight." We know He is present simply because He said He would be. Let us ever rejoice to leave to Him His rightful place.

We find in Acts ii., "They that gladly received His word were baptized: and they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." The "breaking of bread" placed here between "fellowship" and "prayers" refers to no common meal. The "bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" And from Acts. xx. 7, "when the disciples came together to break bread," we learn not only that the breaking of bread was attended to by them, but that it was the *object* for which they were gathered. The verse adds, "Paul preached unto them." But they were not gathered at that time with the *object* of hearing him; they came to break bread; and he being present as a teacher, a gift from God to the Church, exercised that gift in the power of the Holy Spirit then present to lead as He would. (1 Cor. xii. 11.)

Our privilege is to come together to remember Jesus, to adore Him. If every heart is full, then will all be able to say, "Praise waiteth for thee, O Lord." If

when thus gathered there be none with us having gift to teach, how precious to know that we can still most fully carry out the *object* of our meeting! But Jesus being present, His Spirit acknowledged, He can lead such, if amongst us, to speak, even as Paul did. Precious if He give the Word through such; also precious if He give it not.

It is precious to know that we are neither gathered by man, nor to man; nor are we gathered for the *purpose* of listening to the most able teachers, if such be present. And if such are with us, they are present, not as teachers, but as worshippers, and only as worshippers, unless and until the Holy Spirit give them a word of wisdom, exhortation, or teaching.

It is blessed when all at once can rise in the joy of their heart into the atmosphere of praise and adoration; but if our hearts be dull and cold, gracious is the Lord, and He may give such a word of loving exhortation as shall fire our souls afresh, and call forth bursts of thanksgiving. Surely I need not say the necessity for that word of exhortation *should* not exist. I do not say it *does* not oftentimes. When the Lord sat down with His disciples, and broke the bread and gave to them, after giving thanks, He told out to them the precious truths contained in John xiv.—xvii.

Is it not instructive to notice the order? First, the *object* for which they gathered observed; then, teaching. In Acts xx. 8, referred to before, the same order is followed; and in 1 Cor. the Lord's Supper is spoken of (ch. xi.), ere instruction is given by the apostle as to ministry. (Chap. xii.) Should not these Scriptures guide us? They are the words of the Holy Ghost, who will only guide us according to the Word, and never contrary thereto.

When we are gathered in the name of the Lord, it is not that we may do as we like, as I have heard one once said, "Thank God, I have found a meeting in which we can all do as *we* like!" If it was so, it

was a very unhappy meeting; for the Word shows us that the Lord is present to do as *He likes*: "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty"—liberty for Him, not for us.

In 1 Cor. xii. 8 we read, "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit," &c. Verse 11: "All these worketh that one and the selfsame Spirit, dividing to every man severally as *He will*." It is not only that He gifts a person as a teacher, &c., but that one must use that gift as led, not by self, but by that selfsame Spirit. What praise will go up to God, what blessing will flow down from Him to us, if we are thus under the power and leading of the Holy Spirit!

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

ON REV. XXI.

THE marriage relationship has always been used by the Spirit of God as a happy illustration of the connection between the Lord and His people. And this is easy to understand, for in it are combined all the principal characteristics of our relationships with God. For it is an indissoluble union, with perfect community of heart and interests. In the husband there are associated in our minds the ideas, first, of election, then of love unalterable, of protecting power and of honour, position and wealth conferred. In the bride, the wife, the ideas of happy acceptance of all this, of trustful affection, faithfulness, and purity. And are not these the great features which mark the association of the redeemed soul with its God in all ages and dispensations?

Thus in the Old Testament we find such expressions as, "I am married unto you, saith the Lord" (Jer. iii. 14); "As the bridegroom rejoiceth over the bride, so shall thy God rejoice over thee" (Isa. lxii. 5); and that remarkable passage in Ezek. xvi. 6-14, describing

Jehovah's marriage to Israel. And in the New Testament, "I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Cor. xi. 2); "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the Church" (Eph. v. 23-25); and in Rev. xix., "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready;" and here, in Rev. xxi., "I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife."

It is sometimes used to convey the thought of national relationship, sometimes of individual, as in Rom. vii.: "That ye might be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead;" and sometimes of the Church's corporate union with the Lord, as in 2 Cor. xi.

In each case it is, of course, simply an illustration to bring out such features of our connection with God as I have pointed to.

In the passage before us (Rev. xxi.) I propose to consider of what the holy city, the New Jerusalem, is a description, and whether its being described as the bride, the Lamb's wife, is conclusive proof that it signifies the future glory of the Church, as is generally supposed.

It is called the "New Jerusalem." Jerusalem the old, be it remembered, was the metropolis of Israel upon the old earth. A new earth has, then, its new Jerusalem.

Knowing, then, that Israel is the elect nation of God, to hold an eternal place before Him, not only in this world, but also in the new, we naturally expect to find in a city called the "New Jerusalem" such further marks of connection with Israel as will convince us that it is their eternal dwelling-place.

In the first place, then, we find that it comes down from God "out of heaven," and is set up on the new earth among the nations of them that are saved.

This reminds us of the truth that, though Israel's calling was eternal, it was not heavenly like ours, but

earthly, eternally earthly. Their beautiful city comes down out of heaven, and is therefore called a heavenly city, and the "heavenly Jerusalem," but it settles on earth consistently with the calling of its citizens, according to the word of all the prophets.

In verse 3 we have the great voice out of heaven directing all the universe to the fulfilment of the prophecy in Ezek. xxxvii. 27, 28, the very words of the promise as to Israel's eternal happiness being repeated, as God establishes His sanctuary "in the midst of them for evermore." That all tears shall be wiped away from off all faces, is a further realization of hopes founded long ages before in Israel by the words of Isa. xxv. 8.

The next feature that bears on this enquiry is the great high wall, and the twelve gates with their twelve angels. There was ever in Israel one characteristic which distinguished its constitution from that of the Church, viz., the "wall of partition," by which its exclusive right to God's presence and blessing was asserted against the nations round about. To maintain this separation would have been Israel's strength, to suffer it to fail or cease was her ruin. In the Church the most prominent law is, that there shall be *no wall of partition*, that all nations, peoples, and tongues shall have alike free access, through Christ Jesus, to its privileges and its joys.

In glory, therefore, we see this original distinction preserved in the great city of Israel's habitation, for around it stands "a wall great and high," separating between its inhabitants and the nations of them that are saved, who people the rest of the world.

But further, in this wall we find twelve gates, and on each gate a name of one of the tribes of Israel.

By reference to Ezek. xlvi. 30-34 it will be seen that this is in exact correspondence with the description of the millennial city, where "the gates of the city," it is said, "shall be after the names of the

tribes of Israel," and the idea evidently is that each tribe shall have its own entrance. How conclusive is this as to the purpose of the glorious city. All doubt as to its being the special home of Israel must now be removed, for not only the nation, but its tribes, are all found there, each with its own special portion as of old.

From Ezekiel we may also conclude that the tribal gates will be apportioned as those described. We next observe that in the twelve foundations of the wall of the city (*v.* 14) were written the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. An apostle for each gate, and for each tribe. This completes the symbolic representation according to previous revelations. For the twelve disciples were distinctly promised that their place in glory should be to sit on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (*Matt.* xix. 28.) The gate is the place of judgment, and so each apostle's name is written in the foundation of the wall, not in that of the city.

"And the nations of them that are saved shall walk in the light of it, and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." (*v.* 24.) Here still the continuation of the original idea of Israel as the premier nation of the world is shown to be preserved. The river of life and the tree of health are also in accurate correspondence with the description in *Ezek.* xlvi. of the like in the millennial city. So that from first to last the chief features of Israel's position and prospects are found fully and particularly maintained.

This is then, we must conclude, the heavenly city to which Abraham looked forward as the glorious inheritance of himself and the nation of which he was to be the founder—the city which hath the foundations, whose builder and maker is God. (*Heb.* xi. 10.) He saw Canaan, and appreciated its beauties, but "he desired a better country." And "God was not ashamed to be called his God, and prepared for him a city." And here is its description: This is "the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem," to which, amid

other glories of angels and the spirits of the perfected just, we, as members of the Church, are come. (Heb. xii. 22, 23.)

Let us consider now what support the chapter affords to the interpretation which makes the holy city represent the Church of God in its future.

What, then, are the principal features of the Church's constitution?

First, that the distinction between Israel and the nations is totally nullified, abrogated, and disowned within its boundaries, "where there is neither Jew nor Greek." (Col. iii. 11.) The maintenance of that distinction is, however, as we have seen, one of the most prominent features of the New Jerusalem. And not only so, but the very tribes of Israel are set forth in their several places of glory. Who ever heard of the tribes of the Church?

Secondly, that Jerusalem as a centre or metropolis is not recognized in the Church, whose metropolis is in heaven. But this is *Jerusalem* re-established in eternal glory as Israel's habitation.

Thirdly, that the Church's calling and election is heavenly, far above all principality and power, not only in this world but even in that world which is to come, of which the holy city, new Jerusalem, shall be the light. But this city, though built and prepared of God in heaven for Abraham and his children, is not set up there, but "comes down out of heaven from God."

Fourthly, that the risen Christ is its head and makes it one with Himself, incorporating and indwelling it as a whole by His Spirit. But the risen Christ is not seen in the city (it is the Lamb, the antitype of the sacrifices of Israel's past), and the Spirit is not so much as named; for I need not say that from chap. xxii. 16 the prophecy is at an end, and the words refer to the present time.

Fifthly, that the twelve apostles of our Lord have their hopes specially in connection with Israel, and that

to the Church new apostles, called specially to the work, appertain. But Paul and Apollos, Timotheus, Silvanus and Titus, Barnabas and Epaphroditus, all of whom are denominated as "apostles" in connection with the Church, have no place found for them in the new Jerusalem on the new earth. The Church has been compared to a temple, but never to a city. It is as the temple—where God shall dwell eternally—that it is called the building of God, and His habitation. (1 Cor. iii., and Eph. ii.)

There is thus before us very conclusive evidence for the city's connection with Israel's future, and the strongest negative proof that whatever it may represent it can have no reference to the Church.

It remains to show, for the benefit of those who have not hitherto perceived it, that such a destiny of eternal distinctness is the portion of Israel in the promises of God, all of which are yea and Amen in Christ.

When the Almighty God called Abraham to be the father of many nations, He told him He would establish His covenant with him, and his seed after him in their generations, for an everlasting covenant (Gen. xvii. 7); to be a God unto him, and unto his seed after him. This made Abraham look for and desire a better country than Canaan, and made God (speaking with reverence) prepare him this beautiful heavenly city. It was "an everlasting covenant."

In the last verses of the last chapter of Isaiah we have this covenant confirmed, where it is written to Israel, that as the new heavens and the new earth (Rev. xxi. 1) which God will make shall remain before Him, so shall their seed and their name remain.

Daniel vii. 27 adds a splendid promise, that in this eternal state of blessing they shall be a *sovereign* people. "And the kingdom and dominion (see ver. 14), and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the most high, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom." This

glorious prospect gives clearness to the beautiful assurance of Jer. xxxi. 3, "Yea, I have loved thee (Israel) with an everlasting love." We all know that this is true of individual saints in all ages; but observe that it is the elect *nation* of God's delight to whom the wonderful word is spoken.

Upon this follows naturally the betrothal in the language of Hosea ii., "I will betroth thee unto me for ever." Everlasting love is followed by betrothal for ever, and Rev. xix. contains the *marriage* of the Lamb, conveying the thought, if anything does so, of an eternal union; and then in our chapter (Rev. xxi.) the Lamb's wife, so loved, betrothed, and married, we see in her eternal home.

If a lingering doubt still cling to any mind, let it be dispelled by the words of St. Paul in Rom. xi., "God hath not cast away His people which he foreknew." Nor will He. Whom God foreknows, He foreknows for ever. And in verse 12, their ultimate fulness, as leading to the enrichment of the Gentiles, is in exact correspondence with Rev. xxi. And yet, most convincing of all, in verse 15 we are told that their restoration is nothing less than "life from the dead." In a risen people, a people raised from the dead, Abraham shall read the fulfilment of the everlasting covenant. And so in resurrection, "All Israel shall be saved," not as individuals, but as a nation.

Thus we perceive, without a possibility of dispute, that Israel is elected to be a distinct and separate people for God throughout all eternity.

Indeed, were there no other evidence of it, this chap. xxi. of Rev. would be sufficient to prove it to any reader content to understand it in its natural sense.

For if, with every accumulated proof that Israel is the thing intended, we still understand it to mean the Church, then we are utterly at fault in attempting to maintain that throughout all the Old Testament Israel means Israel, and Jerusalem Jerusalem.

Nothing can be more flagrantly inconsistent than to assert that all the prophecies concerning Israel in the Old Testament are to be understood literally, and at the same time to teach that this chapter must be explained away and spiritualized. And this the more when we take into account that there is nothing whatever in the vision to point to the Church, unless the word "bride" be taken to do so. And after the Scriptures on that subject we have considered, it will be freely conceded that that is impossible. G. F. T.

(To be concluded in our next.)

IMPORTUNITY.

FEW can have studied the word of God attentively without having noticed how frequently importunity in dealing with God marks the path of faith. We see it in the preceptive portions of Holy Writ, and we see it equally in all its historic records. There is, however, a danger to be guarded against, and that is in supposing that God needs importuning to make Him willing to listen. The opposite of this is the truth, for He is far more ready to give than we are to ask.

Why, then, it will be said, does Scripture make so much of importunity in asking, when God needs no importunity to make Him willing to give?

Importunity in prayer implies two things, which are essential to our being in a condition to receive; and perhaps few questions demand more serious consideration than the conditions necessary to make anything, how rich soever a blessing in itself, a blessing and not a curse to those who receive it. Herein lies the secret of many unanswered prayers, and many unheeded petitions—petitions that have never ascended to the throne, that have never been incensed up to heaven from the golden altar.

The two things essential to ensure an answer to our

prayers are, *first*, an undoubting faith in the ability and willingness of God to answer, and, *secondly*, a reality in the consciousness of our need. Without both of these importunity is impossible; with them it is easy; and thus he who cries out, "*Make haste,*" "*Make no tarrying, O my God,*" will be able to say, "*I waited patiently on the Lord, and He heard me.*"

There is no impatience in faith's cry, "*Make haste, O Lord;*" there is no listlessness in faith's patient waiting. Waiting sleeps not; but too often the sluggard's ways in Prov. vi. 6-11 are mistaken for that patient waiting that stands in expecting faith at the door of the Giver.

There may be sometimes a sick heart, saddened at having to wait so long; yet hope deferred knows full well that there is an appointed time, and hears the loving word behind it, "At the end it shall speak, and not lie;" and therefore, "though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry beyond the time." (Hab. ii.)

Importunity is thus the test of the condition of our own souls, and as such claims our special attention. We do not prove God thereby. He needs no proof. We ought to know what He is. He proves us therein, and we need to know what we are. The heart's depths need to be revealed to us.

The word "importunity" occurs but once in the Bible, in Luke xi. 5-8, where our Lord, in order to inculcate perseverance in prayer, gives the following parable: "Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his

importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth."

And now what is the inference our blessed Master draws from His simile? He adds, "And I say unto you, *Ask*, and it shall be given you; *seek*, and ye shall find; *knock*, and it shall be opened unto you;" and then He strengthens these gracious words by adding, "For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." How universal, how unlimited is the promise! Why, then, is it so little proved? Why is the experience of the child of God so seldom after this sort?

In things that lie beyond the range of direct promise, we find an easy solution to unanswered prayer in the thought that it was not in accord with the mind of God; but how far this is the real solution may oftentimes be open to very grave doubts. But what are we to say in reference to the non-fulfilment of the many prayers which are based on the precious promises? and of the very prayers left on the page of the written Word for our guidance and direction? We can have no doubt that such petitions are in accordance with the will of God. Why, then, are these unanswered? Does not that word *importunity* in Luke's gospel explain it all? The one whose importunity is there commended to us realized, first, that the man to whom he went was his friend, and able to meet his request; and then, that his need was such that it could not be put off.

The more real our contemplation of God, the more unlimited will be our confidence; and the more real our need, the more unhesitating will be our importunate cry to Him who delights to bless, and waits only for a condition of soul in us that will not turn His blessings into wormwood and gall. He "waiteth to be gracious." He waiteth till the moment arrives when we can hold the cup of blessing, and then He fills and

causes it to overflow. He does not say to the earnest, believing suppliant, "Go, and come again, and tomorrow I will give," when He has it by Him; for He never withholds good from them *to whom it is due*, when it is in the power of His hand to do it. (See Prov. iii. 27, 28.)

Surely it is our unbelief that makes the arm of omnipotence powerless, and it is our careless, unyearning, unlonging hearts that makes the arm of our faith powerless to receive what faith is omnipotent to get. This is the condition when the good sought is *not due*, and therefore withheld.

There is a deeper meaning in those words, "*ask*," "*seek*," "*knock*," than we are perhaps at all prepared for. Each word contains the idea, not of a single act of asking, seeking, knocking, but of a *continued* asking, seeking, and knocking that ceases not till the end is gained.*

When on another occasion our Lord would teach the necessity of always praying and not fainting, He gives the parable of the unjust judge (Luke xviii. 1-8), to whom the poor widow kept on coming until she got what she wanted. Her continual coming (*εις τελος ερχομενη*, *i.e.*, her coming on to the very last) obtained what she sought, and the inference is, Shall not God much more answer those who cannot weary Him, and do not weary themselves?

To understand what *seeking* is, we have but to turn to the parables of the lost sheep and the lost silver to see at once the intensity and the reality implied. The shepherd sought over hill and plain; and the woman lit her candle, swept her house, and sought diligently till she found. To knock at heaven's door is to stand

* These imperatives are all in the present tense, and imply a continuous action; and they who fulfil it give God no rest, while they give themselves no rest, till the asker and the Answerer have met face to face, and the blessing has been given and received.

and knock as God stands and knocks at the door of the sinner's heart. We have, in fact, in all three expressions, to take God as our example, and act accordingly, remembering, however, always that God comes to unwilling men, and man is called to come to an ever-willing and ever-loving God.

This earnest importunity is beautifully illustrated in Ps. cvii.—a psalm that gives the experiences of the redeemed of the Lord, who have been redeemed from the enemy, and shall stand before the throne before long, and be able to say, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever." *He is good.* This is the soul's sheet-anchor, come what may, and has to be remembered here, let the circumstances that surround be what they may.

Four times it is said, "*Then* they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saves them out of their distresses." They may wander in the wilderness in a lonely way; they may be imprisoned in the dungeon bound in iron; they may lie on the bed of languishing and death; they may be surrounded by storm and tempest; but in each case there is a time when their cry is heard. They may have cried often before, and the cry appeared unheeded; but now there comes the moment of hopeless, helpless despair of all and in all but God. "Their soul fainted" (v. 5); "there was none to help" (v. 12); "they draw near unto the gates of death" (v. 18); "they are at their wits' end" (v. 27). *Then*, and not till then, do they so cry that God can hear; and then God saves.

There is an agony in prayer that the Word speaks about that is by most but feebly entered into. Thus prayed the Son of God "with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save," and was heard. Thus Epaphras agonized in prayer for his beloved Colossian fellow-saints (Col. iv. 12); and thus had Paul great conflict and agony in prayer for those who had not even seen his face in the flesh (Col. ii. 1); and

if for them, what for those who had become endeared to him in the labours of his consecrated life?

Prayer is a work, a labour, in which everything fails but God, and in which man, having no helper and no resource, lays hold on God, as none can do but those who know what it is to be content with "God only." (See Ps. lxii.)

There is a beautiful thought brought out in the Greek word for importunity (*αναίδεια*). It implies a shamelessness in action that, counting on the love of the friend and the need it has, thinks nothing of the seeming unsuitability of time and place. It was midnight; but what was that to one who needed help then, and could not wait till the morning? The friend was in bed; but what of that when the need was great compared with the temporary inconvenience of the one applied to for help? Faith meets risks, as Samson met the lion. (Judg. xiv. 5, 6.)

Prayer and fasting, that afflicting of the soul so often spoken of in Scripture, is closely allied to importunity. What reality is implied in Esther iv. 1, when the man of faith "rent his clothes," "put on sackcloth with ashes," and cried to God for help "with a loud and bitter cry!" Mordecai and Job teach us the same lesson, the lesson of Ps. cvii., the moral of which is, "Let men praise the Lord for His goodness, and for His wonderful works unto the children of men." To this end let all our importunities be directed, and then self and its interests will give place to God and His glory.

In conclusion we would ask God's people to see what the Word says about "*prayer and fasting*," in connection with the trials of the way, whether personal, or family, or church trials.

H. G.

ALONE WITH JESUS.

"I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee."—JOSHUA i. 5.

ALONE with Jesus! Oh, how sweet
To lay my sorrows at His feet!
So kindly He consents to share
My crushing weight, my life-long care:
I know how sweet it is, my God,
To fall before Thee, 'neath the rod.

Alone, yet not alone! one EYE
That can my every grief descry—
An eye that beams with pitying love,
And scans earth's depths from heaven above;
That never tires, that never sleeps,
But watches while the tried one weeps.

Alone, yet not alone! one HAND
To hold the glass as runs the sand;
To wipe away the scalding tear,
Dispel each gloomy doubt and fear;
To soothe this wounded heart of mine,
Pouring thereinto oil and wine.

Alone, yet not alone! one HEART
To feel my wounds' acutest smart;
A spacious heart to hide me in,
Safe from the whelming flood of sin;
So mighty, yet so kind and free,
Stooping to love a worm like me.

Alone, yet not alone! one VOICE
To bid me make the Lord my choice;
To whisper "Peace" when troubles roll
Like waves across my chastened soul;
To say, in accents soft and mild,
"I know thou hast a cross, my child!"

Alone, yet not alone! one EAR
To suppliant's whisper ever near;
Awake to silent agony;
To bleeding spirit's misery;
Attentive to the humblest cry,
The faintest prayer, the smothered sigh.

Alone, yet not alone! one BREAST
Where I may lay my head to rest;
Reposing in those loving arms,
So calm, so safe from all alarms;
Oh, here for ever, lying still,
I'll humbly do my FATHER's will!

PERFECTION TESTED; OR, THOUGHTS ON THE HISTORY OF JOB.

WHILE Christian hearts are exercised on the subject of "Christian perfection," and "complete sanctification," it will not be unwise to test experience by Scripture, and to bow to the conviction that God is true, though thereby every man be found a liar, and his experience proved a fallacy.

The word of God and its statements are not to be tested by our experience, but our experience has to be tested by the Word; and whatever our experience may seem to teach, if it contravenes the word of God, let us be fully satisfied there is some flaw in our conclusions. We may not be able to detect it, but there it is. Let this be clearly apprehended, and many perplexities will be removed from our minds, and turning to the simple "Thus saith the Lord" of the living God, we shall find *that* sufficient for all our need—a light from heaven to guide our feet amidst the labyrinth of conflicting statements and of antagonistic experiences.

Human experiences can only tell *half* the truth, and man's biographies can only do the same. There is a secret depth below the surface that God only knows, having a mighty influence over us and our experiences, all the more mighty that we are often unconscious of its presence.

He therefore that "trusts his own heart is a fool," and he who thinks his experiences are to be trusted has forgotten that his heart is "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." God only knows it, and He hath said, "I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings;" and it is only by a divine searching, wherein God tries

and proves it to be what it is, that we know ourselves in any measure as God knows us:

The book of Job shows us the result of the testing of the heart of a man that "was perfect and upright," one "that feared God and eschewed evil"—one concerning whom God could appeal to Satan, and say, "Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth?" &c., and against whom the accuser of the brethren had nothing to lay to his charge, and could only say, "Doth Job serve God for nought?" &c.

God breaks down the hedge that He had set around him, and lets Satan loose upon him, who strips him of all; and when all is gone, Job falls down upon the ground, and worships, saying, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." In the midst of all he holds fast his integrity (or his perfectness, as it is in Hebrew), and is again borne witness to by God.

But there are deeper depths of sorrow still, and Satan, who has asked to sift him as wheat, further gets permission to lay his hand on his person, sparing only his life. In the midst of this accumulated misery his wife comes in to Satan's help, and says to Job, "Dost thou still retain thine integrity (perfectness)? Curse God, and die." Yet even then he sins not with his lips, nor charges God foolishly, but replies, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and not receive evil?"

God had witnessed to him before Satan, and Satan had found nothing to accuse. Job himself stands in conscious integrity before God and man, and can say with Paul, "I am not conscious of anything against myself" (1 Cor. iv. 4); but, unlike Paul, he failed to see that this was no ground of self-justification, and while seeking to justify himself before his friends, he sought not to justify God.

He bowed, he worshipped, he accepted all that God

had sent on him, but he could not justify God against his own consciousness of uprightness. He had never fathomed his own heart, and consequently had never fathomed the purpose and the pitifulness of God. He judged himself by the seeing of his eyes, or by the hearing of his ears, but of that secret hidden power of judgment in the light of God he knew nothing. He was occupied with the self-consciousness of what he was, and even his adversary the devil was obliged to acknowledge his uprightness.

Self-consciousness is always self-ignorance. The pitifulness of God, of which James speaks in relation to His dealings with Job, causes Him to lead His servant where he had not gone before, down deep into the workings of his own heart. By the utterance of Job's own lips, in his intercourse with his three friends, deep and hidden evil was brought to the surface, which Job knew not to have lain beneath it; evil in which, even when it came to the surface, he saw nothing to condemn, till Elihu comes on the scene and vindicates God, condemning alike Job and his friends.

Elihu makes four separate addresses to Job, and he who found ten replies to make to his friends finds no words to reply to Elihu. He ends; Job remains silent; and then God answers Job out of the whirlwind, and says, "Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?"

Ignorance of God and His counsel lay at the bottom of all Job's consciousness of uprightness, and therefore there could be nothing but misjudgment of God. He knew that he was perfect and upright, but he knew not that he was nothing. He knew that he feared God, but he knew nothing of the holiness of the God he feared. He measured God by a human standard of right and wrong, and failed to measure himself by the standard of divine holiness, and therefore all was confusion and darkness. He had heard of God, but he had not seen Him.

All his past sufferings were, in the pitifulness of God, to prepare him for the vision God was going to give him. God's first address to Job is full of questions having to do with His omnipotence — "When?" "Who?" "Hast thou?"

Job makes no reply; and then again God (chap. xl. 1, 2) demands an answer—"He that reproveth God let him answer." To this Job has but one reply—"I am vile," lighter than vanity, fit to be despised (וְהָיִיתִי כְּפֶתֶלֶת).

How has all his consciousness of integrity, of perfectness, of anything, faded away in the presence of God, like the fading of Adam's fig-leaves, when God called him to His presence, and he found that he was naked still! It was with him as with the greatly-beloved Daniel in the presence of the great vision by the river Hiddekel, who says, "My comeliness was turned *in me* into corruption, and I retained no strength."

All divine growth tends in the same direction, and egotism goes out when Christ comes fully within the soul's vision. It was so with Paul, who had been taken up into the third heaven, and had the thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan, given to keep him glorying in his weaknesses, temptations, &c., that he might not be exalted. Under this influence, in the light of that glory, Paul had learnt to measure everything; and while looking in Rom. vii. at "the good" and "the evil," he enters into the experience of Job and Daniel in the presence of the glory, and exclaims, "O wretched man that I am!" Yet in the same breath he adds, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord," and can write, "There is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus."

But to proceed. God ends not yet in His controversy with Job. He addresses him once more. Again He says, "I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto me."

Very solemn are the earlier verses of this address, in which God tells Job that the prerogative of Deity is

to bring down self-conscious pride, and to tread down the wicked in their place. (Chap. xl. 12.) The connection here made between pride and wickedness is very striking; and what was it but pride that led Job to condemn God, that he himself might be righteous? (so God charges him in verse 8).

His perfectness had lifted up his heart, and he had to be brought down; and the malice of Satan was used by God to work out that holiest and lowliest grace, even to enable him to say, "I am a poor sinner, and nothing at all."

In this grace the meek and lowly man, like Moses, the meekest man on earth, can walk on the high places of God's glory, and be transformed into the glory, with its brightness shining on his face, himself the while unconscious of the glory that makes beholders fear. Others see it, but he who has been dwelling in the light of the divine glory is necessarily unconscious of it; for he has seen the very glory itself, and what is its reflection then? We have not got up very far when our reflected glory gratifies. It will ever be unknown to him who has been with God.

The proud will ever find that God will "hide them in the dust," and "bind their faces in secret." Thus was God hiding Job from himself in the dust, and binding his face in secret; and this we find realized by Job in chapter xlii. 6; and he who, in chapter xl. 4, acknowledged that he was vile, and laid his hand upon his mouth, now goes down deeper, and says, "I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes."

Such are God's ways; and he who would be brought into the fellowship of the glory of God, seeing Him eye to eye and face to face, must stand before Him, and say with Abraham, "Behold now, I have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord, who am but dust and ashes."

Let not high theories turn our heads, nor bright experiences our hearts; but let us live in that conscious nothingness that the highest faith will ever produce;

then attainment in holiness, and perfection in love, will be among the forgotten things of the past; and the hungry and thirsty soul, having God only in view, will, in the following-hard after Him, be unconscious of that whereunto it has already attained, and be found pressing after "the mark for the prize of the high calling of God." And what is that mark but the Christian's standard of life and holiness, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself?

These are "the acts" of God, which He can show to all; but there are "the ways" of God, which He can only tell to a friend—to one who, like Moses, has got into the divine secret. This we learn in Ps. ciii. 7.

The same is true of God's dealings with us personally. There is much in the outward bearing of His dealings with us that we can speak of to one another; but there are inner secrets that lie between the soul and God, that for the most part ought to lie there.

Thus Paul seems to have kept for fourteen years the secret of that wonderful revelation mentioned in 2 Cor. xii., when he was caught up into the third heaven; and only under the pressure of circumstances, that made him "a fool in boasting," did he tell the Corinthians of the special favour that had been shown him. He kept the secret, "lest," as he says, "any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me."

Were the high tone of this sentiment, as seen in this "man in Christ," more borne in mind, we should hear less of individual experiences. There would be a more godly sensitiveness, lest others should think of us beyond what they might see or hear of us, by anything that we might say of ourselves or of our experiences.

A text is often made use of to justify what we think Paul would condemn, and that is the following: "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what He hath done for my soul." (Ps. lxvi. 18.)

A careful reader of the Bible scarce needs to be told that the expression "my soul" means nothing more than *myself*. The dealings of God here alluded to, as the whole psalm abundantly testifies, are those visible deliverances of God that the soul rejoices in, and which direct the mind to God and not to self, to God and His glorious workings, and not to self and its experiences.

There are visible and outward actings of God, with us and for us, which are the common property of all; but there are secret invisible dealings which are intended for ourselves alone. Each Christian has his public walk with God, and the secrets of his private intercourse, which to reveal is to profane.

The psalmist writes: "I have seen an end of all perfection, but thy commandment is exceeding broad." Perfection is only to be found in Him, whose commandment and appointment has a length, a breadth, a height, and a depth, that bows the worshipping soul in wonder and awe, and teaches him to say with Elihu, "God is greater than man," a truth often forgotten, and hard practically to learn.

Thus ends this deeply-important book, which places the perfectness, the righteousness, and holiness of the believer under the holy, loving, pitiful scrutiny of the eye of the Father in heaven, who graciously shows us the secret iniquities of our holiest things, of which we are unconscious, and thus keeps us walking in lowliness before Himself. He leads us into the hidden recesses of our hearts; and then how often we find that God has not been all in all to us, and that we have served Him, alas! how selfishly, for something that we hoped to receive—and not for Himself, or to please Him alone.

Satan knew more of Job than he knew of himself when he told God that Job did not serve Him for nought; and he knows our motives better than we do ourselves, though God alone knows the heart, and can search it out, and sees where beneath the rubbish of

self and selfishness there lies that which beats true and loving to Him, enabling the tried soul to say, in uprightness and truth, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him."

Peter loved the Lord in the deepest depths of his heart, and yet when sifted by Satan, so as to bring to the surface the chaff which covered over the golden grains of truth and love, we find him saying, with oaths and lies, "I know not the man."

The Lord keep us from boasting in any thing, and, above all, in the attainment of holiness, lest God come in and we be found liars. Let holiness be as the sweet, fragrant ointment "that bewrayeth itself," of which none need say, "I have got *it*;" for it will tell its own tale in the fruit of the Spirit, seen and known of all men.

Thank God we can put no limit to the "sanctification of spirit," or the "love made perfect," to which believing and trusting souls may attain, seeing we have the inspired prayer, "The Lord sanctify you wholly:" but may God keep His saints from putting holiness in the place of Christ, and from making it a matter to be talked about rather than to be loved. Flowers in the garden of God should be kept for God, and for others to say how sweet they are.

May our contemplation of Job's history profit us; and when our faith and perfectness are tried, may we come out as gold tried in the fire, unto God's "praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ;" and may we be content to wait, if need be, till it be borne witness to then.

H. G.

THE THREE CROWNS.

IN the minds of many of God's children there exist vague and unauthorised notions concerning the Christian course or race. Some think the Christian race an effort to attain salvation; others think it is a probation

time to test the sincerity of the disciple; whilst others, from simple ignorance of what it really is, fail to realize, and so fail to carry out, the high vocation wherewith they are called. Now, whilst all three may utterly disclaim any creature merit, and rely solely on the Lord Jesus Christ for salvation, yet surely it behoves us all to seek both to *know* and *do* His will, and to endeavour scripturally and spiritually to apprehend the instructions He has given us for our life here below, where we are to walk by faith, not by sight.

In the New Testament mention is made of three crowns—

James i. 12: "Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the *crown of life*, which the Lord hath promised to them that love Him." (See also Rev. ii. 10.)

2 Tim. iv. 7, 8: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a *crown of righteousness*, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them that love His appearing."

2 Peter v. 4: "And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a *crown of glory* that fadeth not away."

The believer receives *eternal life* in Christ through faith. (John v. 24.) Jesus Christ is *of God* made unto him *righteousness* (1 Cor. i. 30); and he knows that Christ is his *glory* here and hereafter. (Gal. vi. 14; Rom. viii. 17, 18.) Thus eternal life, righteousness, and glory are God's irreversible gift to every believer in Christ Jesus.

It is, however, evident to any impartial reader of the above texts that these crowns are given as rewards for service. "Know ye not that they which run in a race run all, but one receiveth *the prize*. So run, that ye may obtain." Living men run a race; so new-born souls run the Christian race. No man can compete except he be "born of God," "a new creature in Christ Jesus." The competition in the Christian course is not with *others*, but with *self*; for Paul saith, "I keep

under *my* body." "Every man that striveth for the mastery is temperate in all things."

Let it be well noted that this passage in 1 Cor. ix. speaks of a race for a prize—not for life, but for a crown—an incorruptible crown. Salvation is a gift to him that believeth, not a reward to him that runneth well the race. Yet what does Paul mean by saying he might become "castaway"? This passage is often thrown in the teeth of believers, and applied to their eternal salvation. Does the word warrant this? No; I would humbly assert there is no warrant to apply it thus.

From a careful examination of the text in the original, and of the plain tenor thereof, I conclude it to mean that the believer, if he would win *a crown*, must watch, and not let sin have any dominion over him. He carries about a nature prone to sin, but he is a new creation; he is therefore told to keep under his body, *i.e.*, his old or Adam nature, and bring it into subjection—mortifying his members which are on the earth—reckoning himself dead unto sin, but alive to God—lest, should he fail to watch and train himself, he, after preaching to others, might be *αδοκιμος*—"disapproved of," as unworthy *to be crowned*—though saved through the grace of God.

The expression "saved, yet so as by fire," bears a similar meaning. In 1 Cor. iii. 11-15 we are told that every believer's work is to be *tried* by fire. The verb *δοκιμαζω* is used, the positive verb, of which *αδοκιμος* is the negative adjective. The work which stands the fire receives a reward, *i.e.*, *the believer is crowned*. The work which does not stand the fire is *αδοκιμος*—"disapproved of," burnt up, and the believer not crowned, "though saved, yet so as by fire." 2 Peter i. 5-11 brings out clearly that some have an "abundant entrance," being obedient—in contradistinction to this. There are also many other kindred Scriptures.

Let us now inquire briefly for what special causes these three different crowns are given.

From a careful consideration of the three passages it seems that the believer is exhorted to holiness of life within, to a Christ-like deportment without, and to a life-testimony for Christ around. The "crown of life" is promised to those who "endure temptation," being faithful even unto death. The "crown of righteousness" is given by the righteous Judge to those who, like Paul, fight a good fight, keep the faith, and love His appearing. The "crown of glory" is given by "the chief Shepherd" to those who have been good ensamples to His flock. The Lord, the righteous Judge, the chief Shepherd, will, at His appearing, distribute to His own such rewards as they shall be worthy of; even as David to his mighty men, who had suffered with and fought for him.

Fellow-believer, do we thus seek to be crowned? Do we strive for the mastery over ourselves? 1 Cor. iii. 11-15 speaks of the trial of each saint's work, whether it be gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, or stubble. Are we building up gold, silver, precious stones? All these stand the fire; while the wood, hay, stubble of fleshly zeal, carnal pride, and worldly seeking are burnt up.

Fellow-believer, the Lord Jesus Christ saith, "Let no man take thy crown." The Lord the Spirit guide us into all truth.

A. O. M.

THE GREAT LESSON OF THE TRANSFIGURATION—"JESUS ONLY:"

IN ITS APPLICATION TO INDIVIDUAL BELIEVERS AND TO ASSEMBLIES, REMINDING ALL SUCH THAT CHRIST IS ALL; OR, THE RELATION OF MATT. XVII. TO MATT. XVI. ON THE ONE HAND, AND TO MATT. XVIII. ON THE OTHER.

APART from the prophetic aspect of the transfiguration there need be little doubt as to the instruction which the Holy Ghost conveys in the account of that wonder-

ful scene. That instruction is, in brief, comprised in those words with which the account thereof closes—See “no man, but Jesus only.”

I know some regard this quotation in the shape of a motto, as if it were a clause violently wrenched from the context, and as if it had little or no connection with the general description of what transpired on the holy mount. The exact reverse of this view I believe to be the truth.

A glimpse of the Lord in His “majesty” is vouchsafed to three favoured disciples; and near to Him are placed two heavenly visitants, who had been some of the greatest in Old Testament history. And these two by conversing with the Lord on His exodus (ἐξοδον), which He should completely achieve (πληρουν) in Jerusalem, themselves suggest how much more perfect to the very end was *His* course than their own had been. For their language glances back at their failure in the fulfilment of their mission; Moses had not conducted Israel over Jordan, and Elijah, accusing his brethren, was superseded. But a hint from these worthies is inadequate on such a grave point as the divine lesson inculcates. So Peter is allowed to come out in full form with his proposal, which continually since has been repeated down to this very day, viz., to conjoin others, provided they be celebrities, with the Lord Jesus, and to keep them altogether. And so God replies. There is too a vehemency in that reply, as if what concerned the glory of His Son touched HIM to the quick. Himself in the cloud now draws nigh, and a voice proceeds therefrom: “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear HIM.”

These words of God were uttered “while Peter yet spake;” or, as we are wont to say, before the words were out of his mouth, as to the “*three* tabernacles.” But not in word only did God reply. “When the voice was past, Jesus was found alone.” Thus by action significant and itself didactic, as well as by language

distinct and full, did God afford His judgment on this unbelieving and Christ-degrading sentiment of Peter's. True indeed that apostle was quite willing to put Christ pre-eminent—one for *Thee*, &c. But this could not content God. No! It must be "Jesus only" whose beauty we behold, if we would please God.

But this lesson is slowly learned. For we find that, after all this, as the disciples descended with their Lord from the mount, Peter's language betrayed his dismay that Elijah had departed. Thus did he make manifest that the desire still lingered in his heart for all three, or at least for two—for Christ AND Elias.

The worst feature, however, in all this is that Peter is only the mouthpiece of us all, save as through the Spirit's grace we are occupied with the glory of our Lord. The very assaults made against this motto, which does not epitomise the teaching of the transfiguration—those assaults and sneers by Christ's disciples in this nineteenth century demonstrate that the unbelief of Peter remains in ourselves. Oh, Lord Jesus! to see thy grace and thy preciousness and thy fullness, what do we need of aught that is outside of thee and of thy love?

But we have not yet obtained all the instruction from this section of the gospel that is here conveyed. For, not to speak of the close of this chapter (xvii.), where again Peter fails to apprehend the glory of the Lord (*vr.* 24–27), let us turn for a while to the chapter before this account of the divine finger pointing to Christ, and again to the chapter after it. There, in xvi., on Christ's own testimony, we have the case of an INDIVIDUAL soul who has been taught of the Father. Whilst most beheld little in Jesus of Nazareth, we overhear one owning Him to be "the Christ, the Son of the living God," whereupon Christ replies, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my Church."

The confession of this heaven-instructed one is in two parts; first, as to his Lord's Messiah; and, secondly,

as to the rock of Christ's divine Sonship on which the Church was to be built.* The Father had lifted up the veil, and the disciples had seen beyond it—had seen at least a glimpse of the uncreated effulgence of glory that dwelt within Christ's pure humanity. But that view of the full person of the Lord, a glimpse only though it was, was that which had given to the beholder himself divine life. Hence as the divine Sonship of Christ is the rock, is the *πετρα*, so had the disciple become thereby a *πετρος* (Peter), with this sublime difference, that Peter's name (*i.e.*, real character) was given, not revealed; but Christ's is revealed, not given. Christ is the Rock, not of granite. He is the Living Rock; that is, the rock of solid, divine life.

Nothing could shake this. All else must be shaken save what is actually and immediately founded on this rock. Much even now is being shaken, and shall be more and more as the day approaches. What we have learned of God and know of Christ will alone prove to be salutary. Nothing else will. And Peter was a living believer, because he too had seen somewhat into this Living Rock—this eternal life which Jesus is.

But on this part of chapter xvi. we possess an inspired commentary in chapter ii. of this apostle's first epistle. There can be no question that he refers to this memorable conversation with Christ, since he here uses the very ideas, and even the very word, over and over again, which, as Christ had declared, the Father had taught him. For here again we have the word "living." Here too we have Christ so presented as the Living Stone, as that those having to do directly with Him become living stones too. This is very important. What Christ had said to Peter, Peter, inspired of the Holy Ghost, applies also to us, *viz.*, that we seeing, or, as it is here, "coming to" Christ, are also Peters—are living stones ourselves, and are built

* See LINCOLN'S *Leaflets*, first series, No. 5.

upon Him too. He does not utter the word "Church," because that is Paul's theme. But he does most distinctly lay down two fundamentally important axioms. These are :

I. Coming to Christ, or seeing Christ's glory, we are alive unto God ourselves, and have His own nature from Him.

II. Coming to Christ, we ARE—not ought to be—we *are* built up.

In other words, it is Jesus only that is BOTH our Salvation and our Rock, by clinging to whom we are built up as much as any can be, and more than any are who add aught to Himself. It does not seem to occur to his mind when inspired, as it actually had to him when uninspired, that he should add anything else to the living Rock for souls to be built up together thereon.

Clearly his teaching here is that, to be built up for a habitation of God, the way is, "To whom coming, you are built up." Let those who will, add what they will; they do it at their peril, and to the dishonour of the Son of God. Such are not on God's true ground. Rejected this Rock may be by souls or by foolish builders, whether altogether or by adding something besides it, still it is so precious in God's account as to be everything. It is the foundation or corner-stone for anyone coming from east or west, from north or south. If one from China and one from Lapland come to Christ, those two are at once one in Him.

And this leads me, in conclusion, just to request the reader's attention to the eighteenth chapter, the one on the other side of that containing the transfiguration scene, and of its all important lesson, "Jesus only."

There the Lord first speaks of the value of one of His to Him. Then He comes to twos and threes. In other words, His subject is no longer of individual safety, or of individual obedience; but it is of corporate blessing. Thus the two chapters, to wit, sixteen and eighteen, afford us the two divine applications of the

great lesson of the seventeenth chapter. It is the assembly which is here treated of—yea, the assembly in the exercise of the very gravest responsibility—of discipline (*v.* 18), and of privilege—of unitedly prevailing with God (*v.* 19). And then comes by way of explanation that wondrous statement, disparaged by some, but which probably has never had its full emphasis accorded to it, has never yet been fully, unhesitatingly believed, “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.”

Another paper would be required to bring out the entire teaching of this Scripture. It is not the writer’s present purpose to do this. His object is solely to show how the divine motto, “Jesus only,” is the connecting link of the three chapters, with its weighty lesson for the individual soul in chapter *xvi.*, and with the identical lesson, and equally weighty, for assemblies in chapter *xviii.* Suffice it to say, first, that “gathered in my name” imports ‘gathered unto my presence,’ or ‘unto me.’ (2 Chron. *xx.* 9.) Then, secondly, Christ here pledges His word that He is present, in His own true, proper, beautiful place, “in the midst,” to group us all and each around Himself. And so real is this grouping, so sufficient is this presence to the twos or threes, that Christ again in the context uses the word church or assembly* (*v.* 17); and He assigns the fact of His presence as the warrant for the discipline enjoined.

Therefore let assemblies see to this cardinal point. Let the living person of their Lord be their sole centre round whom in faith they congregate. Let them beware of all idolatry, of putting servants of the Lord,

* The definite article, “THE Church,” fixes the meaning. As any grammarian will admit, the article here points to its use before. But it only has been used once before, *viz.*, in chapter *xvi.* So that certainly in chap. *xviii.* Christ had chap. *xvi.* in His mind. Thus these chapters are closely connected.

however gifted they may be, in the place that belongs to the Lord Himself. But let them also with equal sternness hold fast the grand truth that the presence of the Lord, of “Jesus only,” is the one essential of the two or three obediently, holily (*v.* 18), joyfully (*v.* 19), being together, of being on the right, the scriptural ground of the assembly of God. Aught added to this “only” ground of gathering is as dangerous, if not as fatal, to the assembly as it also is to the individual. In short,

“On Christ, the solid Rock, we stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.”

W. LINCOLN.

“ I HAVE ANOINTED THREE KING.”

“Then Jehu came forth to the servant of his lord: and one said unto him, Is all well? wherefore came this mad fellow to thee? tell us now. And he said, Thus and thus spake he to me, saying, Thus saith the Lord, I have anointed thee king over Israel.”—2 KINGS ix. 11-13.

THIS was Jehu’s “witness of himself” to his fellows as to what had taken place between himself and God in secret. But this was not all; there was the sweet, fragrant oil upon his head and person, seen as soon as looked for—the *token* that what he said was true. And it being thus manifest that he had indeed been anointed of God in secret, the *word* also that he said had been spoken to him in secret was received without hesitation as the very word of God, and his companions and hearers at once declared, “Jehu is king!”

May it be so with us! full proof, as well as assertion, being ours. We declare that we are made “kings unto God” (Rev. i. 6); that we have heard in the secret of our chamber, or of our heart, “I appoint unto you a kingdom.” “It is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” (Luke xii. 32.) Then let us see to it that the oil be not wanting.

Let us remember, “If any man have not the *Spirit* of Christ, he is *none* of His.” (Rom. viii. 9.) “The *Spirit* itself beareth witness *with our* spirit, that we are

the children of God; and if children, then heirs." (Rom. viii. 16, 17.) "In whom (Christ), after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. i. 13.)

Here is the proof, and the only proof, to others and ourselves also, that the faith we profess is a *living* and not a *dead* faith. They who profess Christ, and yet have not the Spirit of God, are just in the place of the five foolish virgins, whose end will be to be *shut out* from the kingdom to which they aspire.

But with how many of us who are *truly* called and anointed, and *know* it, is the oil sadly lacking as regards power for service to God, and testimony for God, and hence our wretched failure in both. Men will look for evidence of our high calling, and they have a right to do so. "What do ye more than others?" will be asked; and the true answer to this, as gathered by themselves as they watch us, should be, "Old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. v. 17); their own unavoidable conclusion concerning us, "They have been with Jesus!" (Acts iv. 13.) Will the ungodly believe that we are indeed brought into higher dignity, or are better off than they, if they see about us nothing more than ordinary?

Do you reply, dear fellow-Christian, 'But *God* believes me; He knows I am His, and He will one day acknowledge my name before the world'?

This is blessedly true of each one who has received God's testimony. The Good Shepherd says, "I know my sheep, and am known of mine," and they truly have the anointing of the Holy One upon them, though men see it not; for

"On each He setteth His own secret sign.

They who have my *Spirit*, these, saith He, are *mine*."

But shall we be content to have it a "*secret sign*," when there is so much that we could do for God were it brought out and manifested as *active power* also? Is

there not evil to be subdued in the little kingdom within and around us?

Jehu was raised to dignity, and anointed to execute judgment, and inflict death on evil-doers in the kingdom. "Thou shalt smite, that I may avenge," &c. (Verse 7.) "And shall not God avenge His own elect," groaning under the power of inward evil? "He will avenge speedily;" and that by our *own* hand when we have faith for the work.

There are reigning principles within, already condemned to death, which must be brought down and destroyed utterly; and this can only be done *as* we are "endued with power from on high" by that Spirit who is the "promise of the Father." (Luke xxiv. 49.) It is only as we "walk in the Spirit" that we are kept from fulfilling "the lusts of the flesh." (Gal. v. 16.) "If ye through the *Spirit* do *mortify* the deeds of the body, ye shall live." (Rom. viii. 13.) "God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, and *condemned sin* in the flesh; that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Rom. viii. 3, 4.)

Surely we feel with sorrow how deeply we have failed thus to "show forth the *virtues* (margin) of Him who hath called us." (1 Peter ii. 9.) But, blessed be His name, "He giveth *more* grace." (James iv. 6.) Jesus is the Prophet who hath anointed, as well as called us. He received the Spirit as the promised gift of His Father when He went up on high. God gave not the Spirit *by measure* unto Him. And at once, on the day of Pentecost, was that all-empowering, all-hallowing Spirit, "shed forth *abundantly*." He is infinite, expansive, all-pervading; and He may be used to the utmost of our *need* and *desire*. Let us then *yield place* to Him; let us give Him *room*; and we shall yet know the blessedness of having that exhortation of God fulfilled in ourselves, "Be *filled* with the Spirit" (Eph. v. 18); and the result will be according to

Micah iii. 8, "Truly I am *full of power* by the *Spirit* of the Lord, and of judgment, and of might, to *declare* unto Jacob his transgression, and to Israel his *sin*." And thus we may be used by God in leading the sinner to Him, by whom alone "transgression" can be forgiven, and "sin covered." (Psalm xxxii. 1.)

THE NEW JERUSALEM.

(Continued from page 190.)

IN the paper which appeared last month on this subject, it was shown that the glorious city described in Rev. xxi. and xxii. contains every feature peculiar to Israel as the eternally blessed people of God, and that it wants the distinguishing marks of the Church of God. Its name, its origin, its situation, its wall, its tribal gates, its apostolic foundations, its position as regards the nations, its river and its tree, all proclaim it to be the residence and metropolis of Israel in her eternal blessedness as queen of the new earth.

The voice that aloud proclaimed its wondrous purpose—the promises and hopes of Abraham and the prophecies of Israel—bear corroborative testimony, which it is impossible to resist; while the absence of all the Church's distinctive characteristics, declares no less plainly that the commonly received interpretation is erroneous.

We have seen that Scripture plainly teaches that Israel's hopes are connected with a glorious future of eternal national distinctiveness. This passage gives, without doubt, a description of the eternal earth, its city and its nations. How impossible, then, that Israel should be ignored in that description; for therein we find but two classes, the bridal city and the nations of the saved. If that city be the Church, where is Israel? And what has the Church to do with the new earth? Is not heaven with the many mansions—now being prepared—her home?

There remains to be considered some passages which bear upon this study—one in Gal. iv. 26, "Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all." This has been supposed to confirm the view that Rev. xxi. describes the Church. But examine the passage with its context. This Jerusalem is described as the mother of us all; that is, of all Christians. Who, then, is our mother? Is it the Bride? The city not yet formed? The light of a future earth? Our mother must be something of the past; that which is future may be our offspring, but cannot be our mother. What is it, then? It is the spiritual Israel, the Israel of God (Gal. vi. 16), that is, the converted members of the family of Israel, through whom the Word has reached us and all the world, by which we have been born again. (1 Peter i. 23.)

To Israel have been committed the oracles of God; and through Israel, that is, the inspired Jews whom God employed to write and preach the glad tidings, have the Gentiles received the grace of life. Israel is therefore the mother of us all. And that enlightened portion of the nation is described as Jerusalem above, Jerusalem free, Jerusalem our mother, and the Israel of God; all these being expressions used in strong contrast with unbelieving Israel, barren, in bondage, of the earth, and of the devil.

Another passage quoted against this interpretation is Heb. xii. 22—"Ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem;" words, no doubt, addressed to Christians and members of the Church, and therefore connecting them with the city of Rev. xxi. This cannot be disputed, and our only enquiry is, What is the nature of the connection described by the words "ye are *come* to"? This we learn by the conclusion of the passage—"And to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the

spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator," &c.

Thus we see that if "ye are come to the new Jerusalem" means that we *are* the new Jerusalem; it must also mean that we are angels, instead of being their judges, as 1 Cor. vi. 3 teaches. But the passage is in fact an enumeration of the glorious circle of the saints' inheritance, including near approach to God the Judge, to Jesus the Mediator, to Israel glorified in her city, to the perfected spirits of the saints who died before the Church was founded, to angels, to mount Sion, the seat of grace, and to the blood of sprinkling. We shall have free access to all these privileges and glories; but of course shall nevertheless occupy our own peculiar place as far above all principality and power, in fellowship with our risen Head, and distinct from all these.

Rev. iii. 12 is another text which presents difficulty to some. "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. . . and I will write upon him the name of the city of my God, which is new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God."

This faithful one who shall be so blessed is doubtless a member of the body of Christ, and yet is to hold a place of honour in the new Jerusalem. But this does not militate against the interpretation that that city is Abraham's hope, and Israel's home. For, as we have seen, the twelve apostles, though members of the Church, shall be Israel's rulers in their eternal city. And as every figure in these epistles to the seven churches of Asia Minor is of a Jewish and Old Testament cast and character, we may discern what history tells us, that these churches were mainly composed of converted members of the children of Israel scattered abroad; and this promise shows that the faithful among these shall have special honours conferred upon them in connection with their own nation hereafter in glory.

And what can be more beautifully in harmony with all that Scripture would lead us to expect?

There is little more to add, unless it be briefly to show that the site of the city is the new and eternal earth, and that it cannot be a glorious apparition in the clouds, above the millennial Jerusalem, as some have strangely imagined.

Rev. xxi. 1, tells us the first earth was "passed away," and that there was no more sea. Thus we see the millennial city and earth are at an end *before* this city descends, which is confirmed by the word that "there shall be no more death." This would not be true if the city were millennial. (See chapter xx. 9.) So also there shall be no sun, and yet no night. This describes eternal glory.

That the city shall not be above, but on the earth, is proved by its wall and gates, which would have no meaning unless it were so situated. And furthermore, "the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it. . . . And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it" (vv. 24, 26); all showing clearly that a city above or over the earth is not contemplated, but upon and in the earth, its metropolis and its royal centre.

As to its shape and form, we cannot pretend to any degree of certainty; but from the description, it would seem to be material, to be in the form of a lofty pyramid, of which the height to the topstone shall be the same as the length of the side of its base, and the total circumference about a thousand miles, roughly estimated.

Around the base of this God's holy hill, will stand the great wall, about three hundred feet in altitude, in which will be set the pearl gates, always open. The top-stone, the chief corner-stone, will crown the pyramidal city, and forming thus the centre in which all its lines shall meet, will, with exquisite suitability, form the material representation and glorious monu-

ment of the exalted Living Stone, which once the builders rejected, but which shall then become and be manifested before all the redeemed earth and ransomed universe as the Head of the corner. G. F. T.

LIGHT BEARERS.

AROUND us is the dense darkness of the night. In our possession is a light—a light which will not only illumine the darkness, but will impart light to others also. We have this light, fellow-Christians; how do we carry it?

My thoughts were led into this channel by observing a little figure of an Indian light-bearer. His was no careless service; the light was borne aloft, with outstretched arm, with tightly-girded loins, and with well-shod feet. No one could misread his business; his whole attitude betokened earnest, eager, and devoted service! Oh, my brother! where is your light? Is it under the bushel, or under the bed? or is it carried so carelessly in your hand, half hidden by the folds of your ungirded garments, that the passers-by perceive not your errand, and are ignorant of the service on which your Master sends you ~~in~~ their midst?

Is it thus with you? Alas, I know it is too true of me! That little figure speaks to my heart and conscience, and I would that it may speak to yours. Are we not called to be God's witnesses in this dark world? Are not *we* commanded to be "the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom shine ye as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life"? (Phil. ii. 15, 16.)

Let us see to it that we are at least in some degree faithful to this our trust. Let the word of Christ dwell in us richly (Col. iii. 16), that we may "hold it forth," using it first as the lamp for our own path, and then as the torch to guide others also.

Let us so gaze into the face of our glorious Lord and

Master, that the light of His countenance may be reflected in our own. We may not ourselves be conscious of an increased brightness, even as Moses "wist not that his face shone;" for as our gaze becomes more steadfast, we shall ever trace fresh glories and fresh beauties in our holy, perfect, matchless pattern, and so shall never be able to say, "I have attained," but "I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." (Phil. iii. 12.)

But though Moses wist it not, the change which had passed upon him was visible to all around! "The children of Israel saw the face of Moses, that the skin of Moses' face shone." (Exod. xxxiv. 35.) And when we with unveiled face behold as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we "are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. iii. 18.)

Shall we not beseech our God to tear away the self-made veils from all our hearts, that we may behold His glory, and that the light which He has kindled in us, being fed continually with fresh oil, may burn more brightly, and be more evidently seen by all around us; that with loins girded, and shoes on our feet, we may be as men who wait for their Lord, and, even in the darkness of the hour which precedes the dawn, may let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven? (Matt. v. 16.)

THOUGHTS ON SYMPATHY,

"In all their affliction He was afflicted, and the angel of His presence saved them: in His love and in His pity He redeemed them; and He bare them, and carried them all the days of old."

"For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

How our hearts rejoice to dwell upon the sympathy of Jesus, our great High Priest.

Are we in sorrow? He is waiting "to comfort all that mourn." Are we cast down and depressed? He "raiseth up those that be bowed down." Are we broken-hearted? "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Are we foolish, ignorant, stupid? He has "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way." Are we faint and weary? "He giveth power to the faint, and to them that have no might He increaseth strength."

He is "touched with the feeling of our infirmities;" His heart is tender with truest sympathy; there is no coldness or indifference in Him. And as we realize His sympathy, should not our sympathy flow out for the griefs of others? As we prove His quick, His ready help in times of trouble, does it not stimulate us to stretch out our hand to minister to the need of others? As we prove His power to wipe our tears away and hush each sigh of grief, do we not long to soothe and comfort others?

Surely it should be so. Our God desires to form within us large and loving hearts, bowels of mercies, deep and overflowing compassions. Paul says to Philemon, "I long after you in the bowels of Jesus Christ," and we need increasingly to cultivate this true and fervent love.

It is easy to be hard, and harsh, and cold towards an afflicted one, especially when we believe that he is reaping the fruit of his own doings. But such are not the ways of Christ. *He* wept over Jerusalem when He was obliged to pronounce it desolate; and He grieves over every painful stroke which in faithfulness and love He sees needful for His people's good.

Sympathy with and pity for the afflicted is a privilege belonging only to this earth. There will be no tears to wipe away, no griefs to soothe, no woes to mitigate above. All there will be unmingled joy and gladness. Then let us make the most of this little space of time, and seek to be like *Him*, who "went

about doing good, and healing all who were oppressed of the devil."

There are times when we are disappointed at the little effect of our sympathy. We feel half inclined to be displeased with the sorrowing one because he will not be comforted.

If we would be wise sympathizers we must be content to spend our sympathy without seeing immediate result. Let us learn to be silent with the silent ones, to show them that we in some degree realize the depth of their sorrows, and feel that there are secrets in their grief which no stranger can pretend to fathom. Such silence is eloquent, and is far more likely to reach the stricken heart than if we lavished many words, when it has no capacity for receiving words at all. Alas! this sympathy of silence is but little understood. "He will be silent in His love." (Zeph. iii. 17, margin.)

The Lord has told us to "weep with them that weep" (Rom. xii. 15), and in this sorrow-stricken world there is deep need for such sympathy. But are we not prone to neglect the previous part of the exhortation? Do we not too often fail to "rejoice with them that do rejoice"? And is not many a beam of joy in a brother's heart allowed to fade away, because there is no one willing to share his joy?

Oh, to be less selfish! to feel as glad in others' gladness as in our own! My brother is honoured—honoured, perhaps, in the conversion of souls—and should not I rejoice? Shall I not forestall the rejoicing which my heart shall share when this his honour is proclaimed in the courts above? And does not Jesus, my Lord and Master, say, "Rejoice with ME, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" What a wondrous privilege it is to be permitted to enter into some few of His thoughts—to rejoice when HE rejoices, and to weep when HE weeps!

We hear Him say, "As the Father hath loved Me,

so have I loved you." If an earthly friend expresses love for us, how quickly do our hearts respond to it. And if we believed—truly believed—in the *reality* of these words, what intensity of love should we feel towards Him. If we fully understood their meaning, what fervent affections would be produced within us; and how careful and anxious we should be not to grieve or neglect Him in any way.

An honoured servant of God once said, "I am better acquainted with the Lord Jesus than with any other friend." And surely it should be thus, since He has laid His very heart open to us in His Word, and so graciously encourages us to seek after close and intimate acquaintanceship with Himself.

We only know our earthly friends in part. There are always secrets hidden deep within each heart; secrets of which we are ashamed, and dare not open out to any but our blessed God.

But Jesus—the holy, harmless, spotless One—desires that we should know Him perfectly. He has nothing to conceal; no thoughts about us which He desires to hide. Not only does He call us *friends*, but opens out His secrets to us. He calls us near unto Himself, and bids us gaze on Him. He takes the veil from off our hearts, and manifests His ways of grace, His tender love, His deep compassions, His patience bearing much and long, His faithfulness, His willingness to save, His holiness, His power, in short, HIMSELF! And as we gaze on Him, and by the Holy Spirit's power behold His all-intrinsic excellence, our souls are satisfied. Ah, yes; we find we have in Him a never-failing treasury. We see He is exactly suited to our case, the very One we need to meet each craving of our hearts; and here we *rest* and sing with joy, "THE LINES ARE FALLEN UNTO ME IN PLEASANT PLACES; YEA, I HAVE A GOODLY HERITAGE." "THE LORD IS MY PORTION, SAITH MY SOUL, THEREFORE WILL I HOPE IN HIM!"

THE FELLOWSHIP OF SAINTS.

Read Psalms cxxxii., cxxxiii., cxxxiv.

It was when Simon Bar-Jona confessed Him as the Christ, the Son of the living God, that Jesus said, "Upon this rock I *will* build my Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." And it was when He had "poured out His soul unto death," and was just risen victorious from the grave, that He said to Mary, "I ascend (or "am ascending") unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God," thus connecting our solid and living union to Himself with the rich things of His death for us on the cross.

In this union to Himself lies also our union with each other; and, again, from this flows all fellowship of saints with each other, that is either wholesome, or pleasant, or lasting.

The fellowship of saints has been built by God on the "Rock" of what Christ is, as the once dead and now risen One. It grows, as branches and as green boughs, of both cooling shade and pleasant fruit, from Himself, the central stem. The sap of the Spirit's grace first gave that fellowship on the resurrection-day, when two at Emmaus felt their "hearts burn within them" with Jesus' words of love; and it was enlarged afterwards at Pentecost, when three thousand "continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine, and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers." But all this fellowship of saints in Christ comes from the deep root of His death for us. Hence it is so precious to God; hence also so refreshing, yet humbling, to us!

But we live in days when this fellowship of saints is so hindered and marred, when we see so little of it manifested (and yet are so refreshed with what there is of it), that it is well to remember the unchangeable

source from which it springs. The walls of it are so low in our time, and so feeble, that we do well to remember that the God-laid foundation of it remains—even Christ Jesus—on whom all the Church is built. The boughs of it have become so stunted, and barren of even shade, as well as fruit, that it is well to remember that the living One, even Jesus, still has a fulness of the Spirit's grace wherewith to renew it, which He possesses through the unchanged, unlesened value of His death. And surely we may boldly plead with God to revive this Spirit-wrought and Spirit-taught fellowship of saints, since Jesus bled and died to bring it about; and is it not for His glory that it should be revived?

And is not this source of the fellowship of saints suggested by the connection between Psalms cxxxii. and cxxxiii.? and the stirring and awakening effect of such also taught by the addition to them of Psalm cxxxiv.?

The short, bright, middle psalm of these three has always been most refreshing to God's children, and is frequently read, and also sung in our hymns, in the assemblies of saints; and well it may be. It is rich, indeed, on the subject of the "communion of saints." How beautiful are the two emblems used in it of the union between Christ as Head, and His Church as His members!

The first is a sanctuary emblem, viz., the *oil* on Aaron's head, reaching also to his garments.*

The second emblem is the *dew* on the top of lofty Hermon, a snow-capped mountain at the very north of the land; but the same dew, it is here said, descends on the little hill of Zion, which was far to the south.

* The word "skirts" in verse 2 should be "mouth," or "opening." It is the same Hebrew word as is rendered "hole" in Exod. xxviii. 32, and means that mouth or opening of Aaron's garments at his neck, which was strengthened with "a binding of woven work" at its edge, because on it hung the weight of all his garments. To this opening, therefore, and its collar, the oil poured on his head came down, and by touching it

Verse 3 should be read—"As the dew of Hermon is that which also descends on the mountains of Zion; for there," &c. This latter emblem is from *rural* life; it is drawn from the hills and valleys of *all the land*, just as the other is from the worship of the sanctuary.

The union of the two emblems is perhaps intended to show what the fellowship of saints is in two main things, viz., their worship when assembled, and also in their daily outspread life, whether of town or of country parts. Just as we find Paul exhorting the Corinthian Church to remember their relationship to each other in the Lord, not at "the Lord's table" only (1 Cor. xi.), but also at their daily meals, and even when any of their unbelieving kindred bade them to "a feast." (See 1 Cor. x.)

So applicable, then, to ourselves and our fellowship as saints is this happy psalm! Well may it cry—"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" and then close with saying, "For there (*i.e.* on Zion's hill and in her assemblies) Jehovah commanded the blessing, even life for evermore." (Comp. Ps. lxxxvii. 2.)

Musical and melodious as the *bells* of Aaron's robe, and refreshing as the *dew* of the morning, is this fellowship of saints intended to be, and that because so *pure*. Those bells were of gold, gold that must have known both the furnace and the anvil and hammer; and the dew was what had dropped straight from heaven, and lay unfingered by man.

How true these emblems of that day of the Church's early grace when they daily praised in the temple, and every day, "breaking bread at home, did eat their meat *was accounted to have touched ALL his raiment.* Compare the inbreathing of the Holy Ghost, in John xx. 22, fresh from the risen Jesus, and the gift of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and His consequent indwelling in all believers ever since. This explanation of the word in verse 2 avoids the idea of Aaron's oil of anointing streaming down to the foot of his long and beautiful garments.

(not only with gladness, but also) with singleness of heart!"

Alas, alas, how has that fellowship of saints failed since! The music sadly marred with discord! The dew almost a drought! Well may a beloved brother say, in one of his hymns—

“But where is now the unity
Of happier days of yore?
Its brightness, freshness, fragrance, Lord,
Oh, when wilt Thou restore?”

As it is, we thank God for any measure of it left, while we confess our own and others' share in that grieving of the Spirit which has so marred it.

And just here it is that the sweetness comes of remembering that this psalm is preceded by Psalm cxxxii., which reminds us of the deep, unfailing foundation, and the living spring, of that pleasant unity of brethren of which Psalm cxxxiii. speaks. It tells of the zeal of the heavenly “David,” even Jesus, who would give Himself no rest “until He found out a place for Jehovah, a habitation for the mighty One of Jacob.”

He gave Himself, when there was *no* church, *no* fellowship of saints, *no* “place for Jehovah, nor habitation for the mighty One of Jacob,” *that there might be one*. Jesus died “that He might gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad” (John xi. 52), and that He might be “the chief corner stone, in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord.” (Eph. ii. 21.)

Now in Psalm cxxxii. faith pleads this with God. The first verse of that psalm should be—“O Jehovah, remember *for* David (*i.e.* on behalf of David) all his afflictions, how he sware,” &c. The whole psalm is of this character, pleading the zeal and sorrows of the true David (*vv.* 1–5), the lowly place in which the habitation of God was found (*vv.* 6–10), and God's oath to Christ to give Him Zion. (*vv.* 11–18.)

This is followed in the next psalm by joyous excla-

mations, as if to say, Our prayer is heard. It is done. God has a habitation. "Behold, how good and pleasant it is for brethren to dwell even together in unity!"

This connection of the two psalms shows us that the Church, where alone is the fellowship of saints, is God's reward to His David, His beloved Son ("David" in Hebrew means "beloved"), for all His afflictions, and for His zeal for God's glory, *even unto death.*

What a strengthening truth this becomes to us, when we feel that our weakness and sinfulness has helped to mar that unity, and tarnish the beauty of that fellowship! We still have a refuge for our wounded hearts, and a prevailing plea to use—"O God, for Jesus' sake, passing by all our failure, *bless Thy Church.*"

And we may still further strengthen our hearts in this by noticing that these three psalms are the *closing ones* of the fifteen psalms entitled "Songs of Degrees," psalms that were evidently either written or arranged in later days to be used by *the remnant returning from the captivity*, as they journeyed up to Jerusalem. (The word "degrees" should be "the goings up.") At such a time Israel, indeed, had need to fall back on the days of David—the "man after God's own heart"—as a reason why God had begun to give them their joys in Zion again, and as a plea with Him why He should increase them.

And at the end of this age, just as at the end of that age, those who seek to meet simply to Jesus' name, may painfully feel the weakness of their fellowship together; but Jesus' love to the Church, and His giving of Himself for it, is a plea with God of which nothing can rob them! And the joys that are continually tasted in their fellowship together by such as do thus meet, may well utter itself in the words—"Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

But it is equally profitable to follow these two psalms with Psalm cxxxiv. We there have exhor-

tation to the night-servants of Jehovah, to waken them, and to keep them awake.

In the Old Testament use of it the first two verses of this psalm were doubtless a parting word to the priests from the retiring tribes as they left when their festival and assembly in Zion was over, exhorting them to remember their *night-service* in the temple, and not allow the lamps to go out or become dim; while the last verse was the reply of the chorus of the priests to each godly Israelite as he left—"Jehovah, that made heaven and earth, bless thee out of Zion." It is the only psalm that speaks of "night-servants."

The lesson to us is obvious. In our better time *all* God's children are priests, and are all of us called on to remember that we are in a night-time (see 1 Thess. v. 4-10), and must not "sleep, as do others."

How good to have this exhortation follow so closely after the joys of meeting and greeting each other, of which Psalm cxxxiii. is so full!

Fellowship and communion of saints is sweet; but we must not let it end there, and lose ourselves in the sweetness of it, but be strengthened by it to resist the lulling power of worldliness, and to watch, and work, and praise, and pray. Surely the fellowship we have together every Lord's-day as fellow-saints should strengthen us afresh to be as God's and Christ's night servants through the week.

And the fellowship we have with fellow-saints at any time, and of whatever measure it be, should be like that of Jonathan and David, to "strengthen each other's hands in God" all through these night-watches till "the morning cometh"—the "morning without clouds." "For God (says Paul) hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we watch or sleep we should live together with Him."

For Jesus' sake, therefore, may the fellowship of saints increase.

H. D.

THE SYMPATHY OF JESUS.

Yes; for as if Thou wouldst be God,
 E'en in Thy misery,
 There's been no sorrow, but Thine own
 Untouch'd by sympathy.

THESE lines were brought to my mind, when looking again at the way of the soul of Jesus in Psalm cii.

That utterance is fitly entitled or headed, "A prayer of the afflicted, when he is overwhelmed, and poureth out his complaint before the Lord."

Like Rachel, we may say, the mourner there "refuses to be comforted."

Jesus pours out His complaint in verses 1-11. God then breaks in upon this bitter current of His soul with a voice of very rich promise. (*vv.* 12-22.) But, as not heeding that, as though He had been a deaf man and heard it not, Jesus resumes His complaint, without the least allusion to this interruption, without its appearing to have had the smallest influence upon His soul (see verse 23); and a second time God breaks in with a still richer promise, hangs a brighter bow in the still heavy and dark cloud. (*vv.* 24-28.)

The quotation of verses 24-28 in Heb. i. 10-12, and there declared by the Holy Ghost to be the language of God to Jesus, warrants this structure of the Psalm, and therefore I believe this interpretation of it also.

But if so, in what an article or moment of intense grief does this present Christ as having sympathy! At times when affliction, as this psalm speaks, is overwhelming, the heart is so occupied with sorrow that it can listen to nothing else; and yet this is not *unbelief*, but the depth of sensible grief. Rachel is not blamed for being in that condition in Jer. xxxi. 15-18; a voice of promise is addressed to her there, as here, to Christ; but both seem to refuse to hear it for a season,

and this, in both, coming from the deep reality of the grief that was endured at the moment.

But is it not, I ask a poor overwhelmed heart, a comfort to know, that the hour of sorrow, too deep to listen to consolation, has been passed through by Jesus? He has not left that moment of full human affliction "untouched by sympathy;" and because of His sympathy, and not merely of divine omniscience, we can say to Him, "When my spirit is overwhelmed within me, then Thou knowest my path." (Psalm cxlii. 3.)

THE VARIED GLORIES OF THE REDEEMED.

RECENT articles on the New Jerusalem, which represent Israel as heir to a distinctive position in eternal glory, have suggested the need of some reference to the divine plan for the other glories of eternity as revealed in prophecy.

And first let me say that there is no reason for supposing that all the saved will be collected into one vast multitude, in which no subdivisions or classifications shall be, each occupying only his individual or unit position.

Such a notion, common and almost universal as it is, shows a very poor appreciation of the divine resources for order, beauty, and glory. Nature itself might teach us that the great Creator's wisdom is displayed not only in the marvellous and infinite diversity of the individuals, but also in their grouping into families and societies.

Look up at night, and you will see not only that one star differeth from another star in glory, but also that these same stars form parts of constellations large and small; while in some regions the individual stars are lost to the eye in the beautiful cloud of light which their association goes to form.

Moreover, in the animal creation "all flesh is not the same flesh." "There is one kind of flesh of man,

another flesh of beasts, another of fishes, and another of birds." (1 Cor. xv. 39.) Here also there are the innumerable individual differences, and yet the beautiful and perfect variety of classification and association.

And does it need proof to show a greater richness of design and resource in such arrangements, than in the mere gathering together of a multitude of individuals?

There are thus bodies celestial, and bodies terrestrial, in the present and physical economy, and all the bodies, though in harmony, differing; and are we not prepared to find, in the dispensation of glory, similar distinctions in the spiritual kingdom?

Turn now to the page of revelation, and let the light of the future shine in upon us.

In Rev. vii. we have in the same glorious scene, and standing together upon the same stage, five distinct groups or families of glorified beings—the angels, the elders, the living creatures (v. 11), the servants of God in their twelve subdivisions, and the great multitude (v. 9) whom no man could number.

So also in Heb. xii. we have the heavenly Jerusalem, the innumerable company of angels, the church of the first-born, and the spirits of just men made perfect—all several and separate groups or families, forming together the harmonious diversity of the eternal heavens and earth.

This is that of which St. Paul, in Eph. iii. 15, speaks, when he says of our Lord Jesus Christ, "Of whom every family (*πᾶσα πατριὰ*) in heaven and earth is named." The families will be many, but their Head is one. The groupings are various in the flock, though there is only one "door of the sheep" (John x. 7) whereby they may enter in.

It is but recently that Protestants have come to see the diversity of individual position and reward in glory, a truth which was magnified for long ages beyond its proper purposes, and exalted so as to exclude justification by grace and faith alone. The Reformation, in

recovering this lost truth, rejected the rewards of works which God has promised in a hundred places to all who serve Him; rewards which will cause no sense of want in any, but give a greater capacity to some. Now the mind of the Church is growing into further light, because they begin to see not only individual distinctions, but corporate classifications.

The history of the individual determines his individual reward; the character of each dispensation regulates the corporate position of those who belong to it. Israel's glory is one, the Church's glory is another; the one celestial, the other terrestrial.

After the Church is completed, and while for a thousand years the reign of righteousness continues on earth, millions will be saved of all nations, whose glory will not be that of Israel, nor yet of the Church. Before Israel became a nation, there were Abels, and Enochs, and Noahs, who walked with God, not of Israel, much less of the Church which succeeded Israel, whose glory will yet be perfect in its place.

Around one grand centre these various constellations will revolve, each in its several orbit. Unto one Sun these diverse rays will from each quarter of the universe converge, as from it they severally branch off and radiate.

The nations, the tribes, the families of earth are formed by relationship of birth, or consanguinity. The families of glory derive their associations from another kind of source, namely, from the various forms of divine dealings of which they were on earth the subjects, including the different degrees and character of His revelation of Himself and of His will, and by the forms (not the measure) of their faith.

The *form* or character of faith, which depended on the measure and nature of the revelation, is what distinguishes the dispensations. The *measure* of the faith is what distinguishes the individual. Thus Abraham, though the measure of revelation was small, and his

faith had but little to grasp, may and probably will stand higher personally than those whose faith has all the epistles of Paul to revel in; because of the power with which he grasped the little, in contrast with the feebleness with which we finger the much. Dispensationally, he stood lower than we; personally, how far higher!

Just decrees will stereotype in glory these distinctions; and there, while, for example, the corporate standing of antediluvian saints will be of a lower grade than that of the Church, the personal reward of this one and that may exceed the highest glory of any member of the Body of Christ.

In the army one regiment takes precedence of another by reason of its history or connection with royalty or otherwise, but when the war begins, it is some private of the humblest regiment who for his prowess carries away the honourable decoration. The regimental standing does not interfere with the personal reward. And in the great army of heaven we shall find many who are connected dispensationally with a lower standing brought out to be crowned with the best reward for personal faith and service.

Not perceiving this important distinction has caused many to resist and dislike the truth of what we may call dispensational classifications in eternity. But let it be seen that the heavenly and eternal arrangement is in all things guided by the earthly history, not only as regards the individual, which all admit, but also as regards the class or body to which the individuals belong, and all difficulty will disappear.

These principles of divine government will then explain why we have a description of the children of Israel, in Rev. xxi., occupying a place of distinctness in the eternal world hereafter. Distinct from them, and yet beside and with them, we also find "the nations of them that are saved," also in a place of eternal glory; while Hebrews xi. 40 tells us the

spirits of the patriarchs and faithful men and women of the past are still waiting to be perfected until we, the Church, shall have entered upon that "better thing" which the Lord Jesus is preparing for us.

This brings us to the question of the Church's eternal distinctness in glory, which, however, must form the subject of another paper.

G. F. T.

HOLINESS AND VICTORY

AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE LIFE OF JOSHUA.

THE secret of all advance in the divine life is "following fully" the Lord who has called us to be His good soldiers. This is the special characteristic of Joshua. It had marked his history all through the wilderness, and fitted him to fill the place to which God then called him.

Holiness is discipleship, and discipleship involves a step-by-step following of the Master by one who has denied self and taken up his cross. Steps in the wilderness with Christ may be taken rapidly or slowly, accomplished in years or in days, but the direction is ever heavenward, upward, homeward. The journey of "eleven days" (Deut. i. 2) may become, because of unbelief, a forty years' wandering (v. 3) before the land is entered by the people of God.

The wilderness is designed of God to be the place of grace; for there Israel learned what the grace of God was. (Jer. xxxi. 2.) Moses reminds them of this when he tells them, "The Lord thy God bare thee, as a man doth bare his son, in all the way that thou wentest" (Deut. i. 31); and through all the great and terrible wilderness, by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, He had brought them on eagles' wings, teaching them to make Him their refuge, and to bring the truth of Psalm xci. into the experience and realization of their faith.

How Israel failed to learn God's lesson we know,

but there were *two*, Caleb and Joshua, who profited; and they represent those of the family of faith who learn God's lessons, and reap the fulfilment of His promises; and the book of Joshua lets us into the secret of "prosperity" and "good success."

Joshua is the model of the man of faith, and therefore the type of the blessed Lord who has trod the path of faith before us. Walking in His pathway, Paul was able to say, "I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." At *His* feet he was content to sit, and there to be a learner to the end. He not only lived in Christ, but Christ lived in him. The life of the new creation goes on "from strength to strength," till in the heavenly city we stand in the full stature of the perfect man; that is, "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ;" for the apostle says, "We are being changed from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord." As belonging to a new creation, a *growth* is implied; as having once belonged to an old order of things, a *change* is implied; and as being opposed by enemies within and without, *conflict* and *victory* are implied.

This *growth*, this *change*, this *victory* is holiness advancing towards attainment, having its consummation when we see Him and become like Him. This consummation in Israel's history was, for a few brief years, attained in type under Solomon; for then, and then only, did Israel enjoy *rest*. Typically, the glory was very bright; but its brightness, like the glory on Moses' face, must fade, till He come who will maintain the glory for ever.

Of Solomon alone it is said that "he shall be a **MAN OF REST**;" for, says God, "I will give him rest from all his enemies round about; for his name shall be called Solomon (corresponding to Christ's title of the Prince of Peace), and I will give peace and quietness to Israel in his days." (1 Chron. xxii. 9.) Joshua did not give Israel rest; Solomon did. Joshua led them into it;

but Solomon gave it to them, and under him they found it.

This distinction needs to be much borne in mind, or a fatal delusion comes in, namely, that *faith* can lead beyond conflict. *It cannot.* The history of Israel, from Joshua to David inclusive, shows that war, and not rest, was their normal condition; and that, not because of failure on Israel's part (though that aggravated it a hundredfold), but as the result of a divine purpose that would not subdue the Canaanites all at once, lest the beasts of the field should multiply.

To see how fully this path of conflict has to be trodden by ourselves, we have but to remember that we are called to put on the whole armour of God, having to "wrestle against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in the heavenlies." The might of these powers, of which the ten Canaanite nations are a type, can only finally be broken in the heavenlies, when the dragon with seven heads and ten horns is cast out of heaven and broken; on earth, when the beast with its ten horns is cast into the lake of fire; and in ourselves personally, only when that thread is cut which links us still to the earth, which causes us to groan, although we have the first-fruits of the Spirit. (Rom. viii. 23, 24.)

Till then, our calling is to stand and be ready for the fight, and not to sit down and take our rest. The cross must be before the crown; the fighting before the rest. Christ as Joshua secures Canaan, but does not give the enjoyment of rest in it (for rest there can be none as long as the Canaanite remains); *that is*, reserved for Christ as Solomon. Here lies the way, long and weary, that connects the victories of Joshua in the past with the peace and rest of Solomon in the future.

We will now turn to the first chapter of Joshua, and seek to profit by God's instruction. God had never spoken to Joshua before. He had been Moses' minister, and is now to become God's immediate servant. So

must it be with all who would rise from the weariness of the wilderness to the conflict of Canaan: they have to meet God face to face.

God's communication of His commission to Joshua is contained in the first nine verses, and in it there is a *promise* and a *precept*.

The *promise* is, "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee: I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."

The *precept* is, "Observe to do according to all the law which Moses my servant commanded thee: turn not from it to the right hand or to the left, that thou mayest prosper whithersoever thou goest. This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein."

In connection with both the promise and the precept, we note the thrice-repeated words, "*Be strong and very courageous*;" and in this consists the real secret of that victorious power that marked Joshua's course. These words are very important, and deserve pondering over.

To be *strong* stands in opposition to all weakness, and to be *courageous* in opposition to fear. Weakness can never entertain a high purpose, and fearfulness can never execute a great design. Faith gives strength to purpose, and courage in bringing it about. It is said of God that He is "wonderful in counsel and excellent in working;" and as it is with God, so it is with that faith that lays hold on God. But the strength and courage of Joshua have to be tested by his ability to grasp the promise (*vv.* 5, 6), and by his obedience to the revealed will of God (*vv.* 7, 8).

The secret of all success and of all advance is in the combination of the faith that grasps mightily the promises, and the obedience which, at the same time, bends its neck to obey, and its shoulder to bear. The maximum of real power is in the measure of the harmony where-with the promises and the precepts are blended together

in the experience and life of the believer. Without the promises all we can have is "dead works," and without the precepts all we can have is "dead faith."

Many difficulties and much confusion in the truth of God arise from oscillations between these two points—dead faith on the one side, and dead works on the other. God's extremes which we are to embrace are living faith and living works—a living faith that lays hold on every precious promise, and living works that are the result of an obedient observance of every precept.

Faith says, "He is mine;" obedience says, "I am His." And therefore in the new covenant both are blended, "I will be their God, and they shall be my people." God has then His right in us, and we have our covenant right in God. God will not fail nor forsake us, and we must not fail nor forsake God.

By the due maintenance of this twofold relationship, the one by faith, and the other by obedience, is the progress of the divine life developed; and its real success; which is *holiness*, attained. All views are defective that make practical holiness the result of either exclusively.

To maintain holiness by obedience alone is to deny God's power for us; and to maintain holiness by faith alone, is to deny God's power in us; the one sets aside the Lord Jesus, and the other sets aside the Holy Ghost; and thus in both ways God is dishonoured, and His perfect work marred. Christ for us is the power of the promise; the Holy Spirit in us is the power of the precept. Therefore we can say subjectively—"I live, yet not I," for it is Christ (not Jesus, but Christ, the anointed One) who lives in us, by virtue of the anointing of the Holy Ghost: and further, we can say objectively, looking unto Christ—"The life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God."

The result of the promise laid hold on, and of the

obedience rendered, is, "Then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, (וַיִּשְׁפָּר), and then thou shalt have good success" (וַיִּשְׁכַּל), good understanding, spiritual intelligence, prudence. This latter word has reference rather to the inward, while the former refers rather to the outward, result of faith and obedience. Unitedly they point to the combined effect of a firm faith in God's promise, and of an implicit obedience to His revealed will. How mighty in its consequences, and how glorious in its attainments, those know who have, like Joshua, followed fully, and followed on to know; and who, like Paul, forgetting the things behind, have pressed on to the mark of the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus; of whom it can be said that they have fought the fight, and finished the course, and kept the faith.

This combination of faith and obedience must ever be maintained, or there will be a danger that the unstable and unwary will fail to hold "faith and a good conscience," and, separating the one from the other, they will make shipwreck of their usefulness, if not of their salvation.

We are thus let into the secret of Joshua's success and victory—he *trusted* and he *obeyed*. God's presence was felt, and this made obedience pleasant, and toil sweet. The yoke was easy, and the burden was light. Herein we see his equipment for the arduous service that lay before him.

We will now take a glance at those eventful seven years of conquest wherein the land was divided, and at its close left to each tribe to secure its own inheritance by the same faith and obedience that had secured the conquest in the first instance.

We cannot go into the details of this history, so rich in instruction; but as bearing on the subject of holiness and victory, and as illustrative of the triumph of holiness in the believer, there are a few points to

notice in which we shall see God's attitude toward Joshua, and Joshua's attitude toward God.

In reference to the first, we observe that no sooner has Joshua placed the Jordan behind him, and in faith gone among the Canaanites, than God reveals to him the captain of the Lord's host as he stood before Jericho; and this revelation of the man with the drawn sword in his hand, is the pledge to him that his God will go before him.

But solemn is the word that meets the servant's ear: "Loose thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy." The presence of God makes every place holy, and it is only as we stand "in reverence and godly fear" that we can stand in His presence at all. God herein seeks to impress Joshua's mind with a sense of His holiness, and of the holiness necessary to all who would walk before Him. Thus had God prepared Moses at the burning bush for the entering on that work which would be continually bringing him into God's presence; and Joshua has to learn the same lesson, to be prepared for the same hallowed fellowship.

It is a great secret of strength when the soul has learned that in all the conflict of the path *we* are followers and *He* is Captain. The battle is not ours, but His; the strength not ours, but His; the wisdom not ours, but His. At the same time, it is not God without us, but we with God, if we would ever know God with us.

Faith does not set aside the man, but it clothes the man with power, with endurance, with zeal, with valour. It does not lie down in helplessness; but it rises in the power of God; it acts, it works, it obeys. It sets aside the wisdom of the flesh, and the power of the flesh, and the glory of the flesh; but it does not set aside either wisdom, or power, or glory. How often a great mistake is made, and the setting ourselves aside is confounded with the setting of the flesh aside.

Nay, rather are we to yield or present ourselves for God's service, as we are told in Rom. vi. 13, "Present yourselves (*παραστήσατε ἑαυτοὺς*) unto God, as those that are alive from among the dead;" and all our powers, spiritually, mentally, and physically, are so many members entrusted to us to be used, not for the flesh, but for God.

Joshua did not set himself aside, he consecrated himself to God; he strained every nerve, he used every power of mind or of body to secure victory, but he did it all in obedience to the instructions he received. He was not content to abandon himself in his weakness to God, for *God to use*; but rose in the might of faith, and made use of the arm of God. *This is faith.*

The faith of a dying sinner is truly the faith of self-abandonment, for he is dead in trespasses and sins; but the faith of a child of God, of a quickened, risen, enthroned saint, is the faith, not of one who can do nothing, and has nothing to do, but of one who can do all things, and who has everything to do. There can be no greater delusion than that which compares, rather than contrasts, the place of a dead sinner justified by faith with that of a living believer, indwelt by the Holy Spirit, "strengthened with might by Him in the inner man." The command is, "Quit you like men; be strong."

We need great care, lest in our teaching we put forward an emasculated Christianity that has lost its nerve and power because of this confounding of things that differ. We need to be *men* in Christ, not babes; those whom growth in grace has made gracious; growth in strength, strong; and growth in holiness, holy. Let the half self-complacent cry of "my leanness" give place to the deep-felt confession of "my listlessness," for this is the real secret of much of the want of power felt amongst the people of God.

For our example we have the mighty men of God, of whom, the apostle says, time would fail to tell.

Such were "Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jephtha, David also, and Samuel, and the prophets, who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions," &c., &c., "and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance," "had trial of cruel mockings, and scourgings," &c. &c.

They did, and they suffered, strong in faith, giving glory to God, and they triumphed whether in death or in life. They were men, children no longer; men who had waxed valiant in fight, and, like Joshua, stood firm with God, and fought for God. They were His soldiers; for the battle was His, and they knew that those on God's side always win. They rested not on their lees in the thought that the battle was God's, but they girded on the sword all the firmer, and threw away the scabbard. Mighty, holy, blessed men of God, "of whom the world was not worthy!"

All this is beautifully illustrated in Joshua. He did not sit down before Jericho expecting the walls to fall. There was not the self-abandonment of which we have been speaking, but "all the men of war" (chap. vi. 3) went round the city, and on the seventh day they went round it seven times, during which they neither shouted, nor allowed any word to proceed out of their mouth.

How solemn this silent walking round the doomed walls! No sound was heard but that of the ram's-horn trumpets, blown by the priests, the symbol of intercession of those who walked in the power of the ram of consecration, the witness to us of Christ, who had filled the priests' hands at their consecration, and whose name was now sounded as they walked round Jericho.

There is no human connection between the walk of faith seven times round the city and the fall of its walls, but that was faith's pathway; and when the moment came, and the long blast with the ram's horn

was heard, then the people shouted with a great shout, and the wall fell down flat, and the city was taken.

When Ai was to be taken and burnt with fire, God said to Joshua (chap. vi. 18), "Stretch out thy spear;" and we are told (v. 26), when the destruction of the place is accounted for, that "Joshua drew not his hand back wherewith he stretched out the spear, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai." There was power and victory, not in the spear, but in the spear stretched out in obedient faith. Alas! how often our hands wax weary through the weakness of the flesh; and the victory is but half gained, and the battle half lost, because the spear falls from our grasp.

In preparing for that memorable day at Gibeon, a day described as one like to which there was none before or after, when God hearkened to the voice of a man, when the sun stood still, and the moon stayed (chap. 10), Joshua ascends "from Gilgal, he and all the people of war with him, even all the mighty men of valour" (v. 7); and they came upon their enemies suddenly, for they "went up from Gilgal all night." (v. 9.)

It is this going all night that secures the victory. The diligent soul shall be made fat, the watchful soul shall be delivered. The midnight march with God found God on the battle-field, who discomfited the hosts of the kings, and Israel "slew them with a great slaughter at Gibeon, and chased them all the way that goeth up to Beth-horon, and smote them to Azekah;" and as they fled, "the Lord cast great stones from heaven upon them."

Notice the order of these events. The going all night, the battle, and then the hailstones. Israel could say with David, "By my God have I leaped through a wall." On this passage one well remarked, "If a wall comes in our way, our place is to leap at it—it is God's work to take us through it."

All this is the very opposite of "leaving it all with

Jesus to do it for me," as we hear it sometimes said, and said by loving, earnest souls, who do not mean what they say, for they would not shrink from the fight or the toil; but often, alas! it is said by unreal souls, who do mean what they say, and hope for honours for which they have never fought.

And finally, in the last battle recorded (chap. xi.) the same features are manifest; and in summing up Joshua's conquest, it is said, "As the Lord commanded Moses, so did Joshua: he left nothing undone." He "took the whole land, and gave it for an inheritance to Israel, according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land had rest from war."

We need pursue the history no further; and perhaps no history in the Bible bears more prayerful study in connection with attaining a constant victory, albeit under the pressure and reality of constant conflict, wherein *we* are the fighters and the workers—God fighting and working in us by the power of His ever blessed Spirit (Col. i. 29); and while it is God, it is none the less ourselves, and while it is ourselves, it is all the more God; for "He teaches our hands to war, and our fingers to fight." (Ps. cxliv. 1.) "It is He who girds with strength unto the battle" (Ps. xviii. 39); so that while we daily learn that "the battle is not to the strong" in the flesh (Eccles. ix. 11), it is to the strong in the spirit and in faith, to those who make God their strength.

Underneath every form of error there is some great truth; for the power of an error is the measure of truth that is mixed up with it. It is this which makes error so dangerous, not often to those who in mistaken zeal with true hearts sow their field with mixed seed, but to those who follow them without their spiritual intelligence, to discern between good and evil, and without their sincerity of heart toward God.

It has been good men who have brought in those errors which have most grievously afflicted the Church.

of God; and therefore the better the men who propagate an error, the more have we to be on our guard. They mean not to lead astray; nay, they would rather cut off a right hand than do it; still they do lead astray the weak, the unwary, and the doubting, and lead many bewildered souls to cry in despair, "Where is truth?"

May God help all His people in these days to choose the good and to refuse the evil, to sift all and separate the chaff from the wheat, God's will from man's, that so "separating the precious from the vile" they may "be as God's mouth" to all around. H. G.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

OF THE LATE J. T. M.

"THE Word says, 'If riches increase, set not your heart upon them.' The *principle* here is, riches are transitory, and, being unsubstantial, they should not be suffered greatly to engage the heart.

"Suppose the command were, 'If *troubles*, increase let not your heart be affected by them;' would not this same principle be involved, viz., 'Let not your heart be swayed from its proper rest, even the true God; upon HIM stay the heart, and He, the unchanging God, the Faithful and True, the God and Father of the believer in Jesus, will keep that heart in perfect peace?' Why, then, art thou disquieted? Hope thou in the God of hope (Rom. xv.), and thou shall yet praise Him."

"Another word is, 'After that ye have suffered *aschile*.' (1 Pet. v. 10.) Bear, then—, endure, wait, hold on, in patience possess your soul; 'God cannot deny Himself.' 'Light is *sown* for the righteous.'"

"The NAME of the LORD is mighty." (Jer. x. 6.) It is not only 'holy and reverend,' but it is POWERFUL,

and upon him that crieth unto it, it bestoweth power. Now, what is the name of the Lord? I might refer you to Ex. xxxiv. ; Isa. ix. ; &c. ; but I rather remind you of Rom. xv. 6, 13, and 2 Cor. i. 3, 4, 10. Believe in this name ; clasp this name ; cling to this name ; and then say to thy heaving soul the composing words of a man of God—agitated as thou art—thousands of years ago. See Psa. xlii. 5, 11, and Ps. xliii. 5.

“There may be some who will say to you, Where is now thy God? Charge it upon your soul that you confound and silence all such questioners, ignorant of the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Be hopeful then, be truthful, be peaceful, be patient. Him whose heart is stayed upon God, God will keep in ‘perfect peace.’ ‘God who hath delivered, who doth deliver, and who will yet deliver.’ This is God’s name, and the name of God’s Son is like unto it. (See Heb. xiii. 8.)

“Yours in the *full assurance* of the Lord’s faithfulness, and lovingkindness, and wisdom, and power. (Eph. iii. 20.)”

“I should now be very thankful for a line from you concerning your experience of the Lord’s dealings with you under your truly afflictive bereavement. As ‘faithful is He that promised,’ so I cannot doubt He has been with you in compassion and lovingkindness, giving you tokens both of His faithfulness and of His all-sufficiency. Further, He may have shown you the wherefore of this His afflictive dispensation, and the profitable application of it to be made by you. Doubtless the Lord sustained your spirit, and doubtless provided the necessaries the occasion called for.

“In view of the unparalleled troubles now close upon us, I would indeed urge you to repose ‘your faith and hope in God, who raiseth the dead ;’ but though we cease from dependance upon man generally, I would not teach the withdrawing of ourselves from

loving expectation, or even hopeful reliance, towards our fellow-members in the same family. The expecting and the hoping from one another, and 'the giving and receiving' amongst one another, and, I should add, the acknowledgment of one another as supporters and helpers, is the ordinance of the God and Father of the redeemed community."

"I have the truly great pleasure of receiving your letter. It shows me, not only the Lord's faithfulness and goodness (which I have *never, no never*, doubted), but your intelligence of it and thankfulness. The Lord surely seeketh fruit from His children, and the fruit most precious to Him is the due apprehension of His Fatherly heart. Only observe that this 'due apprehension' includes the thankful acceptance of all His dispensations, whether joyous or grievous, whether in the providing of the gourd or in the blasting of it. 'In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.'"

"Perhaps it is because you are expecting to be supported by man that your heavenly Father holds back His hand from you? I know you will reply, 'My dependance is upon God alone, my expectation is from God alone.' I quite accept this your persuasion respecting yourself; but your 'dependance' lacks *strength and firmness*, and your expectation lacks *lively and joyous assurance*. 'Looking for nothing again'—make this your maxim."

"— writes, you are 'low-spirited.' Indeed! Should the *Great King* turn upon you, and use the words of Artaxerxes (Neh. ii. 2), would you not be very sore afraid? Would you be able to recover your soul by saying (v. 1), 'I have not been before sad in Thy presence'? Take with you words, and turn unto the Lord, and, as in the very light of His presence read the whole chapter xiv. of Hosea. Then take

clean out from God's most precious book, and engrave deeply on the tablet of your heart, verse 4 of Deuteronomy xxxii."

"Only bear in mind, that faith in the Lord as powerfully constrains the worshipper to *wait* for Him as to pray to Him—that what is called wrestling in prayer gives no evidence of faith at all, being generally nothing better than impatience or fleshly bustle. (Ps. xxvii. 14.)"

"If you throw yourself into trouble by abusing persons, will not God say, Who hath required this at thy hands? You are in trouble already, and God may leave you to feel how heavily you have damaged the cause of the truth, distressed your own spirit, and lost time and strength."

"You must bear in mind that you possess a heavenly Father who, howsoever His children grieve His loving Spirit, does indeed 'care for them.' Wait yet awhile, a little while, and God—who spared not His own Son that He might embrace *you* as a son—will surely provide some occupation for you.

"Disappointments and wants make the Lord better known, and endear Him more.

"The Lord will continue to provide for you; for His faithfulness abideth for ever. When He maketh one means of support to cease, He createth another."

"Seek 'meekness of wisdom;' even when censuring drunkenness or popery, abstain from naming *persons*. It is said of 'the only *potentate*,' 'Thy *gentleness* hath made me great.' Further—bite your lips right through when you find yourself speaking against 'denominations.' If you are not to flatter, you are not to provoke; 'live peaceably with all men.'"

"Surely the Lord's compassions have not failed! Remember 1 Cor. xv. 58. Are you bold enough to say, 'My Father worketh hitherto, and *I* work'? Yes,

you are fully warranted to say this. 'Be ye imitators of God'—and in all things."

"The Lord will open fresh doors of service; but He will also appoint fresh exercises of spirit. Be not faint-hearted; and be not strong in your own strength."

"You, pray for 'Christian meekness and patience.' Surely God will bestow this 'spirit of meekness;' for amidst countless graces and heavenly affections, the 'meekness of wisdom,' and the lowliness of self-judgment are eminent. (2 Cor. x. 1; Heb. ii. 6.) But the very weighty passage to grasp, and to rely on, and to rest on, is 1 Cor. x. 13."

"Your interpretation of my words (you *miss* the true God) is seriously wrong. Ah! my brother, are you hot and hasty still? I doubt not, yea, even for one minute, or on the ground of the score of particulars, your Christianity; but I do affirm, and this positively and most sorrowfully, that you miss the forthshining and the warm manifestations of the Father of your spirit, the fountain of your being, and the spring and seal and essential dwelling-place of the Holy Ghost, even Him who sheddeth abroad in the heart God's love and declared fellowship."

"Live on, labour on; trust and hope, and rest on *from day to day*. 'Sufficient for the day' will be the Lord's provision for the day."

"Sickness is a trying dispensation of the Lord; but 'He doeth all things well.' When He appoints sickness, sickness is better than health. When He appoints hardness (of whatever kind or however enduring), let us accept it as that form of loving-kindness most suitable for us. 'The Lord delivereth the righteous out of all his afflictions.'

"Take good care not to dishonour Him by faint-heartedness. 'The Father (*i.e.*, the fountain or source)

of mercies,' 'the God of consolation, and the God of hope'—to Him I commit you."

"Current or continuing mercies depend greatly upon the acknowledgment of mercies vouchsafed. Be observant, be intelligent, be thankful. Lastly, render unto God that which He seeks in return for His love-tokens. Be a *satisfaction* to Him, even a refreshment and a delight. 'Jehovah-Jireh' in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen.' Study this Scripture: *what shall be seen?*"

"THIS ONE THING I DO:"

PHIL. iii. 2.

A SINGLE eye, an undivided heart,
Affections all absorbed in Christ my Lord,
Enable me with joy to count as loss
The very GAINS which nature may afford.

Confidence in the flesh, no longer mine;
Repose and PERFECT PEACE in Him I love,
Throw into gloom all that this world can give,
And loose all ties that are not bound above.

To commune with my Christ henceforth my aim;
Forgetting all behind, and pressing on
To that which is before—one thing I do—
One aim I have—one object—only ONE—

That I may win Him, and be found in Him,
Not having spot of sin, nor guilt, nor stain;
For in the light of Holiness Divine
HE fully satisfied the utmost claim.

And gazing on Him morn, and noon, and night,
Transformed into HIS IMAGE I shall be;
My heart's affections ALL around HIM twined,
His heart of fervent love embracing me.

I look for Thine appearing, O my Lord!
I long to see Thee, and WITH THEE to be;
Till then, may nothing interrupt the flow
Of perfect fellowship, and peace in Thee.

ZIKLAG; OR, GOD'S MERCY IN OUR UNBELIEF.

THERE are perhaps no mercies so sweet as those that come under a deep-felt consciousness of undeservedness. They speak to the heart of the unchanging love of our God, that never alters and never lessens.

David's life was one of manifold experiences, and hence is so deeply instructive. We need many circumstances to develop our Christian life, and to bring us into a real acquaintance with God. When David went out with his sling and stones to meet Goliath, he went strong in the power of his God, and one stone slung in faith laid the giant dead at his feet. The victory was great and immediate. But when one enemy is overthrown another takes his place, and Saul becomes his enemy every day. Goliath had defied the armies of the living God, and David went against him as the defier of Israel; but Saul is God's anointed, and therefore he dare not lift his hand against him. He has now to learn a harder lesson—faith in submission to God in His appointment of Saul as king of Israel.

Saul was to David a very different enemy from Goliath; and the Christian finds the power of the world an easier foe than the power or the will of the flesh, which, till the kingdom come, will have power, and from which we must seek that every-day deliverance which David experienced when pursued by Saul. He seeks him daily, but God delivers daily. Numberless and remarkable were the interventions of God, and bravely did the man of God maintain his course notwithstanding all; and whenever escape seemed hopeless God interfered, and even made his enemy bear witness to his integrity, and predict his ultimate success.

The difficulty is in patient *continuance* under a day

by day antagonism, as we learn from David's history. Worn out by Saul's attempts on his life, in an hour of faintheartedness and feebleness of faith, he forgets the God who had delivered him hitherto; forgets the many promises given to him; forgets his anointing and the power of the Spirit that rested on him; forgets the priest, and the Urim and Thumim. He forgets all. He asks no counsel as heretofore, but says in his heart, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul;" and with this unbelieving foreboding on his mind, he determines to go away a second time into the land of the Philistines, and adds, "So shall I escape out of his hand." It is sad when a child of God so seeks to escape.

Is it not strange that the past experience of going to Achish, king of Gath (as described in 1 Sam. xxi. 10-15), did not deter him from going there a second time? Past troubles in the way of unbelief, are, alas! soon forgotten under present troubles in the way of obedience; and the bitterness of departing from God seems less when faith is less, than the bitterness of following, which would be all joy, were faith in lively exercise. The provings of faith are very precious; for if therein God proves us, and often finds us wanting, we therein prove Him, and ever find Him sufficient. We taste and see that the Lord is good, and find, indeed, that there is no lack to them that fear Him.

In 1 Sam. xxvii. we find David again in Gath; but the man of faith is ill at ease "in the royal city" (v. 5) with the Philistine king, and he receives Ziklag from him, where he remains sixteen months. In the meantime events ripen fast, and at length the Philistines pitch in Aphek to fight with Israel.

Prior to this, however, David invaded the country of the Amalekites, and others of the nations "that were of old the inhabitants of the land," and carried out God's commission to Saul, and slew them all, and "carried away sheep, and oxen, and asses, and camels,

and apparel." This gives occasion to the lie recorded at the end of the chapter, wherein, when questioned as to where he had gone, he said, "Against the south of Judah," &c.

The path of faith needs no lies, but the self-chosen path has to be upheld or maintained by falsehood. Abraham's unbelief led him into Egypt, and then he must needs deny his wife: just as in this case, the conqueror of Goliath of Gath has to come and tell lies to the king of Gath to secure his favour. How soon can "the gold become dim," and "the most fine gold be changed!" These are solemn lessons; but oh, what joy—the God of all grace remains ever the same, ever true, ever faithful!

The world gives not its favour and its protection but for an equivalent, for some "*quid pro quo*," in which the world secures its own advantage, and drives as hard a bargain as it can. And what is the history of Christendom, from the earliest times, but an exhibition of the false position the professing church gets *into, when, forsaking the place of suffering and of faith*, it seeks an alliance with the world, to gain its protection and support, and a city wherein to dwell?

In chapter xxviii. 1, we find Achish calling David, and telling him he is to go to the battle against Israel; for he who had gone "against the south of Judah" (chap. xxvii. 10) on his own account, could not hesitate to join his protector in going against his people. What David's purposes were we know not, but he promises to do all he can for his master, and Achish's words are, "Therefore will I make thee keeper of my head for ever."

Thus also nominal Christianity, by sacrificing every holy principle, and desecrating every divine precept, has been made the keeper of the head of the kings of the earth, and become man's servant instead of remaining God's servant alone. This is the Erastian principle which has brought the church of God down

from its heavenly and its persecuted place, where God was the alone support, the strength and stay, to where the world's power or the world's wealth has been the shrine before which she has practically worshipped. This is more or less true even of those who would disallow any Church and State connection, for church and world often, alas! go hand in hand, where Church and State are separated. Let this be remembered, or some will seek to pull out the beam from another's eye, forgetting the existence of the same beam in their own.

But to proceed: God interferes unasked. He comes to the rescue of His faithless servant, and, by the adverse judgment of the lords of the Philistines, obliges the king of Gath to send David back at once. How gracious the intervention of God! A few days later it might have been too late, for Ziklag had been taken by the Amalekites, and burnt with fire; and the wives, the sons, and the daughters, and all they had, had been taken away three days before. David and his men arrive to find all gone, and they can only lift up their voices and weep, "till they had no more power to weep."

In the bitter anguish of that moment, it is said, "David was greatly distressed, for the people spake of stoning him." There is no Achish to flee to for protection now; all human help fails, and again faith bursts forth triumphant as ever, and finds God unchanged.

We are told "David encouraged himself in the Lord his God." The blessed One whom he had found faithful in so many difficulties he now finds, as ever, a very present help for his faith to lay hold of, and for his helplessness to find shelter in. *He* upbraids not the sorrowing one for his folly in going after Achish, and seeking help from him. He reproves him not for going after the Philistines without seeking counsel of his God. The priest is called once more, the ephod is brought, and again David inquires of the Lord.

Let this feature in God's dealings be well pondered. We need to know and appreciate its value. Our failing, faithless hearts need all the comfort we can get from the revealed character of our Father—our faithful and covenant-keeping God. The backsliding soul needs again and again to be reminded that our God changes not—that His love is to the end; and though the burning of Ziklag be His loving discipline towards us when we need it, still when in our need we call, He hears; and the experience of Psalm cvii. is fulfilled in ourselves. We are "at our wit's end," and then we cry, and He bringeth us out of our distresses.

To find God unchanged is our great joy. In infinite grace He allows David's folly to work out its own punishment; but the moment He is appealed to in faith, and David consults Him, and asks, "Shall I pursue after this troop? shall I overtake them?" He answers, "Pursue; for thou shalt surely overtake them, and without fail recover all." How gracious this answer! He not only was told that he should overtake them, but that he should get back *all* that he had lost.

Ziklag burnt with fire had put David again in his right place—it brought him into contact with the Lord his God *once more*; and David again seems to become a man, and to quit himself as such. He now stands before us once more the man of prayer and the man of power.

David pursues after the Amalekites, crossing the brook Besor. God provides him, in the restored servant of the Amalekites, a guide to where they were, and they are found "spread abroad upon all the earth, eating, and drinking, and dancing because of all the great spoil that they had taken out of the land of the Philistines, and out of the land of Judah." And then we read, "David smote them from the twilight even unto the evening of the next day; and there escaped not a man of them, save four hundred young men, who rode upon camels, and fled. And David recovered all

that the Amalekites had carried away; and David rescued his two wives. And there was nothing lacking to them, neither small nor great, neither sons nor daughters, neither spoil, nor any thing that they had taken to them: David recovered all." (Chap. xxx. 17-19.)

But not only had they recovered all, but God gave them more than He had promised; for they brought back to Ziklag all "the spoil of the enemies of the Lord," and of this spoil did David send a present to all those who had befriended him in times past. Thus, while Saul was in vain seeking help from the God whom he had rejected, and who had rejected him, David was preparing the way for his return to Judah; and God showed David again how He could provide for all his need. Ziklag, which was the witness of David's failure and breakdown in faith, became also the witness to the abiding faithfulness of God, and to the immutability of His purpose.

Who has not Ziklag reminiscences of unfaithfulness, and of unbelieving doubts and fears on our part, and of the riches of that grace in God which never fails?

In conclusion, we might refer for a moment to Psalm xxxiv., written, as it was, just after David's first attempt to find rest in Gath had failed; when they "drove him away, and he departed." He then sang, "I will bless the Lord at all times: His praise shall continually be in my mouth." He had been delivered from "all his fears," and "saved out of all his troubles." He had seen the angel of the Lord encamping around him and delivering him. He could say, "O taste and see that the Lord is good: blessed is the man that trusteth in Him."

Yet, with all these blessed experiences fresh in him, when he returns to the land of Judah we see him forgetting all, and finding his way back again to the Philistines, till his gracious God burnt him out of house and home in the alien land, and sent him back to Hebron.

How often do we find our Ziklags burnt with fire, and our helplessness casting us afresh into the arms of the infinite love of God! and then we are able to thank God and take courage once more, and rise out of our failure wiser and stronger, through that gentleness which is ever leading us on to greatness and lowliness. May the Lord make these remarks helpful to the weak and the failing, so that their hands may be lifted up, and their tottering knees made strong by the hand of the mighty God of Jacob. Amen.

H. G.

“THE STRANGER.”

THE stranger occupies a very marked position in the word of God; let us seek to gather some of the teachings of the Holy Ghost concerning him.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were all strangers in a land not theirs. (Gen. xv. 13.) As soon as Canaan seemed about to become a home, Jacob is sent down into Egypt, and for four hundred years the children of Israel dwell as strangers there. Then they are led forth to forty years of wilderness life, and even when once more within the borders of Canaan they are strangers still. “The land is MINE,” saith the Lord; “for ye are strangers and sojourners with ME.” (Lev. xxv. 23.)

Concerning the Sabbath, there was one law for Israel and for the stranger, that they might be “refreshed.” (Exod. xxiii. 12.) In the feast of ingathering, the stranger was called to share in Israel’s rejoicing. (Deut. xvi. 11, 12.) The cities of refuge were open to him (Num. xxxv. 15), and in no way was he to be oppressed. “Thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers* in the land of Egypt.” (Lev. xix. 34.)

* It is interesting to note that there are two principal words (among several also used) in Hebrew for “stranger.” The one which occurs in all the above passages, and in many others which speak of showing kindness to him, is *gehr*; while

This care for the stranger may be traced throughout the Old Testament Scriptures; and surely it speaks to us of Him, of whom Moses in the law and the prophets did write, who was indeed

“A homeless stranger
In the world His hands had made!”

No room for Him even in the inn—a manger His first resting-place. He came as a stranger, and His home-land was very far off. “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” (John i. 11.)

Why did He stoop so low? Was it not that He might rescue other strangers who were far off by wicked works? That He might bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows? (Isa. liii. 4.) For who can so fully sympathize as He who thus “knows the heart of a stranger?” Was ever lowliness like His? “The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.” (Matt. viii. 20.)

Yes, Jesus was emphatically “THE STRANGER,” in His birth, in His ministry, in His trial before Pilate, when all forsook Him and fled; and, finally, on the cross—“I am become a stranger (*zoor*) unto my brethren, and an alien unto my mother’s children.” (Ps. lxxix. 8.)

And shall Jesus be a stranger, and *we* whom He has redeemed, be at *home* in the world which rejects Him? Shall the servant be above his Lord? Let us not seek to be aught else but strangers and pilgrims here; “for our citizenship is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself.” (Phil. iii. 20, 21.)

zoor is as frequently used to express one with whom Israel was to have no contact, and who was strictly forbidden to come near the tabernacle (Num. i. 51), or to eat the passover. (Exod. xii. 43.) This distinction is of great importance.

Our home is in the "many mansions;" but, alas! our eyes are oftentimes dim; we fail to discern the good land, and then the loneliness of a pilgrim's path is keenly felt. We forget that He "who went in the way before us" to search us out a place to pitch our tents in (Deut. i. 33) is still abiding with us; that He is standing at the door, too often *closed*, and saying, "If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me." (Rev. iii. 20.) None need be lonely with such a guest! He will talk with us until our hearts burn within us, and we are ready to exclaim, "Yea, He is altogether lovely! This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem." (Cant. v. 16.)

If this blessed Stranger dwell with us, our eyes will also be enlightened to acknowledge other strangers, fellow-pilgrims who are dear to Him, and in whose persons we may so minister to Himself that our ears may one day hear the welcome words, "I was a stranger, and ye took me in." (Matt. xxv. 35.) And even now we may seek to earn the commendation addressed to Gaius of old: "Beloved, thou doest faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers. . . . We therefore ought to receive such, that we might be fellowhelpers to the truth." (3 John 5-8.)

And there are other strangers, "aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise" (Eph. ii. 12), still groping in Egyptian darkness, still held in Satan's chains. Shall we not stretch forth our hands unto them? Shall we not tell them of our wondrous Saviour, who, as we have seen, became Himself a stranger that He might bear the punishment of the stranger's sin, and make a new and living way, through the rent veil, by which even the stranger may have access by one Spirit unto the Father? (Eph. ii. 18.)

• Oh that we may enter more and more into the spirit

of Him who "knows the heart of a stranger, and who says, "Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt." (Deut. x. 19.) "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. vi. 11.)

"We are journeying to a country
Of which God Himself hath said,
'I will give it you:' then let us
Simply follow as we're led.

"We are journeying; *we are strangers*,
Passing through; not come to stay:
Let not foreign toys engross us
That we see upon our way.

"We are journeying; Oh, then onward
Not as though we had attained;
But in holiness advancing,
Till our blood-bought home be gained.

"We are journeying; yes, and whither?
To a land that's very dear!
To a land of peace and plenty,
And that may be very near!

"For although before us stretching
Seem a long and dreary road,
Ere we pass another milestone,
We may be at home with God!" *

THE CHURCH'S ETERNAL DISTINCTNESS IN GLORY.

DISPENSATIONS in the dealings of God with men are of two distinct characters, corresponding with His own supreme attributes as the civil and spiritual Ruler of men. Dispensations are therefore civil and spiritual; that is to say, that God has, at different successive periods, governed men on earth on different systems. He has also at sundry times and in divers manners adopted means for the spiritual control of their souls.

* These lines are extracted from *Heart to Heart*. By authoress of *The Old, Old Story*. Published by W. Macintosh.

The *governmental* changes of dispensation have not been always coincident with those of the spiritual order. They relate to earthly and temporal affairs, and are subject to different laws from those which govern the *spiritual* history of the human family.

They must not therefore be confounded one with the other, but kept always distinct. Both may be shown in a tabular form, thus :

GOVERNMENTAL.	SPIRITUAL.
1. THEOCRACY till the fall.	1. INNOCENCE till the fall.
2. ANARCHY till the flood.	2. CONSCIENCE acting in all men until now, but supplemented by revelations to some.
3. HUMAN RULE over men given through Noah. (Gen. ix.)	3. LAW GIVEN to Israel, and indirectly to all who hear it.
4. ISRAEL SUPREME among the nations till her fall, when	4. JESUS COMES to Israel as her Prophet, Priest, and King, and is rejected, and returns to heaven.
5. THE GENTILES COME INTO POWER, and so continue until now. The ruler's position is seen in Nebuchadnezzar, Cyrus, &c.; the saint's relative position in Daniel's.	5. THE CHURCH incorporated. The gospel preached. The Spirit on earth, till the Lord comes.
6. SATAN will be ALLOWED the reins of power, and ANTI-CHRIST set up.	6. THE JEWISH REMNANT testify for Jesus.
7. CHRIST ON THE THRONE 1000 years.	7. LAW ENFORCED; sin at once punished.
8. REBELLION of GOG and MAGOG.	
9. ALL ENEMIES MADE SUBJECT.	

So large a subject can only be imperfectly shown in any simple form, yet the above will serve to point out the differences that mark the two lines of dealing, it *being borne in mind that one system is not necessarily brought to an end by the introduction of another.* For example, magisterial authority once established by God is only *once*, and then for a short time, allowed to give way entirely to the power of darkness. So also conscience, law, and the teaching and substitution of

Christ, are of continual operation and efficacy, though not simultaneously introduced.

At present, our subject being the relations of future and eternal glories to present spiritual dispensations, we have only to consider that line of things, and specially the Church as a distinct form of divine creation for His eternal praise.

The Church was still future at the time of our Lord's life on earth. Before that there had been the isolated ante-diluvian, and post-diluvian saints walking with God, but unconnected by any known tie with one another.

Then came the saints in Israel, related to each other only by earthly and temporal ties, unembodied by any spiritual bond of union, and knowing only their national connection as members of the Israelitish nation.

While this state of things still continued our Lord foretold in prophecy His intention of building His Church—"Upon this rock I will build my Church;" "Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets"—that is, Jesus Christ (for "other foundation can no man lay than that" which they laid by their preaching). It took its rise from the ruins of the fallen nation of Israel, whose guilt was consummated by the crucifixion of its King.

The Church of God—the Body of Christ—now takes on earth the place forfeited by Israel as God's witness among men. Through it only God can be heard to speak, and into its circle all who hear are drawn. So far there is a similarity between the present and the past; but all else is contrast.

The Church is a new creation of divine wisdom, as it is the last and the highest. In the thousand years to come, the failures of the dispensation last past will all be set to rights, and in the presence of the King of Righteousness and Peace, universal sovereignty, her proper destiny, will be given to Israel. But the Church, though not the last chronologically, is morally,

as we have said, last and highest of the dispensational creations of divine wisdom and power.

It has several remarkable peculiarities which distinguish it pre-eminently in the history of the ages.

As to time, it follows hard upon the glorious achievement of which Calvary and Joseph's garden were the scene. The Lord foretold of it, when announcing His intention of constructing it, that "the gates of the grave should not prevail against it." That is to say, that it should triumph over death—an evident hint that its full development, beauty, and glory would only be reached in resurrection. As an earnest and solemn seal to this announcement, He, its Founder and Foundation, and the First-born among the many brethren who shall throng its ranks, has risen already from the grave, to whose power He voluntarily had surrendered; and the first act He performs as risen Man, is to incorporate the Church as His body by the descent, baptism, and indwelling in it of the Holy Ghost—further earnest of the resurrection as its ultimate and proper hope. (Rom. viii.)

This, then, is the first strong distinctive feature, its chronological position. God waits to bring out His perfect design, the "*chef d'œuvre*" of His constructive wisdom, till human crime has outstripped itself in the massacre of His Son in the chosen city of His delight, and at the hands of His ancient and beloved people. He brings it forth in immediate connection with the resurrection of that Son, to show that the final triumph of God over Satan, sin, and death, is to be found not alone in the resurrection of the Son Himself, but in the eternally mysterious and extraordinary union in resurrection life of that risen Son with sinners (even with some of those who joined against Him in His rejection), as partakers also of that same risen life in Him.

Before going further, let me be understood to assert, that life in all dispensations is in the Son of God, only in Him. "In Him was life, and the life

was the light of *men*" in all ages—dimly in some, brightly in this one—and His "flesh He has given for the life of the *world*;" any other theory or doctrine of eternal life is not according to godliness. The peculiarity of the Church is not that its members have life in the Son, but that in that life they have also a mysterious and entirely new position—viz., union with the Son and with each other in Him, as the members and Head of one body.

The next remarkable feature I would notice is the position in the Church of the Holy Ghost. Here also we see what was never before witnessed on earth, and never will be after the Church is removed from it.

He has made it His palace. Not only does He dwell in men's hearts personally; He always dwelt in the hearts of the saints, and always will. There was nothing new in that, nothing to justify the special prophecy—"I will send the Comforter." "If I depart, I will send Him unto you." "Tarry in Jerusalem till ye receive the promise of the Father."

Remember, these were believers born again of water and the Spirit, taught of God to love the Son, each one living in the Spirit and contending with the flesh, as all saints have ever done in the power of the Spirit; and yet they were to wait for the Spirit to descend and abide with them. It was the Holy Ghost finding now for the first time, in a company of saints united to the Son of God in a mysterious identity of being, a suitable abode on earth; yea, an abode as suitable—by His own creative power prepared—as heaven was before (one great purpose of His residence being for conflict against all the powers of evil). Each man was a "new man created in righteousness and true holiness," and the corporation was "Christ." (1 Cor. xiii.) Beautiful palace! holy resting-place on earth for the holy, heavenly Dove!

Another, a third peculiarity must be dwelt on—the materials of its composition.

In this respect it was worthy of the final climax of perfect association. It was not to be composed of one nation only—Israel. Israel had proved herself unworthy. It was not to be composed of Gentiles. They had no better claim. Israel and they had joined to crucify the Son. Such distinctions are at an end. It is universal. All nations alike have part in it. Gentiles are there, and Israel is not excluded. When God means to bring out His greatest work, He returns to the original conception of one great human family, under one great human head. And out of that one great family, from all parts of it alike, He elects members for the glorious corporation, of which He has made the **SECOND MAN**, the Lord from heaven and the grave, the **HEAD**.

Note in passing that it was always foretold to Israel, as a part of her glory (and no small part either), that Gentiles should be saved; in proof of which we need only open anywhere in the books of the prophets. But it was never foretold that saved Gentiles should stand on a level with saved Jews, as they do in the Church. They would be saved as Israel's vassals and subjects, as Israel's dependants and willing servants. Israel should be to them for light, and to her light they would gladly look and come. Israel should be queen, and they should rejoice beneath her sceptre; and all this will yet come to pass. But where is there a hint of this, that Israel's sons should descend from their high place and take with Gentile "dogs" no other place than that of guilt, and then be raised as one with them, to be in union with the Son of God, members together of His flesh and of His bones?

This was not known. This was the precious "mystery" which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit, that the Gentiles should be *fellow-heirs*, and of the *same body*, and partakers of His promise (the indwelling Holy Ghost) in

Christ by the gospel." "A mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God." (Eph. iii. 5-9.)

Therefore it is named, in Eph. ii. 15, the "*one new man*." "*One*," because in it Jews and Gentiles are distinctions known no more. "*New*," because, though the world be old and ready to vanish away, it hath never been heard or thought of until now; and more, because in its inexplicable mystery it will have the feature of eternal novelty to all intelligent search and study. And "*man*," because it is what Israel never was or will be, what no saint before or after can ever expect to be—a *single being*, though composed of many—its life, its head, its unifying and energising will, and heart, and nature, being the risen "*Man*," Christ Jesus.

A fourth feature is not less peculiar: it is a heavenly structure. For this, search and study Ephesians and Colossians. It is heavenly now, how much more hereafter!

Ephesians i. 3 tells us that the members of it have been blessed in "heavenly places in Christ." The end of the same chapter shows us (*vv.* 22, 23) the Church as Christ's body, one with Him in His yet future supremacy over all powers and dominions of this world and that which is to come "in the heavenly places." Chapter ii. 6 reveals that already we are "made to sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." And we might pursue the enumeration further.

But what is this. We are familiar as Old Testament saints, both before and in Israel, were familiar with the idea of heavenly hopes; but here is seen a company who, because their Head is in heaven, are spoken of as already seated there in Him. What a marvel! So one with Him, and so essentially heavenly, is this wondrous corporation that even now it is seen and shown as in heavenly places, while yet its members, many of them, are pilgrims on the earth. Who ever heard or conceived of such an apparent anomaly!

But eternity will unfold it. The Church, as a peculiar thing, will only be understood in heavenly places. There be some, I know, who conceive that this peculiar wonder of divine architecture is only to be seen on earth; that in eternity its distinctiveness will be lost. Those who have followed me hitherto will not concur in this opinion. The Church is a wandering stranger on earth; her home as a corporate thing is heaven. And in heaven, as Eph. i. 19-23 shows us, and not till then, will her glory as the "one new man" be seen; when, as the fulness of the Head to whom every knee shall bow, she shall sit with Him upon His throne; when, the glory which the Father shall give the Son shall be given by Him in Him to her. (John xvii. 22.)

Finally, the Church has been made the receptacle of the full revelation of truth and of God. This seems the highest of all her distinctive features. The Spirit came not only to incorporate and to indwell, but He came also to teach—to teach us ALL THINGS. And now—oh, hold it fast, my brothers!—the true light is come, and "He hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true." (1 John v. 20.) And "the anointing which we have received *abideth* in us, and we need not that any man teach us: but the same anointing teacheth us of all things." (1 John ii. 27.)

What, then, is this? The Lord Jesus has taught us of the Father, and in His words and deeds God is seen. The Spirit has come to expound the texts our Lord Jesus announced. The epistles of the New Testament unfold all truth. "Ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things." And the Church, the body of Christ, is the casket in which the precious treasure is reposed. Through her it must now be communicated to all. A better treasure than all the "oracles" of Old Testament revelation, in the possession of which Israel rightly gloried.

But is this all? Nay; we are taught in John

xvii. 21, 23 what gives this great fact a peculiar significance. The Church, by reason of her oneness with the Son, is brought into a connection with the Father, which is the climax of divine victory and glory—“That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee, that they may be one in us.” “I in them, and Thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” “This is life eternal, in order that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.” (v. 3.)

I can only, in closing, hint at the wondrous truth that in the eternal experiences of heart, soul, affections, mind, and talents, in union with the Son of God, there will be a revelation of God in us that could not be reached or attained by any less intimate or wholly divine bond of fellowship. We in God! God in us! We can only stand upon the margin of the sea, and gaze a moment in wonder, and worshipping, wait for the launching into its depths.

From all this it will be seen what a destiny of eternal distinction awaits the “Church of the living God.” The dispensation which fills so remarkable a position in *time*, will have its corresponding pre-eminence in eternity, according to the principles which, in the last paper on the subject,* we endeavoured to point out.

The measure and character of God’s revelations of Himself, determine the spiritual dispensations; the measure and power of faith, the individual position now and hereafter. This period is, as we have seen, strongly pre-eminent in the brilliancy and profuseness of the revelation; and however the individual apprehension of these great things may be found to vary, the corporate entity, which is its result, will stand out distinct for ever to the glory and praise of God. Therefore we have, in Ephesians iii. 21, after a transcendantly beautiful utterance as to the heart and understanding that befits the Church, the conclusive

* See *The Varied Glories of the Redeemed*, p. 232.

pronouncement upon this question—"Unto Him be glory in the *Church* by Christ Jesus, *unto the ages of the ages.*"

The Church will therefore not only be distinct for ever, but will be, as such, what is said of no other glorified association, unto the glory of God throughout all ages.

God grant us grace to appreciate our solemn position, and rise to the joys, and sympathies, and blessed experiences of thought, of feeling, and of walk which correspond.

G. F. T.

"THE CHARIOT OF FIRE AND HORSES OF FIRE."

THE fellowship of saints with one another here below, and the sweetness of it when it is in the Spirit, was the subject of a previous paper. A word may now be added, on God's gracious and mighty help to survivors, when bereavement has broken that dear and loving companionship.

The godly journey of Elijah's last day of life below is narrated in 2 Kings ii. What child of God would not wish to be able honestly to say about every day's footsteps below, and especially about his last steps on earth, as Elijah could and did—"The Lord hath sent me to" such or such a place? Such were his steps till the whirlwind took him up.

But there was also "the fellowship of saints" in that journey: for Elisha, his manservant (see 2 Kings iii. 11), was of the same godly mind as himself. Three times, Elijah says, "Jehovah hath sent me to" such a place, and three times Elisha answers, "As Jehovah liveth . . . I will not leave thee." This blessed name, *Jehovah*, formed the link between them, a link that bound them in godly union all their time below, and through all the steps they trod.

How like it is to the New Testament word, "Where

two or three are gathered together in *my name!*" This is the only bond of "fellowship of saints" that can bear the strain of all the roughs and trials of the way, which strengthens all who know it in God, and keeps them in loving company with each other to the last.

Mere opinion, pride, or self-seeking could not get in to part these two, whose union was in that gracious and blessed name. Difference of position there might be, and there was: Elijah, the master, and Elisha, the manservant. But this, far from parting them, only brought out the grace of God in each suitably to his relationship to the other. Elijah does not *claim* of Elisha to travel the long distances with him he might naturally have done, but says to him at each stage of the journey, "Elisha, tarry here, I pray thee."

How like to that word of Paul—"And, ye masters, do the same things unto them, . . . knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with Him." (Eph. vi. 9.)

On the other hand, Elisha does not mention the inconsistency there would be in now deserting him, nor even set personal attachment in the foremost place, but "As Jehovah liveth . . . I will not leave thee." How like to that word of Paul to believing servants, "With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men." (Eph. vi. 7.) Not, however, that personal affection was wanting; for Elisha adds, "As thy soul liveth." Service done by the servant "as to the Lord," not only leaves room for natural affection, but even begets it. Such was the fellowship, and such the loving companionship, of these two saints.

But it was now to be broken. Elisha was to be bereaved. But there was no agitation. Tender affection did but deepen to the last. In parting from him, Elijah only wishes the more to aid him, and says, "Ask what I shall do for thee, before I be taken away

from thee." This is used by Elisha, as Solomon used his similar opportunity at Gibeon (1 Kings iii. 9), to obtain only a *spiritual* boon. His request also showed a lowly estimate of himself, as one who knew that he should need more of God's grace and help than even his master had done.

With similar lowliness Elijah casts this "hard thing" asked on God to fulfil, by leaving it dependent on whether God enabled him to see him ascending when the moment of separation came.

How godly is all this! No wonder there was no agitation. But "it came to pass, *as they still went on and talked*, that, behold, there appeared a chariot of fire, and horses of fire, and parted them both asunder; and Elijah went up by a whirlwind into heaven." They talked on in sweetest fellowship to the last. And mark God's kindness to the bereaved survivor in His way of parting them. It was by the chariot and the horses of fire. This glorious object filled the place made vacant at Elisha's side. Hence his joyful word to the ascending one, as he saw him rise, "My father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof." As if he would say, "My father, my father, my prayer for special help is granted: I see thee ascending, and am not left alone: the chariot of Israel, the emblem of Jehovah as 'a man of war,' (Exod. xv. 3) is with me: I have the double portion."

Nor was this glorious symbol of Jehovah's presence and power lacking in his after days of service. On that memorable occasion, when the "horses and chariots and a great host" of the Syrians shut him in at Dothan, he answered the alarm of his servant with, "Fear not; for they that be with us are more than they that be with them," alluding to the mountain "full of horses and chariots of fire round about," which, in answer to Elisha's prayer, God caused the "young man" also to see.

How blessed is this to the bereaved survivor, espe-

cially if he be a labourer in the gospel of God, and in testimony for Jesus. How it reminds us of the assurance, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about *them that fear Him*, and delivereth them;" and still more of the Lord's resurrection word to His *labourers*, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the age."

The glory of Jehovah as "a man of war" thus made *visible* to His lonely servant, may remind us of the special visions of the Lamb, and His glory and power, which were given to John when he was lonely in Patmos for the gospel's sake, to strengthen him as Jesus' servant, and through him also all Jesus' servants, in an evil day of declension in the churches, and abounding iniquity in the world.

From the very outset of his solitary path and service the vision did indeed strengthen Elisha, and others witnessed it. As he returned to feeble Israel the bed of Jordan was dried up before him, though he was now alone, as it had been before him and his master, when they came to it together. An illustration of Isaiah xii. 4—"I am the first, and *with the last*."

All his subsequent ministry was one of power, yet power exercised in grace. And when his days below were about to close, and he "was fallen sick of the sickness whereof he died," this blessed emblem of the chariot, as the characteristic of his life and service in Israel, was so well known, that king Joash comes and weeps over his face, and says, "O my father, my father, the chariot of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!" As if he would say, in his unkinglike feebleness, "We have had the chariot power of Jehovah with us while you have lived, smiting the Syrians with blindness and gaining victories for us, but now we are losing you, and shall lose it also."

But the dying servant of God remembers too well his own mercies, and knows too well the faithfulness of the God of Israel to His people, to think that His battle-power on their behalf would be lost. He bids the feeble

king "take bow and arrows," the weapons used in those days by warriors from their war chariots; then "open the window eastward," the direction of Syria, the direction too of every morning's light, and of all Israel's good things to come; then "shoot," and declares the arrow to be "the arrow of *Jehovah's* deliverance," not Elisha's, "and of deliverance from Syria."

As if the dying one would say to the king, "Why need you lose the battle-power of God with you because I am going? Dry your needless tears; be kingly, take your weapons; fight still the fight, and *Jehovah* will be with you in delivering power, as He was with my master *Elijah*, and has been with me ever since I lost him."

How like this is to Paul's encouragements to youthful Timothy when about to leave him. (See 2 Tim. ii. 1-9, &c.) And how animating for all who feel themselves bereft, or about to be bereft, of those who have been, or still are, leaders in the blessed fight!

But dying Elisha adds yet another lesson; Israel must *still fight*; but *the trust must not be in the weapons used*. Once more he speaks to the king, "Take the arrows; smite upon the ground." A strange command. The last thing an earthly warrior would like to do to his well-sharpened, needle-pointed arrows, Hence the king's striking on the ground but thrice, on which he is told that had he but been willing to blunt them still more, and thus obey God more, and trust his arrows less, his future would have been still more victorious.

One is reminded that the *first* victory of Israel, after their song to *Jehovah* in Exod. xv. 3, as "a man of war," was gained, not so much by Joshua's sword as by Moses' uplifted hands. (See Exod. xvii.) And who does not remember Paul's word, "For the weapons of our warfare are *not carnal*, but mighty *through God* to the pulling down of strongholds?" (2 Cor. x. 4.)

Thus rich are the lessons from scenes of departure

and from dying beds. Surely we who survive should so profit by them as at least not to come behind the dear and honoured ones who have preceded us. The mighty grace and power of our Lord Jesus so wrought at the scene of Stephen's martyrdom, that the young man, Saul, who took part in it, did not forget it in after life; as Paul he drew, from his sinful aiding of the murder, a new and mighty motive for preaching Jesus to his nation. (See Acts xxii. 20.) And if "the blood of martyrs is thus the seed of the Church," should not its times and places of bereavement, and the dying chambers of its honoured ones, help on such as "are alive and remain," to "fight the good fight"?

But the loss to Israel of Elisha yielded them yet another lesson. The spring of the year opened, and the saint lay in his sepulchre, already, may be, too much forgotten. The Moabites "invaded the land at the coming in of the year." Some Israelites "were burying a man," and, forgetful of the chariot-power of Israel's God, they had not the calmness of Elisha at Dothan, but in their timorous haste cast their dead companion into Elisha's sepulchre, a thing they would not ordinarily have done, out of respect to his dear and blessed memory. Fears turn God's people aside from the happy narrow way, as truly as lusts do.

But God, who watches the dust of His sleeping saints, and is ever with *us*, His living and remaining ones, was near at hand to remind them that Elisha's was no ordinary sepulchre to Him, and that "the bones" that lay in it were precious in His sight. No sooner was the dead Israelite let down and touched those bones, than "he revived, and stood up on his feet."

What a reproof this was of their fear of the invading Moabites—mere mortal men—whom they saw approaching! Was not God Himself in their midst, who quickens and raises the dead? They had forgotten it; had been blinded by their unbelieving fears; but

there stood the proof of it before their eyes: their slain companion was alive again, and ready to fill his place in their ranks as before.

They had not asked for "the Lord God of Elijah," as Elisha did in his "time of need;" but the Lord God of both Elijah and Elisha was with them still, and revealed Himself thus in their midst. Yes, the Lord of resurrection was there, as truly as He was at Bethany in "the days of His flesh," to restore Lazarus back to his godly and affectionate sisters; or as He was at Troas, when He gave Eutychus back to the assembled saints.

Surely, then, they need fear no Moabites. True, they might, like Paul amongst the Diana craftsmen at Ephesus, be "pressed out of measure, insomuch as to despair even of life;" but they could afford to have "the sentence of death" in themselves, that they should not trust in themselves, but in God which raiseth the dead. (2 Cor. i. 9.) Or if this precious knowledge of a resurrection God and Lord be more than they could have learnt when the Holy Ghost had not yet come, surely these "things written aforetime were written for our learning," and may be used by us to stir us, bereaved ones though we be, to fight still "the good fight," and also to fight it not with carnal but with spiritual weapons. Let us remember that in that fight "he who loses his life finds it;" while he who basely turns his back on the foe, and "finds his life" by deserting the Lord Jesus as his Captain and his Standard, shows he never truly knew the Lord, and loses life eternal.

Much in sorrow, oft in woe,
 Onward! Christians, onward go;
 Fight the fight, though worn with strife,
 Battle on to life.
 Onward! Christians, onward go;
 Join the war, and face the foe;
 Faint not, little doth remain
 Of the drear campaign.

Fight the glorious fight of faith ;
 Fear not conflict, fear not death,
 Conflict!—that but nerves to strife ;
 Death!—to endless life !
 Onward ! Christians, onward go ;
 Scorning danger, shame, and woe ;
 Tread the path that they have trod
 Who are now with God.

H. D.

THE DEMONSTRATION OF THE SPIRIT.

THE love of God disclosed in the gospel passes knowledge; and yet the tale of it is told without glowing expressions to give it effect without the help of language or description, to commend it to the heart.

This is a wondrous thing. Attempts are not made in Scripture to carry the sense of this love to the soul of a sinner except by the simple disclosure of it. It is told, but told artlessly. This is the *general* way and style of the book of God.

This also was the way of Christ in the day of His ministry on earth. He never used man's wisdom of words. His way or His style was not that of a glowing eloquent declaration of His love, or of ardour, either in manner or word, to enforce on the disciples the conviction of His affection. There was, however, ample material for the heart to assure itself of this precious truth. All His ways, in life and death, passed in calmness, formed a material which one who could appreciate it, and who understood its meaning, would have used for the demonstration of a love which thoroughly passed all knowledge.

Let me just refer to such a chapter as Exodus xxviii. There we have detailed to us the clothing of the high priest, the typical Christ or Son of God, serving us in the sanctuary. These garments were "for glory and beauty." Let one who understands their meaning come and inspect them, and he will find that he has a subject before him, a material there, which may well

fill his soul with the sense of a love that passes knowledge. And yet in the chapter there is no effort to produce that effect. None whatever. The dress of Aaron is simply hung out before our eye, as it were, and there is no description accompanying it which labours to attract attention or to command the heart.

Wondrous way of the God of all grace and all perfections! And this way of the sanctuary of old was the way of Christ in the day of His ministry.

It is the office of the Holy Ghost to interpret all this mysterious love. It is for Him to take Jesus, and to show Him unto us. Christ made no effort to persuade us of His love. That was not His way. The Lord of the old sanctuary made no such effort. Each detail passed before the eye of faith calmly and, as it were, silently; but the Spirit has material abundant to interpret to us the unfathomable love of God.

In the accomplishment of the great mystery of our redemption, there is the covenant place of the Holy Ghost disclosed, as in the name of God—"Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." The Holy Ghost, the Spirit of Truth, the Unction from the Holy One, serves the ends of the covenant by making effectual to the elect, still hidden in this naughty world, the gospel of the grace of God, and then by dwelling in the saint, and in the church, for various precious and wondrous graces, secured in Christ to them.

The Lord in His ministry honoured the promised and coming ministry of the Spirit, as we have reason so well to know. He told His disciples that there was One, even the Comforter, who would instruct them in a far deeper way than He Himself was then doing. The Comforter would bring to remembrance what He was then but saying to them, would *teach* them what He was then but speaking, would *guide* them into truth, *taking* and showing His things to them, and effectually making good to their souls His words, dealing with heart, and conscience, and understanding in living

power, and not with the ear only. (See John xiv. 25, 26; xvi. 7-15.)

This was a change and an advance, and very precious this is; and each saint now is to be the happy, conscious witness of this other and needful Teacher.

The things about Jesus, the things which He spake and did, are written in the book. We may read them there, and even learn them from thence. But if what we know, we know *only* from reading or learning it from the book, it is but as the letter of the word to the disciples. But the Spirit is a living Spirit. He *takes* and *shows*. The book could not do that. The book supplies the lesson, but the Spirit takes and shows it. That is the way of a living Teacher. His living energies accompany the lesson to the heart, and bear it out in the lips or confession of the saint. Ere they reach the lips of the saint, as I have just observed, the living Spirit, the Holy Ghost, the Unction from the Holy One, has accompanied them. He has taken them first as into His own hand, and then shown them to us.

What, I ask, is such a process? With what living power the things of Christ must reach the saint when we think of all this! The Spirit of Truth takes them and shows them! They do not reach us *merely* from the book, but are borne to the heart, conscience, and understanding by the Unction.

To be *spiritual* is not merely to *know* the lesson, as the book would enable us to know it, but to know it in such wise, as will evidence this taking and showing the Spirit of Truth. The more our knowledge is clothed with the characters or expressions of this living process, under the power of the Comforter, the more really, graciously spiritual are we. When the things of Christ are dealt with by our souls as they would be dealt with by the Spirit of Truth—the Unction from the Holy One, then are we “*spiritually-minded*,” which to be, is “*life and peace*.”

SINGLENESSE OF HEART AND EYE.

WE see singleness of eye in perfection only in the Lord Jesus. He was at all times full of light, having no part dark. He did always those things that pleased His Father. Self-will never had a place in His heart; it was His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him. He knew no sin. Rebellion could not enter His mind. He never "turned away back." He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheek to them that plucked off the hair; He hid not His face from shame and spitting. (Isa. l.)

The one object that pervaded the soul of Jesus was the Father's glory. He was emphatically Jehovah's "Righteous Servant," the "Faithful Witness," the "Beloved Son," in whom the Father was well pleased. We never find that Christ was occupied in seeking anything for Himself. When His soul was sorely troubled His one desire was, "Father, glorify thy name" (John x. 11), and when the bitterest of all sorrows was in immediate prospect, and the cup of unutterable anguish before Him, still it was, "Not my will, but thine, be done;" "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (Luke xxii. 42; John xviii. 11); and surely He has left us an example that we should tread in His steps.

Let us seek to occupy ourselves with Christ; to sit at His feet, and hear His words, and drink into the fulness of His love. It is only as we are filled with Him that we shall be able to give up self, and its idols; and the more we are filled with Him, and His grace and truth, the more readily and thoroughly can we yield up all that He condemns.

It is only as led by the "God of all grace" that we can really go *down*, really be *nothing*, or really admit *all* His rebukes, and see the hollowness of *all* which

His grace has not given. Christ enters, and all that cannot live in His company goes out; slowly it may be—unwilling to yield possession—but the inflowing of blessing through the knowledge and power of Christ must *cleanse* the heart while filling it.

There is nothing really spiritual apart from God. Those who do not abide in Christ do not bring forth fruit. The very life and power of our souls flows from enjoying the fulness which the Father has given us in Christ.

If we are found living as separated unto God by the blood and righteousness of His Son, we shall have an impenetrable shield round about us. When we are thus dwelling in God we find we have something better than the world, and desire to be God's witnesses in separation from it rather than to have the best associations with it. When the warming beams of the Sun of Righteousness, the fertilizing showers of divine grace, and the tender, culturing hand of the heavenly Husbandman are upon us, our souls prosper, and we are ready to cry out, "Let my Beloved come into His garden, and eat His pleasant fruits."

There is no bondage in this; it is the happy liberty which is produced by the Spirit of God. When thus walking in the enjoyment of the love of Christ we are glad in the Lord, humbled under a sense of the exceeding riches of His grace, melted with an increased feeling of utter unworthiness, and constrained to live only to Him who died for us, and rose again. A true spirit of worship takes possession of the heart, and a song of gratitude is the instinctive fruit of the lips; the inner man becomes strengthened in the grace of Christ Jesus; the world is only known as a Christ-rejecting territory, lying in the wicked one; sin is felt to be exceedingly sinful; the flesh is known as crucified with Christ, and the saints as raised up and seated in heavenly places in Him.

The precepts of the word of God are verily suitable

and congenial to heaven-bound pilgrims, and His commandments will not be found grievous. As the Lord Himself fills the eye and heart, His divine characteristics will shine forth in our walk and conduct, and we shall become increasingly conformed to His blessed image; and thus the hidden, crafty, dishonest workings of the flesh, though often detected, will not be tolerated.

The psalmist desired "one thing of the Lord," and "that," said he, "will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to enquire in His temple." This is truly blessed; the breathing of the Holy Spirit in the soul, which had its full utterance in the heart of Jesus. It is written for our learning, and we may well ponder the lesson.

And, beloved in the Lord, do not our souls sympathize with the desire for this "one thing," this thirst for fellowship and joy in the Lord? Surely "the beauty of the Lord" is above all created excellence, whether visible or invisible. It is both unchangeable and eternal, and the soul anticipates no higher delight than seeing "Him as He is." It is the consummation of the saint's desire, and also of the desire of Christ concerning us: "Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory." (John xvii. 24.)

The fervent utterance of the heart of Paul was, "that I may know Him;" and those who have beheld "the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ," who know a little of the price He paid to save their souls, and win them for Himself, and have proved the vanity of the world and themselves, find that the one object of their desire and affection is CHRIST HIMSELF. They search the sacred oracles, and thirst for closer, happier, deeper fellowship with Him of whom they testify. This "one thing" they seek after; they are never weary of considering "the beauty of the Lord;" they

never aspire to a higher position than that of enquirers and learners at His feet.

The more we learn of Jesus the more earnestly we "follow on" to know Him. We find increasingly that His flesh is bread to strengthen, and His blood wine to cheer; and He alone can give the oil that makes our face to shine. (Psalm civ. 15.)

A THOUGHT ON JOHN II.

THE position of the miracle at the opening of John ii. is instructive in more ways than one. John i. and ii. are, properly speaking, one single piece; and the second chapter ought to end at v. 22. Then the entire piece presents us with a full view of the path or passage of the Son of God through time. The entire section may be arranged into seven parts. Each of the first four parts closes with something about John the Baptist.

The *first* part is contained in the first seven verses of John i. Its subject is the eternal Son of God, the divine light shining out from God. The first verse treats of His Godhead; the second verse of His Christhead. And His Godhead is seen to be the substratum of His Christhead. In those opening verses perfect stillness reigns; for they treat of a period anterior to all creaturehood. Then follows a glance at His work in creation, and next of His being the light of men. John was a witness of that light. How good of God to vouchsafe a witness to Christ! which witness itself, however, assumes man's gross darkness. We need no witness that the sun shines.

Then part *two* reaches to v. 15, and treats of the arrival of the Son of God in the world and in flesh. In v. 9 He is seen to be coming; in v. 10 He is seen to have arrived. In vv. 11 and 12 we have His reception. His dignity and greatness are rather assumed and asserted than demonstrated here. But in v. 12 He is seen to be so great as not only to be Son of God Him-

self, but able, by associating us with Himself, to make us who believe in Him sons too. And having thus far advanced on the road towards reaching us, seeing that dwelling in the flesh He has pitched His tent and shechinaed among us, thence in all directions does His glory beam forth, so that those that have eyes to see behold who He is, by seeing the fulness of grace and truth in Him. Hence John's earnestness in calling attention to Him in *v.* 15, and in distinguishing so strikingly between himself and his Lord, in that he *became* (*γενωεν*), or was *made*, but that Christ *was* (*ην*), ever *was*. Throughout this chapter, as also in chap. viii., a contrast is maintained between every thing else that was *made* (*γενεσθαι*) and Him who, even in the beginning, *was*.

Next, the *third* part shows us the greatness of the grace which the Son of God brings. And as to us, whatever grace we have received, it is grace in the stream corresponding in width and depth to grace in the fountain. Whatever of mercy, of love, of goodness there is in God, all has been brought down to us by Christ. Thus, Christ has told out God. (*v.* 18.) But, alas! it might seem from *vv.* 19–28, that men by nature would prefer John the Baptist to Christ—the servant to the Master. But indeed, sad to say, thus with religious flesh it has ever been!

But now, in part *four*, we have the full introduction of the Lord Jesus. In this part He has fully reached us. It is no more here Christ in the flesh among us, but He is as God's Lamb presented to the admiring view of sinners. Thus it is, and thus only it is, that God in very truth draws any one to His Son. Souls are drawn in truth to Christ only by their need, and that need is the burden of their sin. But Christ can lift it off us, and take it quite away. Then, when once He has done this, He gives the Holy Ghost. (*v.* 33.) What a perfect Saviour! Well may John say, as he does in *v.* 34, I have seen, and I have borne wit-

ness, that then you have God's eternal Son. Language tantamount to declaring, 'My work now is done. And if that lovely and attractive sight of Him draws you not to Him, I can add no more to my testimony.'

Then parts *five* and *six* of this same section most appropriately represent sinners beginning to cluster round Him. In part *five* (vv. 35-43) we have the picture of some coming to Him; and in part *six* (vv. 44-51) we have Him on the look-out, and seeking sinners. For it could, I think, be proved, that Nathanael under the fig-tree had been confessing sin; for this is the only way in which it is possible for any of us to be without guile. And the Lord in His word to Nathanael (*i.e.* Bartholomew) certainly alludes to Ps. xxxii. But it should be noticed, that in each of these two parts, in which sinners are seen clustering round the Lord, when they have found Him, one brings another. And also that, after they have once beheld Him as the Lamb of God taking away their sin, they still again and again behold Him, after they have had their sin forgiven; and after they have received the Holy Ghost, still gaze on Him as the Lamb of God. Hence, the repetition of the injunction, "Behold the Lamb of God," without the words about the sin.

Thus the first four parts of this section exhibit the Lord in His goings forth from everlasting, until He has quite reached down unto our true state, and misery, and need. Then, parts five and six reveal Him in His grace as at present acting towards us, attracting our hearts to Himself.

Then the *seventh* part, beginning at v. 51, exhibits Him, our Lord, in the future, and so on and on to the end of this section at chap. ii. 22. Verse 52 of chap. i. is clearly a millennial scene, and introductory to what follows. The marriage scene and also the raising up of His body (the mystical body in the future like the raising of the literal body in the past) is by the Holy Ghost connected with the well-known word of

“the third day.” After which follows the purging of His temple, when He has “come down” to Capernaum. On these matters I refrain from enlarging, each and all of them having a future aspect, and revealing in type what yet He will do when the second thousandth year from the cross is completed.

There is only one single feature in the account of the marriage scene to which I would call attention. It is one on which much stress is laid by the inspired writer. For after he has told us of the turning of the water into wine, he adds these words, “This *beginning* of signs (*σημεια*) did Jesus.” As if to say, This was His first. What, had He been received, would have been His next, and His third? And what would He have gone on to? And where would He, or could He, have stopped? Never until His fulness was exhausted, and He had no more from Himself and from His riches to bring forth—never!

Here remark a way, a perfect way, of the Lord. All His ways are perfect. So is His way here. Miracles of wrath and judgment, where their voice is not listened to, proceed, as in Exodus, and again in the Revelation, from great to greater, until the wrath and the judgment have dealt with every thing thoroughly. But, on the other hand, miracles of grace, where their voice is not listened to, proceed from greater to less. Thus, for instance, He fed first five thousand with five loaves, and subsequently four thousand with seven loaves.

So in Mark viii., when He would heal a blind man at Bethsaida, where He had lived and done many miracles, He took that blind man out of the town, and He healed him, as if with more toil, in two stages, and not in one. So in the book of Judges, each succeeding deliverer is raised up with increasing reserve. Now some do receive Him as their Lord, and believe in Him as God’s Son. Then in their case He will go on with His mercy and grace and love, displaying His glory

more and more. And even as the one display of Himself succeeds another, will He more and more cause us to exclaim, "Thou hast kept the good wine until now." Yes, it is His way with us to keep His best till the last. For He loves to surprise us with His grace. This is God's way in our souls, and in His word, and in all dispensations. Thus would He make us to grow in the knowledge of Him and of His love. Thus will He overwhelm us with adoring admiration, and fill our hearts with joy, that we may duly worship Him.

This sign of turning the water into wine is significantly placed in the gospel of John; that is to say, in the picture of Christ as Son of God. It is placed so as to suggest what He will do in the future when the time of the marriage of the Lamb has fully come, and when His wife hath made herself ready. Above all, it is placed in the front, and not in the rear of this gospel. It is placed at the outset on purpose to show us how much MORE He could have gone on to had it so pleased Him. He could summon Lazarus from the grave; so could He have summoned millions. He that could do the one could do the other. He again that could despoil death, could heal disease, could remove sorrow, and sickness, and crying. And as these displays of His power have somewhat of a negative aspect, He could have gone on bringing out His joy, heavenly joy, in a world of wretchedness and woe. But they would not have Him, and so they crucified Him. Yet there we learn the preciousness and fulness of Him that was slain. If it was He in whom all this fulness was that was thus slain, no wonder that His death is so costly, and His blood so precious. Drawn to Him hereby, we gladly receive, yea, have received Him. And now, therefore, He is going on to tell us by His Spirit of His love and of His Father's love until the time for the display of His glory has arrived. Then, in the ages which are coming on, God will show out the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards

us through Christ Jesus. And then will the Lord, when we have been brought to our wit's end, come forth Himself, and fill us with Himself and with His joy for ever.

W. LINCOLN.

DISPENSATIONS; PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.*

VARIOUS have been the dispensations of God in dealing with His rebel creature man, each developing some fresh revelation alike of God and of man—of God's greatness, righteousness, and tender mercy; of man's evil, corruption, and sin.

In Adam we see the world, under his headship and without a covenant of grace, winding up its corrupt and corrupting course in the terrible judgment of the flood, wherein none were saved but Noah and his house, because he had found grace in the eyes of the Lord. From this we learn that divine righteousness, apart from covenant, must end in universal destruction. (Compare Genesis vi. with Psalm liii.)

With Noah, as he came out of the ark, commenced a new dispensation, the primary feature of which was that God made a covenant with the earth in Noah—himself a type of the Man of rest who should come, the true Noah, to give rest, because of the curse which sin had brought. The covenant depended on the *rest-giving* savour that came from Noah's sacrifice. God needed to find rest ere He could give it to man; and His resting-place and ours is found in Christ only.

But while Noah showed us the type of rest found in covenant both as regards God and man, he fails dispensationally, and the earth goes farther and farther into apostacy. Ham occupies the place of Cain, and to the corruption of the ante-diluvian age is super-

* The writer does not wish to maintain the identity of Old and New Testament saints, but desires to show wherein they agree in essential characteristics.—ED.

added the idolatry of the post-diluvian; and Nimrod, the mighty hunter in the Hamite line, builds Babylon, a name full of dispensational mystery and teaching.

In the plains of Shinar men sought for themselves a city, a tower, and a name. The result we know: God broke the pride of their unity, and they were divided into nations, peoples, and languages. Having thus separated man from man that henceforth their unity in rebellion might be broken, God in due time separates Abraham from the nations, and in him introduces the principle of divine sovereignty and grace. Thus, while Noah was the type of a universal head, Abraham became the type of an elective head within the limitations of a narrower sphere of covenant and blessing.

It was in Eber's time that the confusion of tongues took place, and, as if to connect the call of Abraham with it, though years after in point of time, Abraham is called "the Hebrew," or more properly "the Eberite."*

The covenant made with Abraham calls for particular consideration, for out of it are developed the Jewish dispensation of the past, the Christian dispensation of the present, and the millennial dispensation of the future.

These dispensations are so different in character one from another, and so diverse in results, that it is not easy at first sight to connect and to disconnect them aright. We are in danger on the one hand of confounding them together, on the other of putting them into antagonism. What we want to ascertain is their harmony as parts of one whole, wherein God has been teaching us correlative truths. Symbols may pass; dispensations may change; but that of which they

* The word עֵבֶר rendered *Hebrew*, is a patronymic from עֵבֶר, *Eber*, perhaps so called from his father having crossed the river and separated himself from the growing apostacy in the land of Shinar.

speak remains; and, therefore, the Bible is one complete revelation from God, in divers parts.

Prophecy frequently has an immediate and partial fulfilment in something near and proximate, but it has its full and absolute fulfilment in something remote and final. This principle solves many difficulties in prophetic diction, and prevents an ignorant hypercriticism from charging God foolishly, and making the statements of "the Scriptures of truth" untrue or unreal. The sceptical mind of man is never satisfied; to some the proximate fulfilment seems so lifelike that the prophecy is reduced to a mere historical record; and to some, the unfulfilled future not being seen, the whole is styled hyperbolical or mythical.

As we have noticed, Abraham comes in as a new head involving a new relation, and that the relation of *faith*; for Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness." This forms the very basis of the covenant that God made with him and in him; and the dispensations resulting from it are dispensations of faith.

The Jew in the land only held his temporal blessing as he believed what God had said, and acted on it in his temporal sphere; the Church holds her spiritual blessings in faith and in obedience in her heavenly sphere; and the millennial nations will, in the blended harmony of the temporal and the spiritual, do the same. This will be pointed out when we come to consider these three dispensations separately. We must now direct our attention to

THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT.

God's promise to Abraham, we first read in Genesis xii. in the following words: "I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: and I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

This promise is again confirmed in chapter xxii., after Abraham offered up his son, when God says, "By myself have I sworn, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son: that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is on the sea shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed; because thou hast obeyed my voice."

Between the giving of the promise and its reiteration with an oath, Abram, "the high father," had become Abraham, "the father of a multitude of nations." The first name, implying a place of lonely and personal exaltation, had given place to another of headship and fatherhood in blessing over multitudes of peoples and nations and tongues. When God made the covenant with Abraham, He caused "a deep sleep to fall on him," and brought upon him "the horror of a great darkness" (Gen. xv.); and afterwards added the rite of circumcision. In all this Abraham stands, like Adam, "the figure of Him who was to come."

We thus find the promise previously given, ratified by oath, by covenant, and by blood; and of this Paul writes: "When God made promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no greater, He swore by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee. . . . Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath; that by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us."

The mighty promise and covenant thus confirmed divides itself into

- (1.) Personal blessings to Abraham and the Seed
- (2.) National blessing to Israel, the great nation.

(3.) Universal blessing to the nations of the earth.

(4.) The subjugation of all enemies.

1st. Personal blessings to Abraham and the Seed.

Here let us contemplate what God has accomplished in Christ, the true Seed; for, says Paul, "He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Thus Abraham and his Seed alike find their antitype in the Lord Jesus, just as He is at once the root and the offspring of David. As the true Abraham, He is "the Father of the everlasting age" (Isa. ix. 6), and as the true Seed He is "the Prince of Peace."

All glories and all apparent impossibilities find their harmony in the person of the only begotten, alike Son of God and Son of man. All blessing finds its centre, and all fulness finds its dwelling-place, in Him. Of this we shall have to speak more at large when we consider the dispensation of the Church, "which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all."

2nd. National blessings to Israel, the great nation.

These were given apart from law. The gifts and callings of God are without repentance, and therefore no failure under law can set aside what was promised unconditionally to the Seed. Thus the promises made to Israel are as much promises made in Christ as are those heavenly promises which have become the special possession of the Church of the First-born; and being equally made in Christ, are equally sure and certain, let what will come between, whether on God's part or on man's.

3rd. Blessings to the nations of the earth.

The promises of universal blessing are also equally secured; not the blessing of an elect few, as now and heretofore, but of the nations themselves as such—saved nations who shall hereafter walk in the light of the New Jerusalem. This likewise forms a part of the Abrahamic covenant, and till this is realized, the yea and the Amen of the promises of God in Christ await

their accomplishment. Of this, as well as of Israel and the Church's blessing, we shall speak each in their individual sphere, when we contemplate the dispensation of the millennial and post-millennial ages.

4th. *The subjugation of all enemies*, as in Gen. xxii. 17, where God says, "Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies."

This dark side of God's glorious prophetic declarations is never lost sight of. We see it illustrated in the destruction of Pharaoh and his host, of the ten Canaanitish nations, in the deaths of Haman and of Judas, and in the destruction hereafter of the beast and his ten kings and their armies; and we see its ultimate result in the lake of fire. This is an aspect of the severity of God that man is ever in danger of losing sight of; but God has linked it with His eternal covenant made to Abraham and confirmed to David.

The epistles to the Romans and Galatians throw great light on the covenant and promises to Abraham; and in the light of the New Testament we see how much is included in that covenant, and how Abraham stands typically the new head of the human family through faith.

In Romans iv. he is spoken of as "the heir of the world," the receiver of Adam's lost inheritance, and as such the "father of all them that believe." *Faith* links to Abraham as *blood* links to Adam. It takes the place of natural consanguinity under the Adam headship.

With this covenant is connected the imputation of righteousness, thereby giving to those under it the position and standing before God of an indefeasible title. (Rom. iv. 11.) This the apostle says was included in the words of the promise, "In thee shall all nations be blessed." In fact we may safely say that the whole of the gospel was hidden in the covenant and promise made to Abraham; for the seed therein alluded to referred not to the many, but to the one Seed, to whom

all the promises were made (Gal. iii. 16), and in whom they are "yea and Amen."

Out of this covenant the great mystery of the Church is developed, not as something foreign or alien to it, but as the divinely-appointed climax of glory that lay hidden underneath it, wherein those mighty promises were to find their fulfilment, whether in the heavens, as seen in the stars of heaven, or on the earth, represented by the sand on the sea shore. Abraham read underneath the promises that seemed to speak of earth exclusively, the promise of the "better country, that is, an heavenly." He knew that God had "prepared for him a city," and "looked for the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." (Heb. xi.)

Further, in speaking of this covenant, Paul says that it "was confirmed before of God unto (*eis*) Christ," and as the result he adds, "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into (*eis* as in *v.* 17) Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one (*eis* one person, incorporated into the same body) in Christ Jesus. And if ye are Christ's, then are ye (the Gentile Galatians) Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." (Gal. iii. 26-29.)

Thus the Abrahamic promise reaches to the incorporation of the Church in Christ; and not only so, but the same chapter shows the promise of the Holy Ghost as given at Pentecost to be an integral part of the same covenant blessing; for Christ was "made a curse for us," "that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles in (*ev*) Jesus Christ, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." (*vv.* 13, 14.)

Having thus far seen the connection subsisting between Abraham and the churches of Rome and Galatia, let us turn to the epistle to the Ephesians.

This epistle opens with the ultimate purpose in the fulness of time to bring together under one head all

things in Christ, "both which are in heaven and which are on earth: even in Him" (chap. i. 10); and as a part of this purpose He is "given to be the head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fulness (*το πληρωμα* the full complement) of Him that filleth all in all." This body is the *one person* spoken of in Gal. iii., the "one new man" that the cross produced, wherein, to use another figure, the Gentiles were no longer strangers and foreigners, but "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God." "For," says the apostle, "He is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition, having abolished in His flesh the enmity, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, that He might create the two *in* Himself into (*εις*) one new man, so making peace." This is "the mystery of Christ," the hidden mystery lying concealed in the covenant of Abraham, though in other ages not made known, as it is now made known, unto His holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit."

And what is the mystery? "That the Gentiles are *joint-heirs* (*συγγληρονομα*), a *joint body* (*συσσωμα*), and *joint-partakers* (*συμμετοχα*) of the promise of Christ by the gospel." Notice all through this description the thrice-repeated preposition *συν*, "with," implying an inheritance and a body already existent as that with which the Gentiles were to be united.

This continuity Paul further illustrates in Gal. iv., where, after speaking of believers in Christ as heirs, He continues, "Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all. . . . Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world." Consequently he ends his recital of the faith of the Old Testament saints in Heb. xi. with these words, "These all, being borne witness to by faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

“But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under law, to redeem them that were under law, that we (Jew and Gentile alike) might receive the adoption of sons.” And the Good Shepherd Himself, when speaking in John x. of the Jewish saints, says, “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also must I bring, that there may be one flock and one Shepherd.”

The mystery of the Messiah, the Christ, the Anointed One is, that the seed to whom all the promises were made is a corporate body, composed of those who walk in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham; and the covenant to Abraham will not have its consummation till the new heavens and the new earth appear, wherein dwelleth righteousness, when every family in heaven and in earth, who are each and all named of Christ, shall stand in their respective spheres around Him, the head and centre of all, who shall gather all around Himself.

Having considered the promises made to Abraham, and noticed their ultimate realization in the future, we must consider separately the Jewish and the Christian dispensations which lie between the promises and their fulfilment, and show the essential differences between them.

(To be continued.)

H. G.

THE PRIEST'S PORTION.

“The priests the Levites, and all the tribe of Levi, shall have no part nor inheritance with Israel: they shall eat the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and His inheritance. Therefore shall they have no inheritance among their brethren: the Lord is their inheritance, as He hath said unto them.”—DEUT. xviii. 1, 2.

Who can measure the lengths and breadths, the heights and depths, of the blessings which flow to us through the precious sacrifice of Christ!

In Him “we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins.” Through that blood we have boldness “to enter into the holiest,” even the

very presence of our God. Through that blood we are sanctified and ordained to be a peculiar people—a peculiar treasure—unto the Lord Himself. And through that blood we are constituted priests, yea more, consecrated and set apart as “a royal priesthood,” and called even now to enjoy the privileges and blessings which flow from this glorious and lofty calling.

Under the law of Moses, only the priests might draw nigh to God; and this is now one of *our* special blessings. We are “no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God;” for “through Him (Christ) we have access by one Spirit unto the Father.” This is no small matter; for “glory and honour are in His presence, strength and gladness are in His place.” “Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house; they will be still praising Thee.”

The office of the priests was to offer all the offerings of the Lord, to burn sweet incense before Him night and morning, to cause the lamps to burn continually, to set the shewbread in order upon the pure table, to *pour out the strong wine before the Lord, and to offer the bread of their God—the food of the offering made by fire for a sweet savour—and to stand continually before the Lord to minister unto Him: and very blessedly the Lord adds, “And ye shall serve; I have given your priest’s office unto you as a service of gift.”*

So now, as the holy priesthood of our God, it is our blessed privilege to serve Him; “to offer up spiritual sacrifices;” to “enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise;” to pray “always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit;” in everything by prayer and supplication to make known our requests unto Him; “to do good and to communicate, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased;” and, above all, to yield *ourselves* unto Him, to present our bodies “a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable” unto Him.

How wonderful that He can be delighted with creatures such as we are! How wonderful that He can

accept and rejoice over our worship and service, and speak of it as an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable, well-pleasing unto Him! Yet so it is, because of the infinite value of that precious blood, which has redeemed and made us priests.

No part nor inheritance was permitted the priests among their brethren; the Lord Himself was their part and their inheritance. And so with us, Christ Himself is our inheritance, and all He has is ours. We must not seek our portion here. We are a heavenly people, and blessed with all spiritual blessings; and He has commanded us to come out and be separate, to touch no unclean thing, to be holy even as He is holy, to set our affections on things above, and lay up all our treasures there.

But if the priests were thus set apart for God, and called to be occupied continually in His holy and blessed service, how wonderful is the provision He made for their personal need. He made them joint participators with Himself, and fed them from off His own altar with the most holy things, reserved from the fire expressly for them. He called them into His sanctuary, and bid them eat before Him in the holy place.

Part of the meat-offering was burnt upon the altar, and the remainder was eaten by the priests in the holy place. (Lev. vi. 14-18.) The fat of most of the smaller sin and trespass-offerings was burnt upon the altar, and all the flesh was given to the priests to be eaten in the holy place. (Lev. vi. 25-30; vii. 1-7.)

How blessedly true is this of us! If we draw near to our God, and seek to abide in His presence, He feeds us with His own food, even Christ: not only Christ as our Saviour, but He also unfolds His varied glories and beauties to us. He leads us into fellowship with Himself, and enables us to enter into and delight in His thoughts about His beloved Son.

He shows Him to us as the fine flour, perfect and even in all His ways; opens out His perfections, as tested in

the oven of suffering and the furnace of trial, and bids us feast with Him upon this rich and heavenly food. Yea more, He tells us of His grief and pain, His agony and bloody sweat, the torture of His holy soul when bearing all our sins, and bids us rest awhile, and eat this holy food.

It is *most holy*; so holy that it cannot be eaten at a distance from the Lord. If any of the flesh of the sin-offering was left, it was to be burnt with fire; it must not be carried forth from the holy place; it might not be fed upon by any but the priests. All the sons of Aaron might eat it, provided they were clean, and fulfilling their office of ministering in the holy place. So now we must draw nigh to Him, and sit down and rest in His presence, if we would feed upon this holy and blessed food.

The right shoulder and breast of every peace-offering was also given to the priests (Lev. vii. 29-36); and surely when they had been feasting upon such rich and satisfying food, they would have no appetite or desire for aught besides. And when *we* in any measure enter into the affections (the breast) and strength (the shoulder) of Christ, embrace them as our own, and delight in them as the portion given to us by our God and Father, the world must lose its power to attract or charm, and our satisfied and rejoicing souls are constrained to pour themselves out in adoring gratitude and praise.

In Numbers xviii. 9, 10, we read: "This shall be thine of the most holy things, reserved from the fire: every oblation of theirs, every meat-offering of theirs, and every sin-offering of theirs, and every trespass-offering of theirs, which they shall render unto me, shall be most holy for thee and for thy sons. In the most holy place shalt thou eat it; every male shall eat it; it shall be holy unto thee;"—and then follows a long list of still further provision for them. (See Num. xviii. 11-20.)

“All the best of the oil” was theirs: and surely no natural power, or ability, or eloquence, can equal the unction of the Holy One which is given to us, to enable us to enter into and enjoy for ourselves, and also unfold to others the unsearchable riches of Christ.

“All the best of the wine” was theirs; and what is there upon earth that can so exhilarate and gladden as the new wine of the kingdom—the joy of the Lord Himself!

“And of the wheat:” and what has such power to nourish and sustain and minister strength to the soul as Christ the bread of life—the old corn of heaven—the very bread of God! No angels eat such food; but *we*, the holy priesthood, the children of the living God, are permitted and commanded to feed with HIM, at His table, on the very bread which has been His delight from all eternity.

“And whatsoever is first ripe in the land, which they shall bring unto the Lord, shall be thine.” Yes, as the holy priesthood, we are also privileged to feast with Christ upon the fruit which is presented to Him, the service and obedience of His people, the first-fruits of that abundant harvest, which He will reap in the day of His espousals. He calls us to rejoice with Him over sinners saved; and loves to see us take pleasure and delight in each increase of grace which we may see in any of His beloved and precious saints.

Much more is named as the abundant provision reserved for them; far more indeed than they could possibly consume. Well might they say they had a goodly heritage.

And we, beloved in the Lord, oh, what a heritage is ours! The Lord Himself is ours, and who can tell the treasures which are hid in Him! These gifts to Aaron's sons but faintly shadow forth the blessed portion we possess in Christ!

And yet how often are we poor and needy, how often sad and weary, how often faint and hungry.

And why? Ah, is it not because we do not eat before the Lord? We fail to enter in within the veil; we fail to sit before our God and feast with Him; we do not fill our priestly place, and thus we lose the strengthening food, which can be only fed upon by those who stand before the Lord and minister to Him.

Ah, may He give us hearts intent on pressing into His holy presence, and thus we shall gain power to take our portion, to eat, and to drink, and to rejoice before Him, and so receive out of the fulness of Christ that we may grow up into Him in all things.

DAVID, THE MAN AFTER GOD'S OWN HEART.

"I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will."—ACTS xiii. 22.

THROUGHOUT the history of David we trace a very deep acquaintance with the mind and will of God, and at the same time great willingness and readiness in obeying it. Whether the call was from a lowly shepherd's life to that of king and warrior, or from a throne to a place of exile, he was ever ready to say, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth Him good."

Although anointed to be king of Israel when but a youth, David was content to wait the Lord's time for the accomplishment of His purpose; and while waiting was still working God's will, overcoming Goliath and serving Saul against the Philistines. Does he not remind us of the greater than David, who took not the honour to Himself (Heb. v. 4, 5), but waited till in resurrection glory He was proclaimed both Priest and King; and who, while He waited, fulfilled His Father's will, whether in silence at Nazareth for thirty years, in enduring temptation, in preaching the word, or in the last awful conflict on the cross?

In CHRIST we see the true BELOVED, who should indeed fulfil all the will of the Father; but in David, the type, we find failure and faithfulness closely intermingled.

David seeks a refuge with Achish, the heathen king of Gath, and behaves in a way which ill-befits his dignity as God's chosen king. (1 Sam. xxi.) But he is soon set free from the snare; and again, while wandering among the mountains and in the cave of Adullam, we find that, though sorely discouraged because of the way, he was meekly submitting to the will of God, and not rebelling against it. (See Psalms lvii. and cxlii.)

Even when circumstances *seemed* to make it right for him to take matters into his own hand, he says, "The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord's anointed." (1 Sam. xxiv. 6.) He would wait God's time rather than do evil that good might come; and yet very shortly his faith again fails, and for the second time he goes to Achish, saying, "I shall now perish one day by the hand of Saul." (1 Sam. xxvii. 1.) What a picture of our faithless hearts! Well may our gracious Master say to us, "O thou of little faith, wherefore dost thou doubt?"

Passing over Saul's death and the earlier part of David's reign, we come to the time when the Lord had given him rest round about from all his enemies (2 Sam. vii.), and here we find him still seeking to fulfil the will of the Lord. His first thought is to build Him an house, but immediately Nathan brings him word that it is not according to the Lord's mind. (1 Chron. xvii. 4.) The plan is given up, and in a beautiful song of praise he pours out his heart, accepting the promise that the Lord will build *him* an house, but does not even allude to his own cherished desire! Oh, that we may thus obediently and submissively bow before the Lord, that our plans, even for His service, may ever yield to His plans, and that in full trust and confidence our hearts may cry with David, "Thou, Lord God, knowest thy servant!"

Again, we have the will of God fulfilled in David's desire to find one of the house of Saul, that he might show the kindness of God unto him. (2 Sam. ix.)

But 2 Sam. xi. brings us back to failure, and as we read the terrible story, we ask, Can this be the man after God's own heart? Alas! David is only a man, and "there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good and sinneth not."

In His grace our God seems to take up those who are in an especial manner types of His Beloved, and (while lifting the veil to show us that they are but men, and thereby to bring out in strong relief the contrast between them and Himself) He also speaks of those things in them in which He can delight, even the fruit of the Spirit which He has first inwrought, and of which they must ever say, "Of thine own have we given thee." In the books of Chronicles we find things chiefly recorded from this point of view, and there this sad history is entirely omitted. (Compare 2 Sam. xi. 1 and xii. 26 with 1 Chron. xx. 1.) "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither hath he seen perverseness in Israel!" (Num. xxiii. 21.) "As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our transgressions from us!"

In this dark chapter of David's life, he still displays childlike confidence and trust in God. The sin is brought home to his conscience (2 Sam. xii. 13, and Ps. li.); he confesses it to have been sin "against the Lord;" and then in wondrous grace he receives the *instant* response, "The Lord also hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die. Howbeit, because by this deed thou hast given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme, the child also that is born unto thee shall surely die." But, in spite of this distinct announcement the man who has known so much of his Lord's tender compassion, dares to beseech that this bitter reaping of what he had sown might be spared to him; and though for the sake of others the rod must be seen to fall, surely it was not displeasing to the Lord that His servant should so fully trust Him; and in God's choice of Solomon as heir to the throne

(compare 2 Sam. xii. 24, 25 with 1 Chron. xxviii. 5), David must have had a double assurance that his sin was indeed blotted out.

Passing on to Absalom's rebellion, we are struck by David's perfect submission to exile and to insult. (2 Sam. xv.) A vivid picture of the true King of Israel, rejected by that same city of Jerusalem, and treading with weary feet that same mount of Olives! "He came unto His own, and His own received Him not."

These are a few of the ways in which the will of the Lord was fulfilled by the man who was so near His heart; the man who perhaps more than any other shared in the heart-sorrows of the Lord Jesus, and who in his inspired Psalms reveals to us the deep secrets of the awful hours of Calvary, and tells out the love, stronger than death, which prompted the true David's Son and David's Lord to say, "Lo, I COME TO DO THY WILL O GOD!"

SERVICE OF THE LEVITES.

NUMBERS iii., iv.

THE Levites were taken up that the ways of God toward His redeemed firstborn might specially be shown out in them.

The Lord took them from among the children of Israel, instead of all the firstborn. "Therefore," said He, "the Levites shall be mine; because all the firstborn are mine; for on the day that I smote all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: mine shall they be: I am the Lord." (Num. iii. 11-13.)

They who were the special witnesses of the grace of God, in the day when judgment was poured out, were in a special way to be His own, serving Him in the ways of redemption, as set up in the mercy of God—the ways of His mercy and love to poor sinners lying under judgment. Such, in the shadows of the law, was the service of the Levites; and such, in the good

things that have come to us in Christ, is the service of the saints.

There are two numberings of the Levites recorded, but with striking difference between them. In chapter iii. they are reckoned from a month old and upwards; but in chapter iv. they are numbered from thirty years old, and upward, even unto fifty years old. They are reckoned according to the days of their strength in chapter iv., and, accordingly, their several services are revealed to them; but they were set in blessing as God's firstborn in the days of their weakness. Not what they did for Him, but what He did for them, was the ground of their standing.

Here two things are taught us.

First, the question of service does not come in, when we are taken up as the redeemed in Christ.

Second, the demand for service begins at once, when we are looked at as strengthened by Christ. In this service He reveals His mind, and we obey it.

Among the Levites, some had one service to do, and some another; but responsibility to God made each do what he did. The sons of Kohath carried the sanctuary; the sons of Gershon carried the curtains of the tabernacle, and the hangings of the court; and the sons of Merari bore the boards of the tabernacle, the bars, the pillars, the sockets, and the pins.

Such was the choice of the Lord for them, not their choice for themselves. Had the sons of Gershon carried the ark, it would have been self-will in them, not service for God, because He said to them, Carry the curtains. Responsibility to God made each do what he did, and kept him from interfering in other things.

So it should be now with brethren in the Lord. We are entreated by the mercies of God to holy devotedness to God, and are exhorted against being conformed to the world. Conformity to the world blinds men's perception of the will of God, and sets them doing their own will; but he who is transformed

by the renewing of his mind, *proves* what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God : his affections and purposes are after his renewed mind ; and the Lord has promised to him who has a single eye, that his whole body shall be full of light. (Rom. xii. 1-8.)

All are called to labour in subjection to God, as were the families of the sons of Levi. If the mercies of God are not kept before our hearts, then we fail in presenting ourselves aright. If conformity to the world comes in, we lose spiritual energy in our renewed minds, and then we fail to prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God ; and if we go beyond our measure of faith, then we assume what we are unfit for.

This varied labour in service is all for perfect order. He among the sons of Merari who carried even the pins, bore what was necessary for the perfection of the tabernacle : better for him to do this for God, than to despise his own work, and assume another's.

Equally would subjection to God keep the sons of Kohath happy in the holy service of bearing on their shoulders the ark, and table of shewbread, and all that belonged to the sanctuary.

The burden of a Levite, as he went forward through the dreary wilderness, was a glorious burden : it belonged to the sanctuary of God, and was the witness of His grace and mercy to sinful men. So with the service of the saints in the world ; their service is in what belongs *not* to the world. We have God to serve as our purpose ; we have His word and Spirit to guide and lead as to the way of service ; and all as His redeemed, through the blood of Christ.

The communion of the saints, as having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, is according to the service of the *priests*. The testimony of the saints, as sent into the world to give glory to Christ's name, is according to the service of the Levites.

The service of the Levite waited on and followed

the service of the priest: this was the order established of God; and in all our service of testimony in the world, communion in the holiest with the things of which we testify should always precede it. We shall thus be led out by God, and also controlled. In the holiest we have communion *with* Christ; in service in the world we have our place of testimony *about* Christ; but this should ever follow, and be connected with the other.

If the service of the sons of Kohath was made the standard to judge the conduct of the sons of Merari, then they might be despised in their service: but they did unto the Lord what they did, according to His will concerning them; and in His good will the sons of Kohath and the sons of Merari were all fellow-labourers in the same tabernacle.

So it was, that when Gaius, for the Lord's sake, received the strangers who, for His name's sake, went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles, the apostle adds, "We ought therefore to receive such, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth." The poor preacher was a *helper* to the truth when he proclaimed Christ's name; and Gaius was a *fellow-helper* when he took him into his house, and fed and lodged him.

So again, "He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward." Here is one who is not a prophet himself; but he loves a prophet, and receives him as such, and thus becomes associated in blessing with a prophet. Did he assume to be a prophet when he was not one, then there would be no such association, and no blessing.

In all this may we learn subjection to God, knowing that if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not. Such is the grace of God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

“PEACE WITH GOD.” “THE PEACE OF GOD.”

“THEREFORE being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” We have not to make our peace; peace is made already; and God declares His mind by saying, that “having made peace by the *blood* of His cross,” it is His purpose “by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself.”

Many have a vague notion existing in their minds that *they* have to make their peace with God, and this *natural* feeling shows itself forth in the varied modes of religious worship prevalent amongst all nations of the world. The main feature, the common feature of all, is something brought by the worshipper to render God propitious. Ignorance of the true God, ignorance of the truth of God, causes men thus to act, often unconsciously, in direct opposition to the revealed will of God.

God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love where-with He loves man, has made known to us in and through Jesus Christ (the express image of His person) *what* He is. God proclaimeth to all men far and wide that “peace is made through *the blood of the cross* ;” and He would have all men everywhere know the blessed news, that there is now no barrier between Him and them, that the way is now made plain for all to come to Him through the blood of the cross. God has made peace for men; and all who believe God, believe that He has put away sin by the sacrifice (ah, what a sacrifice!) of His Son. God Himself has provided the propitiation, and “in the mount of the Lord it shall be seen” that God, the holy and righteous, can be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

In Jesus Christ crucified we see God’s way of peace.

We see Him dying, "the just for the unjust, to bring us to God," and *God* laying on Him "the iniquity of us all." "*He* is our peace;" for He has, by the one offering of Himself once for all, put away sin. The sinner may see in Him—the crucified—every claim met, and sin atoned for; and in Him—risen from the dead—the full proof that God who gave Him, who sent Him, is fully satisfied.

God wants man to know that He was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them. He has the right to dictate the terms of peace, and, oh, marvellous truth! He proclaims to a rebellious and wicked world that He has found a ransom, that He can both justly and freely forgive every one who believeth in Jesus. Such honour doth He put on His beloved Son.

God is not unwilling, but willing to save, and shows it in the cross of Jesus Christ, where He gave His only begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This, the most majestic act of the blessed and only Potentate, clearly showeth His mind to be towards, and not against, a sinful world.

Thus trusting Jesus, we honour God's plan, we honour and please God. We find Him for us, and not against us. We see Him reconciling us—who by nature are "enemies in our mind by wicked works" and alienated from Him—unto Himself, proving His love, breathing forth peace on earth and goodwill towards man.

It is written, "*He* (the Lord Jesus) came and preached peace." True, indeed; for after that He had suffered, He ascended up on high, and sent forth His Spirit to work wondrously through His chosen servants, proclaiming peace and pardon; as it is written "Unto you first, God having raised up His Son Jesus, sent Him (not to slay, but) to bless you, in turning away every one of you from his iniquities." Truly this is

worthy of our God, who is "glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders."

Peace then is made, and every sinner may know that God has no warfare *against him*, but wishes him nought but good. God calls all men everywhere to repent and to trust in His beloved Son, who saves all them that trust in Him, and removes their fear by breathing peace through His blessed Spirit. Peace *with God* depends on the blood. As with Israel in Egypt, so now with us: if the blood be upon us by faith—that is, if we are trusting to the blood of Jesus—we are safe. God passes over; we can feast in peace.

God's way of peace is to give a Saviour, Jesus Christ the Lord, to us. Our peace with God is in accepting and trusting to that blessed One, who can say to the stormy waves of our troubled hearts, "Peace, be still."

In the account of Joseph and his brethren, and of the meeting of David and Mephibosheth, we get illustrations of peace being made, though unknown at first to those who trembled through fear of retribution, and thought only of themselves and their guilt.

"Acquaint now thyself with Him, and be at peace, thereby good shall come unto thee;" for He (as Mordecai of old) seeketh "the wealth of His people," and speaketh "peace to all His seed." They that lay hold of His strength, that they may make peace with Him, shall find peace indeed with Him.

From "peace *with God*," concerning the great question of sin being put away, we pass to "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." "The King of Peace" (Melchisedec—*Melchisalem*; see Heb. vii. 2) promised His loved followers His peace, saying, "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you." "In me ye shall have peace." Coming to them on His resurrection-day, at evening, He saluted them, saying, "Peace be unto you." And when He had so said, He

breathed on them, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Henceforth had they an abiding token or earnest of peace in the abiding presence of that Comforter whose indwelling was proof to them that they were now of "the household of God."

In Philippians iv. 6, 7, we learn that, though there may be cause for care and anxiety naturally, *we*—God's dear children—are to "be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving to make our requests known unto God," and then, if we so do, "the peace of God, which passeth all (human) understanding, shall keep (preserve or garrison) our hearts and minds through (or in) Christ Jesus." What a simple remedy for all care! "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind *is stayed on thee*, because he trusteth *in thee*." Surely it is our Father's delight to have us confide in Him, to ordain peace for us, working all our works in us. "The peace of God" within the heart flows from childlike confidence in His Fatherly love and wisdom.

But we read of another mode of enjoying peace, and this of the two may be the more important. We read of the enjoyment of peace depending upon obedience in daily life to the will and commandments of our God and Father, and surely this is but reasonable. All God's gifts must tend to God's glory and the enjoyment of God's peace; while walking in disobedience or carelessness would surely be contrary to His mind, and wholly unprofitable for us.

This principle seems to be contained in those oft misunderstood words of our blessed Lord which He uttered, when He taught His disciples to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us," and explained by saying, "For if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your *heavenly Father* forgive your trespasses." Surely here the enjoyment of the *forgiveness of our trespasses* (not of the guilt of sin) is made dependent on our exercising (and

so being capable of appreciating) forgiveness towards our erring brethren.

Again we read, “In the keeping of His commandments there is great reward.” “Great peace have all they that love thy law, and nothing shall offend them.” Is not this worthy of our God? He causes His peace to flow within the souls of those who walk in His ways, and “the ways of the Lord are right.”

This seems to be the meaning of the “rest unto the soul,” spoken of in Matt. xi. 29, 30, flowing from the taking of His yoke (not a grievous one) and wearing it daily, learning of Him (so contrary to nature) to be “meek and lowly *in heart*.” Truly “His ways are ways of pleasantness, and all His paths are peace.”

Of His people of old He mournfully says, “O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! *then had thy peace been as a river*, and (as a result) thy righteousness as the waves of the sea;” for “the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.”

Thus the God of peace imparteth His peace to His children who walk in the light with Him. “The work of righteousness (practical obedience) shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance for ever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable habitation, and in sure dwellings, and in quiet resting-places; when (on others) it shall hail, coming down on the forest; and the (proud) city shall be low in a low place.”

May “peace with God,” through the precious blood of Jesus, be the portion of every one who readeth these words; and may “the peace of God” keep the hearts and minds of all those who are His children, and be their solace and stay until in the land of peace they see the “King of peace” in His beauty.

O make this glorious One thy Friend,
Then shalt thou know deep solid peace,
Which earth's sore trials cannot touch,
And which shall never, never cease.

A. O. M.

BROTHERLY LOVE.

THE thing to promote brotherly love is love. The unchanging law from the first is, "herb and tree yielding fruit after his kind." (Gen. i. 11.) Corn bears corn, and nettles produce nettles. Just as surely love bears love, and pride produces pride. Let us seek to sow this precious fruit broadcast after the blessed pattern of Him who fell into the ground and died, that He might yield fruit after His kind.

One thing that greatly tends to choke the seed is impatience, expecting fruit too soon. We expect fruit before its time, or fruit of a kind too high, not seeing how God accepts "the good smell" of the "tender grape" while it is yet sour. (Cant. ii. 13.) Any one can see that the image of God when it comes is "very good" (Gen. i. 27-31), when the new man created in righteousness rules the whole creature; but we should seek to be like God, and discern what is good in brethren while it is still in the bud; and when any progress is made, to see with God that "it is good."

When Barnabas went to Antioch "he saw the grace of God" in the disciples. He saw the grace of God because he saw with the eyes of grace. "He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost," and such men see grace while it is yet in the bud, where carnal and proud souls may only see the flesh in some poor, weak brother.

It may be difficult to have patience with the erring and weak, or to refrain from saying or feeling what is harsh and severe; but our God is very pitiful, and of tender mercy, and repenteth Him of the evil, and He would have us imitators of Him as dear children. We like to give all our lessons at once, and are prone to grow impatient with the forgetfulness and apparent carelessness of our brethren; but He has said, "Precept

must be upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, and there a little," as they are able to bear it.

Never, never should we *look down* upon a brother in Christ; rather let us *look up* for him, and remember that, however erring or wilful he may be, yet he is precious in the sight of God, and one whom He will lead about, and humble, and prove, and instruct, until He makes him what he ought to be. Far from *looking down* upon such an one, we should *go down* to him, and seek to lift him up, even as our blessed Lord humbled Himself, even unto the death of the cross, that He might raise us up to share with Him in all the glory which the Father has given Him.

Let us thus seek the things which edify, duly estimating and nourishing what is of Christ in each other, and thus we shall be knit together in love, instead of being torn asunder and divided.

DISPENSATIONS: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

(Continued from page 297.)

THE JEWISH DISPENSATION.

HAVING already traced in the covenant with Abraham, and the promises connected with it, the setting up of a new federal headship in the person of the Seed, to whom all belongs, and in whom all subsists, we have now to see how God has been gradually developing His purpose in the dispensations that have been evolved out of blessings given to Abraham.

The covenant made with Abraham spoke not only of ultimate blessings in the fulness of time, but also definitely of a period of four hundred and thirty years of subjection and bondage, after which was to come the exodus. This brings us to the introduction of the *Mosaic economy* and its ministry of law and of works, of condemnation and of death.

To fallen man law and death are necessarily connected. Even to unfallen man in the garden, the law—"Thou shalt not"—ended in its immediate violation; and if so then, how much more so now? God knows it; *we* by grace know it, but found it a very hard lesson to learn. Man knows it *not*, and the dispensation of law came in, not in the line of the covenant, but parenthetically, so to speak, as we read (Rom. v. 20) "the law entered" (*παρεισηλθεν**) as something not flowing out of the covenant of grace, but as brought in by God for a divine purpose, and apparently in direct antagonism to it, in order "that the offence (or trespass) might abound."

The fulness of the time for the coming of Christ had not come, and in the meantime God again put man, in the nation of Israel, under trial. God knew what was in man; man must know it too; and that indwelling sin might become more manifest in outflowing transgression, God placed Israel under a covenant of works, under a law for obedience, on which, as in the garden, depended life and death.

Sin embraces not only the actual committal of evil, but the evil tendency of the heart. God reveals to man the inward by the outward, while man seeks to ignore the inward except as manifest in the outward, and that even as judged by a darkened conscience.

Israel accepted the law, and promised to obey, and in the easily-made promise knew neither the holiness of the law nor the unholiness of their own hearts.

It can never be sufficiently enforced that the law was never intended to be a ministry of salvation. It is called emphatically "the ministration of condemnation," "the ministration of death." (2 Cor. iii. 7, 9.) We see how thoroughly it proved so to Israel in the

* This verb means not merely to enter, but to enter by the side of something else, either intentionally, as here in the purpose of God, or privily and surreptitiously, as in Gal. ii. 4, where the word is rendered "came in privily."

golden calf and its consequences. In fact, the whole wilderness journey proved to Israel nothing but a grave, on which "Kibroth-hattaavah" was written at every stage, so that the two men of faith, Caleb and Joshua, alone could cross the Jordan.

The holy law accomplished its ministry of death, and all Israel who were numbered when they left Egypt perished in the desert, leaving their carcasses, a witness of what man in the flesh under law must come to.

The meek and holy man of God, Moses himself, God's most favoured and most faithful servant, was shut out of the land by the sentence of the law of which he was the administrator. It must needs be so. A word hastily spoken excluded him from the land of promise, thereby making the best man on earth a witness to the inexorable character of the law of the holy God, which is "holy, just, and good."

Yet this same Moses, excluded from Canaan under the law of the covenant of works, stands in the land on the mount of transfiguration with the Lord in glory, a witness to us that what he lost under law he regains under grace. And infinitely more than regains; for he stands with Christ in the glory of the heavenly kingdom, and has received the heavenly instead of the earthly, the eternal instead of the temporal.

How earnestly Moses pleaded to have the sentence of exclusion reversed! But it could not be; and yet his God gives him more than he pleaded for. He gave him a vision of the land; He buried him as no mortal had ever been buried; and sent him to the holy mount with Elijah the prophet to commune with the Son of God about "His exodus" (see Greek, Luke ix. 31) which He was to accomplish in Jerusalem, which alas! had become Egypt and Sodom. (See Rev. xi. 8.)

The Jewish dispensation, then, was only a tentative one. Its object was to show to man that in him there dwelleth no good thing. It was addressed to men in

the flesh who were still unconverted, and all its enactments and all its ritual were designed to deepen man's sense of depravity, to cause him to see how low, how very low, he had fallen, and how death could be the only result, and atoning death in the blood of another the only remedy.

But instead of man being humbled under all this revelation, everything was perverted from God's purpose, and was used to puff up the pride of the natural heart; and when the Jews were at length driven out of the abomination of open idolatry, they fell into the deeper sin and darker apostacy of spiritual pride, and boasted in a law they never kept. They sought to bring God under obligation by their observance of sacrifice and ritual, which were designed of God to lay them in the lowest dust, under the sum of their obligations to Him.

Underneath all this apostacy in the nation of Israel there was the precious line of faith, in those who were inheritors of the covenant of promise, and partakers of the righteousness of faith, of whom believing Abraham was the father and the representative. Of such "the world was not worthy;" they lived above it, but found the enmity of man's alien heart ever the same, from Cain to Caiaphas, and ever deeper and more bitter, as it was animated by religious zeal.

The law, its enactments and its ritual, had however, an object in quite another direction, and that was toward the spiritual development of the children of faith. Its types and shadows reveal God's purposes in Christ, unfold the deep mysteries of the cross, and give a distinctness and a precision to our conceptions of the atonement, and the work and person of Christ, which but for them would never have been possible. Therefore, while the ministration of law came in out of the course of the covenant of grace, nevertheless, as an institution of typical and ceremonial observances, it flows along in sweetest harmony with all God's subse-

quent revelations. While deepening our sense of need and helplessness by reason of sin, it brings in those emblems and figures of heavenly things which at every turn bear witness that we are not left in our low estate to perish, but that "where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."

There was, however, this essential difference: *sin* was in reality, but *grace* was yet only in type and figure, and as such only presented to a faith that could look beyond itself. But flesh has nothing to do with faith in the unseen; the utmost flesh can do is what Israel did—they believed when they *saw*, not before, and not long after. (Ps. cvi.) "Without faith it is impossible to please God," and therefore "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." This is written on every page of Jewish history, and is the hardest of all hard lessons for proud man to learn.

The worship of the golden calf had its consummation in the subsequent idolatry which led Israel to Babylon, as we read in Acts vii. 38-43. The Jews, brought *back from thence, left their idolatry behind them, but* became filled with the pride of their calling and their standing, and consummated their spiritual apostacy in the crucifixion of the Lord of glory. They are now scattered into all lands, with the curse of Cain on their forehead, till their proud heart be humbled, and they accept the punishment of their bloodguiltiness, and worship before their crucified Immanuel.

God gives us in His word many fearful pictures of the result of His testing man on the ground of works and law. We will just refer to one as a sample of very many similar revelations.

Let us turn to Isa. v., and ponder for a moment the "song of the Beloved touching His vineyard." It is written, "My well-beloved hath a vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and he fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a

winepress therein; and he looked that it should bring forth grapes, and it brought forth wild grapes" (or poisonous berries).

Now notice God's appeal to Israel. "What could I have 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."

God had done all with the vine that it was possible to do, and yet the result of all the training, even of nature's "choicest" vine, was to yield poison instead of fruit. What an argument against all possible development of good out of human nature! God had done His utmost, and the end of all was corruption. If God's efforts fail in the old Adam, shall *man's* succeed? Shall man produce by all or any amount of cultivation and care, of education and culture, anything really good, when God's cultivation could cause it to yield nothing but poisonous berries? Man must learn the bitter lesson that in himself all must fail, and that to find good, as good essentially is, is impossible.

Then comes in God's judgment on the corrupt thing. He breaks down the wall, and lays it waste; He causes to come up brier and thorn, till man learns that "God that is holy shall be sanctified in righteousness" (v. 16), the righteousness of God in a new creation created in Christ Jesus.

The flesh failed, and a period of seven times seven has well-nigh passed over a rejected and outcast Israel, to show men that the remedy for all that has befallen them is in God, as the God of the new birth, and the Author of the new creation in the second *Man*, the Lord from heaven, that is, in a risen Christ.

THE CHRISTIAN DISPENSATION.

The Jewish dispensation came in parenthetically to show what the flesh is; and now a new dispensation has to follow, also parenthetically, to show what the

spirit of life in Christ Jesus is, as God's remedy for all that the flesh has proved itself to be.

We will not dwell here on what Christ came to offer to Israel nationally. He presented Himself to their acceptance, and they cast Him out of the vineyard and slew Him, and consequently the rejected King went back again to the throne in the heavens. But God has a purpose to accomplish, and that purpose the highest of all, even the fulfilment of that word, "A body hast thou prepared me;" but here the sphere is heaven and not earth, spirit and not flesh, the object being to form a body for the heavenly Man, the risen Christ.

He introduces this subject to Nicodemus, who as a teacher in Israel ought to have read aright the teachings of the then closing dispensation. This he had failed to do, and therefore had to learn that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God. "Ye must be born again" sets aside all mere earthly claim, and Israel can only get into blessing through regeneration and the covenant of peace. "Am I so hopelessly lost that I must die and be born again?" might the Jewish Rabbi painfully ask himself. Yes, so it must be. He must die, and live again; become dead with Christ, and be quickened again together with Him.

But as the birth is heavenly in John iii., so is the worship as revealed by the Lord to the woman at the well in John iv. Jerusalem, with its temple, its laws, its ceremonies and sacrifices, must all pass away, and the worshipper must worship, not in a ritual, but "*in spirit,*" not in a form, but "*in truth.*"

The Jewish was not to pass into the Christian, the old was not to merge into the new; there was to be a separation in clearest contrast, not a union in closest harmony.

Having failed to see this, the Church and the world have joined together; flesh and spirit have sought a

fellowship that is as impossible as the blending of light and darkness, of righteousness and unrighteousness. Everywhere men are going back to feasts and fasts, ceremonies and ordinances, days and times, and justifying them because they were ordained under the old covenant of works, forgetful that the very God who ordained them to prove man's failure in the flesh, has set them aside in the reality of a living Christ, now at His right hand to prove man's possession of a real divine life in Him—a life that needs no such "weak and beggarly things," which were imposed only till the reformation of a new creation was brought in.

Israel was called to walk by sight; *we* are called to walk by faith. God is now demonstrating that a living faith and a heavenly worship of an unseen Lord can uphold and can sustain in a dispensation of faith, where all in the dispensation of the flesh and of sight has failed and come to nought.

God's object in the two dispensations was to produce a contrast, and as faith and obedience are alive, this contrast will be manifested in the history of God's people. Man has at every step sought to do away with this contrast, and to bring into harmony what never can harmonize in the present dispensation. This is the spirit of antichrist that is abroad, the spirit of apostacy that would engraft Judaism on Christianity, and outward ritual on heavenly worship. The names are all right, but the things are all wrong. The voice is that of Jacob, but the hands are those of Esau. There is a lie at the bottom, and ere long this lie will manifest itself in *the* lie which will be believed by all who receive not the love of the truth. (Read 2 Thess. ii. 9–12.) As yet the working of the lie is seen by comparatively few, and by them dimly; but it is there. May he who readeth understand!

How beautiful is the contrast between John xv. and Isa. v. In the former, Christ is the "true vine," and instead of the wild grapes, the produce of the Israel

vine, we find *much* fruit brought forth to God by those who abide in Christ; and God, who was dishonoured in the one vine, is glorified in the other.

Yet even here Satan has contrived to join in apparent fellowship with the vine, branches that abide not in Him, branches that can give no fruit, for the living sap flows not through them. They are "in," in a sense, and yet not *of*; they are Judas-branches that know nothing of vital fruitbearing fellowship with Christ; they call themselves Christians, they walk, they preach, it may be; but they rob the bag of the sanctuary, and they betray with a kiss their Master and His cause. But the day is coming when the chaff and the wheat shall be for ever separated.

This heathenised church, or this churched world, is apostate Christendom, on which the judgment and wrath of Almighty God, will come down, as we read in the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ; and this will wind up the history of the professed Christianity which has a great name for life, for intelligence, for progress, for power, but is dead, *dead*, TWICE DEAD, to be plucked up by the roots; for God will spare it neither root nor branch.

THE COMING DISPENSATION.

A very few words on this must suffice at present. The age to come witnesses two great results of God's purposes. In the heavens, "the church of the first-born ones," seated before the throne, the *manifested* body of the Son of God, of Him who filleth all in all, the manifested sons of God (Rom. viii. 19-21; 1 John iii. 2); on the earth, Israel and the saved nations realizing the fulfilment of the promise to Abraham and to his Seed, that in Him—that is, Christ—should all the nations of the earth be blessed.

Heaven will no longer be occupied by Satan and wicked spirits, but by a redeemed and heavenly people, children of the faith of Abraham, who in the midst of

earth's vicissitudes have sought and found a city in the heavens, whose maker and builder is God; and earth will no longer be the prey of the tempter, but loyal and blessed in the covenant given to Abraham, and sealed in the blood of Immanuel, who is to gather all unto Himself, in whom all is to subsist and be held together for ever and ever.

In conclusion, the enemies are not forgotten.

"Thy seed (*i.e.* Christ) shall possess the gate of His enemies." Solemn word! May saints and sinners remember it! May those who contend for Scripture evidence that the enemies are to be brought within the pale of blessing, ponder the subject before us! Christ will possess the gate; for He holds the keys of hell and death, and therefore the gates of hell (*hades*) are powerless against His Church. Satan is locked up in the bottomless pit, and ultimately in the lake of fire, where also the beast and false prophet are, the one the executor of Satan's power, and the other the prophet of Satan's lie; and all whose names are not found written in the book of life are there with them.

Here ends prophetic revelation, leaving us with a new heaven and a new earth, the new Jerusalem and the lake of fire; and thence date those future ages that are coming on (the *αιωνες επερχομενοι* of Eph. ii. 7), of which we have passing intimation, but of which we know nothing, and for which we await the unfolding in God's own time.

Let us end where our gracious God has ended His revelation, and with lowly and reverent hearts bow before Him, and acknowledge that "secrets belong to Him," and His revealed mysteries to ourselves. May these considerations humble us, and keep us from stepping one step beyond the written Word, the "It is written," which is ever addressed to our faith, and not to our speculations!

H. G.

THE GIFT AND THE GIVER.

I HAD been away for some time from my home and children, and was returning once more to enjoy myself among them.

They came to meet me at the railway station; and as we were driving homewards in the carriage, I said to my wife, "I tried to get suitable toys for the little ones, but could not find any good ones, so I bought them some useful things instead." Suddenly, little E—— said, "Papa, you're better than any toy," and threw herself into my arms and lovingly kissed me. My heart was stirred and touched with this outburst of love, and after a while I pondered the meaning. It was simply the child's joy to get her father once more by her. She cared not for the toys without the father. Her father's presence was a durable satisfaction to her.

Is not this a lesson, beloved? Can we say to our Father, "Father, you are better to me than any earthly gift"? Do we so delight ourselves in Him, that we value His company above and beyond all the creature-gifts with which He has surrounded us? Has He not often, in His love and wisdom, gently to remove some gift which is engrossing our affection and becoming an idol to us?

Surely "every gift of God is good!" Yes, indeed, both "good and perfect;" but we may make wrong use of good gifts, and fret for them, instead of being content to have or not to have as our Father thinks best. He gives, that our hearts may be drawn out to Him, the Giver, and that we may learn to enjoy Him as our soul's satisfaction and delight. The Giver is ever greater than the gift, which is but the creation of the Creator. Oh to know HIM, so that we may be fully satisfied, and ever ready with loving hearts to

say, "Father, thou art all in all to me. Thou hast satisfied my soul with thy gift of gifts, Jesus Christ."

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside thee."

A. O. M.

GIVING UNTO THE LORD.

IN Numbers xviii. we get God's provision for the Levites, where the principle of giving and receiving is defined.

Man gives to man, hoping to receive again, or at least does not give for the glory of God. Man receives from man, and sees no source beyond. From all this the Lord seeks to deliver His people.

In this chapter the children of Israel, to whom the Lord gave the fruitful land, are brought before us as givers, but givers unto the Lord. They gave Him the tithes of what they possessed, and thus owned that it was He who freely gave them all they had. In these tithes they owned the Lord to be the source of their blessings, and not themselves or any around them.

We have the Levites presented in a different aspect from the children of Israel. They had no inheritance among the children of Israel. The Lord was their inheritance, and His provision for them was in another way: "The tithes of the children of Israel, which they offer as an heave-offering unto the Lord, I have given to the Levites to inherit." (Num. xviii. 24.)

If one asked the children of Israel, To whom do you give the tithes? the answer of the godly would be, We give them to the Lord. And if one asked the faithful Levites, From whom do you receive the tithes? their answer would be, We receive them from the Lord.

The Levites also had thankfully to make their acknowledgment that these tithes were given unto them of the Lord; for His command was: "Thus speak

unto the Levites, and say unto them, When ye take of the children of Israel the tithes which *I have given you from them* for your inheritance, then ye shall offer up an heave-offering of it for the Lord, even a tenth part of the tithe." (Num. xviii. 26.)

As soon as we receive, the first thing to be *seen* is, that the Lord has given. The next thing to be *done* is, the Lord is to be owned in that which He has given.

Thus, when the people offered willingly to build the house, David in his thanksgiving owned how meet and right it was, "For all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee." (1 Chron. xxix. 14.)

It is very precious in all this to see that in their offerings, they that have little stand in common before God with those that have much.

The Levites had a less offering for the Lord than the children of Israel. The one had the tithes of the fulness of the land; the other had only the tithe of the tithe for their offering; but of it the Lord said, "And this your heave-offering shall be reckoned unto you, as though it were the corn of the threshing-floor, and as the fulness of the wine-press" (v. 27); because it was according to that they had, and not according to that they had not, that the Lord accepted of them. And so, when the poor widow cast in her two mites into the offerings of God, although many that were rich cast in much, yet the estimate formed by Christ of her two mites, in comparison with the much that the many rich cast in, was that she cast in more than they all. (Mark xii. 41-44.)

But awful, very awful, it is to see the mighty power that Satan gets over him who in his act appears and assumes to give unto the Lord, while virtually giving only to man! It was thus that Satan filled the heart of Ananias and Sapphira his wife to agree together to tempt the Spirit of the Lord, and to lie to the Holy Ghost. They acted not before God, who trieth the heart, but before men, who could not see so deep; but

God searched them, and revealed the secret to His apostle Peter, and judged them in the presence of those from whom they expected glory. "How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?" (John v. 44.)

And here we see the godly care of the Apostle Paul for the saints at Corinth, that their ministry to the need of poor saints should not be the occasion of sin in them. Money he sought not of them, unless God were glorified in them through it; and so his direction was—"Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come." (1 Cor. xvi. 2.)

There was not the looking for a few good contributions from some rich men, but "*let every one of you.*" He who had very little more than food and raiment, if he was therewith content, could own this to be prosperity, and lay by him his little store in thankful acknowledgment of the providing hand of God, and thus help to meet the necessities of the poor saints in another place.

The contribution was thus made in individual devotedness, according to the conscientious review by each of his circumstances through the past week. The apostle put away all influence that his own presence might have—"that there be no gatherings when I come."

But there are godly thoughts with regard to the receivers of this bounty; for, says the apostle, "The administration of this service not only supplieth the want of the saints, but is abundant also by *many thanksgivings unto God.*" (2 Cor. ix. 12.) Among the poor saints, whose wants were thus supplied, many would be found putting up their thanksgivings unto God for thus supplying them. And the apostle tells the Corinthians what thoughts would be in the hearts

of those to whose need they contributed—"They glorify God for your professed subjection unto the gospel of Christ, and for your liberal distribution unto them, and unto all men; and by their prayer for you, who long after you for the exceeding grace of God in you." (2 Cor. ix. 13, 14.)

How very precious is all this! how different, inexpressibly different, from the false alluring kindness of a corrupt and deceitful world, to draw the heart away from God, and fix it on itself.

The ground on which the Levites received was not the same as that on which the poor saints at Jerusalem received, though they were connected, as we shall see. The one were devoted to the service of God in the care of the tabernacle; the other suffered from poverty, which broke in on their circumstances.

The Levites, as thus devoted, stand in very holy connection. Their service was in things that were outside, but always connected with that which is within; and this connection we never should let go, or outside service becomes dead and barren.

The service of the sanctuary and priesthood belonged to Aaron and his sons; but the Levites were *joined unto him* for the service of the tabernacle (Num. xviii. 4); and they were given to Aaron, as a gift for the Lord, to do the service of the tabernacle of the congregation. (v. 6.) The Levites waited on the priests, and their service flowed from the service of the priests.

As having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, we are priests unto God. This is our high and exalted place of blessing and service there; but we also, in subjection to this service, serve outside in the world.

There were distinct provisions made for the sustenance of the priests and the Levites. They who served in the holy place were sustained with what belonged to it; they who served outside had natural sustenance ministered unto them.

The priests fed on that which was offered in sacrifice. (Num. xviii. 8, 9.) The Levites fed on the tithes of all the fulness of the land.

As priests we feed upon Christ, having access where He is. As serving in the world, we are supported there according to the care of God our Father.

May we be sustained in these services according to the power of God.

There is an important connection in which the Lord classed the Levites, whose inheritance He Himself was. He classed them with those who were the pitiful objects of His care in a poor, groaning creation; not amongst those who were highly esteemed among men, but amongst those who were mercifully dealt with by Him. "The *Levite* (because he hath no part nor inheritance with thee), and the *stranger*, and the *fatherless*, and the *widow*, which are within thy gates, shall come, and shall eat and be satisfied; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hand which thou doest." (Deut. xiv. 29.)

In the epistle of Paul to Timothy the elders that rule well, as labourers worthy of their hire, are set in this connection with poor helpless, desolate, widows.

The direction first is, "Honour widows that are widows indeed" (1 Tim. v, 3); and then, "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine. For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward." (vv. 17, 18.)

An humble spiritual labourer could enjoy this holy association with those trusting in God, and continuing in supplications and prayers night and day—godly objects for the Church's care, even as the labourer in word and doctrine.

May we in all things be kept from the proud and haughty ways of men, humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt us in due time.

“HIS FACE.”

I GREATLY enjoyed the *Golden Lamp* this month. “The Stranger” so links one on to Abraham, who looked for the city—a city worthy of the God who so often tried and as often crowned the faith of the stranger with the very best He could bestow. What a glorious day it is! and what glory awaits us so that we be found in any one of the dispensational circles, seeing the face of the heavenly Stranger! We “shall see HIS FACE.” Yea, how good even to be a doorkeeper *in* the house, so that we might gaze on “thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.” “Thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel,” was the joyful acknowledgment of the Israelite indeed—a son of him of whom Christ testified, “He saw my day, and was glad.”

Looking for the city as Abraham did, we shall be sure to see, in all His brightness and beauty, “the LAMB who is the light thereof.” Abraham’s, Isaiah’s, David’s vision got clearer and clearer as they gazed on the altars. These were the mirrors that reflected the person and glory of the Invisible. Oh that we, in that brighter manifestation and clearer mirror—the cross, may not miss anything of His blessed name, but from that cross learn to carry about with us “the DYING of the Lord Jesus!” “As oft as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.”

The *Golden Lamp*, trimmed by prayerful and skilful hands, will always show us things within the rent veil (*i.e.* His flesh), and discover all the glory that the inner shrine contains, all marked and sealed by the blood of the everlasting covenant. “Great is the mystery of godliness—God was manifest in the flesh.” “*Handle* me, and see; for a spirit hath not *flesh* and

bones, as ye see me have. And when He had thus spoken, He showed them His hands and His feet." "I saw a Lamb as it had been slain." All other mysteries unlock themselves, and appear as no mysteries when we "see *Jesus*, who was made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour." G. L.

Barcelona, Oct. 14th, 1873.

- "O blessed *Jesus*! Lamb of God!
 Who hast redeemed us with Thy blood
 From sin, and death, and shame;
 With joy and praise Thy people see
 The crown of glory worn by Thee,
 And worthy Thee proclaim.
- "Exalted by the Father's love,
 All thrones, and powers, and names above,
 Below in earth, or heaven:
 Wisdom and riches, power divine,
 Blessings and honour, Lord, are Thine;
 All things to Thee are given.
- "Soon shall the day of glory come,
 Thy bride shall reach the Father's home,
 And all Thy beauty see;
 Our highest joy to see Thee shine,
 To hear Thee own us, Lord, as Thine,
 And ever dwell with Thee."