

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.

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"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.

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“TO ME TO LIVE IS CHRIST.”

PHIL. i. 21.

IN the unfoldings of the experience of the apostle Paul we have inspired statements of the natural fruit of a whole-hearted reception of Christ as Saviour and Lord, and in this brief utterance we find a beautiful summary of the noble life of one who, without any reserves, yielded himself to God. The words “*To me to live is Christ*” suggest at least three things :

I. *Christ was his* EXAMPLE. Men are ever prone to separate what God has joined together. Consequently we find some dwelling exclusively upon the example of the Lord, while ignoring the need and value of His atoning death ; and we see others making much (though not too much) of His precious sacrifice, and thinking little comparatively of His wondrous life as a pattern for His followers. To speak of the Lord as an example while disregarding His death as a substitute, is to offer Him the most grievous insult ; for it is nothing less than taking for granted that a sinner in all the guilt and helplessness of his natural state has the capability of living as He lived who was and is the Holy One of God. On the other hand, to make light of His wondrous example while



trusting in Him as the Lamb of God for salvation is to come short of the true blessedness of our calling, and to fail in glorifying Him who has at such cost redeemed us for Himself. With the cross we must indeed begin; for it is by the cross that we are rescued from that state in which it is impossible to please God, and are brought into such a high position that God can set before us the example of His beloved Son for our study and imitation. From the pen of another apostle we have the beautiful statement—"Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow His steps." (1 Peter ii. 21.) He suffered *for us*, on our behalf and in our stead, as our blessed substitute and surety, and He also left us an *example*. With the firm and steady grasp of faith we must lay hold of His death as that to which we owe our all, and then it is our high privilege as well as solemn responsibility "to walk even as He walked." (1 John ii. 6.) We all know how Paul gloried in the cross of Christ. His apprehension of the Lord as his propitiation and Redeemer is manifest in all his writings; but it is equally evident that the Lord was his example too. *Conformity to Christ* was the great aim of his soul. To this he was ever reaching forward, seeking it whether in care for the churches as to their spiritual state, in labouring with his hands, and ministering with the fruit of his toil to the necessities of the weak (Acts xx. 35), in suffering the loss of all things (Phil. iii. 8), or in readiness to be bound and to die (Acts xxi. 13).

II. *Christ was the POWER of his life.* Paul proved the truth of that word, "As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me." (John vi. 57.) That which we eat we appropriate for ourselves, for our own use absolutely. Thus Paul appropriated Christ. Let the sense of sin be

feeble, and the grip of Christ as a Saviour will be feeble too; so in like manner until we learn our utter helplessness there can be very little apprehension of Christ as the *strength* of our life. (Ps. xxvii. 2.) Now Paul's discovery of himself at the very outset was so deep and real that no half measures could satisfy him. He rose out of the very depth of self-condemnation with the word in his heart, "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength"—the one as perfect as the other. As a "*poor man*" he cried and was heard; he was brought low, and God helped him, and henceforth he could say, "My soul shall make her boast in the Lord." (Ps. xxxiv. 2.) In divine strength he went forth to suffer and to do; and what endurance and what labour were his! Look at the man; read the record of his service and his conflicts, of his toil and his care, and then learn from his own lips the great secret of such a life—"I can do all things in Him who strengtheneth me." (Phil. iv. 13. R.V.)

III. *Christ was the OBJECT of his life.* Paul lived for Christ, and he did this under the impelling power of a love that he was ever learning out—"The love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then did all die: and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them, and rose again." (2 Cor. v. 14, 15.) In this respect, too, Paul followed Christ. "Christ pleased not Himself," but did always those things that pleased the Father; and in like manner Paul's grand ambition was to be well-pleasing to Christ. Nothing less than this could satisfy him; but with this he was always content. With Paul this was success, the highest success; he was consequently above human judgment, and he judged not himself by any human rule. That which in the eyes of the world was the sorest defeat

was in Paul's eyes true success if only Christ was magnified thereby. Life and death were alike to him who was obeying the word spoken by the Lord on His way to the cross—"If any man serve me let him follow me." And with what strength Paul expresses the longing of his heart to do so! The word translated "earnest expectation" is only found here (Phil. i. 20), and in Rom. viii. 19, where it sets forth that intense longing with which creation in its bondage is waiting for deliverance. Such was Paul's intense desire and hope that Christ should be magnified in his body, whether by life or by death. He lived and laboured in view of the judgment-seat of Christ; and in his estimate of life and service he, so to speak, antedated that day; he knew that every word of commendation then spoken would be additional honour for eternity, and compared with the approval of his Lord all else was to him as nothing.

Beloved in Christ, we enter upon a new year, and have before us an untrodden path. Whether the end of the year may find us still in this sphere of service we know not; but that is of far less concern to us than the spirit and manner in which our appointed service here is carried out. Fewer trials and difficulties we need not expect. The unrest of the world has its influence upon the Church of God, and even amongst saints (few by comparison), whose aim is to gather in scriptural simplicity unto the name of the Lord, questions may arise which will more or less affect us all. But Christ is our sufficiency, His word a complete directory, and His Spirit a perfect guide. Let us only seek with all humility of mind to set Christ before us as the pattern of our life, to prove Him as the strength of our life, and to glorify Him as the object of our life, and He will be magnified in us as He was in Paul.

W. H. B.

## "THE NEXT DAY" AND "THE NEXT DAY AFTER."

JOHN i. 29, 35.

THE beginning of another year stirs us yet again to note the lapse of time, and to use it for God as it flies. Every opportunity given us should surely be filled with gospel testimony to the unsaved, and with exhortation and instruction of believers—

" 'Tis all our business here below  
To cry, 'Behold the Lamb!'"

And this is part, perhaps, of what we are taught by the DAYS which rapidly succeed each other in John i. Our blessed Master was Himself no loiterer. All four of the gospels show us this. "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" is the earliest recorded utterance of His holy, youthful lips; and His last word in "the days of His flesh" agrees well with this, viz., "It is finished." In Mark (the portrait of Him as a servant) the words "straightway" and "again" are remarkably frequent; the first expressing a promptitude that lost no time; the second, a patient continuance that no frequency of repetition could weary. In Luke also His *hasting on* is seen. In Luke i. 78, He is the Dayspring from on high that hath "*visited* us." In Luke xix. 44, His earthly ministry is called the time of Jerusalem's "*visitation*;" and to plotting Herod He sends the message, "I must WALK to-day, to-morrow, and the day following," as a brief description of His last journey up to Jerusalem. (Luke xiii. 33.) In John's gospel also the same untiring use of fleeting time may be seen. In John iii. He teaches Nico-

demus *by night*, doubtless when others were asleep. In John iv., though wearied with His journey, He still loses no time, but pours out the gospel stream, and declares, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to *finish* His work." Man's adage, "Never hasting, never resting," was indeed true of Him. On the one hand, He would say of this or that work or service, "Mine hour is not yet come" (John ii. 4); on the other hand, when His timid disciples sought to hinder Him, His word to them was, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?"—all of which He would fill with obedience to His God and His Father. (John xi. 9.)

Oh for a renewal and an increase of such like holy diligence in us His followers at the outset of another year!

But the successive DAYS in John i., referred to above, show us *progressive stages* in gospel testimony as well as continuance and diligence in it.

The first eighteen verses of John's gospel may be regarded as the platform upon which all its subsequent unfoldings are made; and fallible, human testimony to the divine One is included in this first section of the gospel. God might have left the eternal Word to be His own witness, and to be Himself the sole Light to darkened man, and in that case all would have been guilty who did not believe on His name and receive Him; but in God's great grace to us a mortal fellow-sinner's testimony was added: "There was a man sent from God whose name was John . . . that all men through him might believe."

It is the course and history of this testimony, whether by John the Baptist or by Jesus Himself, that is the subject of the rest of the chapter and of John ii. 1-12. To trace its stages may be a means both of strength and of guidance for ourselves.

The "days" alluded to make up apparently an entire

week. Four of them succeed each other, from John i. 19-51. Then follows a blank of two days, and on "the third day" (the last of this typical seven) comes the glorious scene of "the water that was made wine"—that "beginning of miracles" which "manifested forth *His glory*," and which can scarcely be considered as testimony to us of anything less than the new heavens and new earth at the finally perfected marriage of the Lamb; for "the woman," says Paul, "is the *glory* of the man."

True, the *first* stage of this testimony (see John i. 19-28) is not directly *called* a "day," but is alluded to as such by verse 28 beginning with "the *NEXT* day." Yet what an important basis it is for the other "days" that follow. The declaration therein given of the inadequacy and nothingness of the creature prepares the way for the pointing out of the divine One, just as the darkness gives opportunity to the light still more to shine. In this first stage John the Baptist does, in his own person, set aside all human ability. In verse 23 he declares himself to be only a "voice of one crying in the wilderness," valuable, that is, only for what the "voice" *says*, and not for anything inherent in the speaker; and in verse 26 he declares *his* baptism to be only "with water," whereas his Master, who was even then standing amongst them, and whose "shoe's latchet" he was not "worthy to unloose," would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire. What a precious initial and threshold stage of testimony is this! The preacher is out of view, as he ever ought to be, that all the hearers may be left ready and waiting for the One that is greater than he. It was at "the *preaching* of Jonah" that Nineveh repented, and not at anything they saw in Jonah himself to attract or to alarm them. What could there be to admire in the son of Amittai, who had been sinful enough to rebel against his God, and feeble

enough to be shut up in the belly of a fish? "We preach *not ourselves*," says Paul; and consistently with this declaration he was in his own esteem "the chief of sinners," and his infirmity was such that his enemies could say his "bodily presence" was weak and "his speech contemptible." Many preachers of our day might learn a lesson from Jonah and from John the Baptist; for human names and natural ability, as shown in eloquence, or power of song, or dramatic delivery, are sadly prominent, and thus this first stage of testimony is weakened.

In verses 29-34 we get the *second* stage, or what the evangelist calls "the next day." And how blessedly full it is of Jesus, and of the cry, "Behold the Lamb of God!" In these few verses also what lessons we have for preachers, and indeed for all believers; for is it not the business of ALL on earth who know Him to point others to Him? Every word of verse 29 has a gospel fulness in it not unlike the Master's own words in John iii. 14, 15. John the Baptist's knowledge of himself as a *sinner* must needs have been his moral preparation for knowing Jesus as "the Lamb of God." In addition to this he had watched for the token divinely given him beforehand of the coming Messiah; namely, the Holy Ghost descending upon Him at His baptism, in bodily shape as a dove, and abiding on Him. And he had *seen* this fulfilled; and yet "I knew Him not," says John, twice over—a fact accounted for perhaps by John's being brought up in Judæa and Jesus in distant Galilee.

All this is interesting in this "next day's" testimony since it brings down the word "Behold the Lamb of God!" to every one who will look on Jesus with the eyes of his sinnership, and will observe also the God-given outward tokens, "for Him hath God the Father *sealed*." Such outward tokens were to be seen all through Christ's life, and

especially at His death. What joy, then, throughout life's little "day," and in every "twelve hours" of each sunrise and sunset to still be saying, "Behold the Lamb of God!" testifying thus of Him as the One whose "perfect work" here on earth we know, and on whom we have seen our own "sin" laid, whether it be the sin of our unregenerate days, or since we believed. For the daily resort which we make as Christians to the precious "blood of the Lamb" fits and inclines us more and more to point the unsaved to Him. In the same epistle in which John says (chap. iv. 14), "We have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the *world*," he also says, "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son *cleanseth* us from *all* sin." Paul also, when calling us "ambassadors for Christ," who do now, "in Christ's stead," beseech men, "Be ye reconciled to God," adds, "For He hath made Him to be sin for us." Thus it is that all the life-long day of our continuous indebtedness to the cleansing blood of the Lamb we continue our pointing of others also to Him.

On the other hand, any subtle, self-pleasing thought of not always needing the blood of the Lamb for ourselves, because of some so-called "higher life" to which we have attained, removes us just that much from the common platform with the unsaved sinner on which to cry to him, "Behold the Lamb of God!"

In John the Baptist's own case much interest is added to his words in verse 29, by remembering that he was a *priest* whose priestly office it was to take part in offering up the morning and evening lamb in the temple service. But we never hear of his doing so, nor of his even burning the incense as his godly father Zacharias did. He may have been so shocked at the money-getting and hypocritical spirit and ways of his fellow-priests that he left it all, and in the wilderness mourned before God the iniquities



of Jerusalem and the priesthood and the nation. How fitting that *he* should be the one to call Jesus "the LAMB of God," and remarkably enough he is the only one of the four evangelists who names Him by this title. In zeal for God John had willingly forfeited priestly income and standing in Jerusalem society, and he is correspondingly enriched. What sure and fitting recompense God gives to faithful souls! As Christ says to Philadelphia, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation." (Rev. iii. 10.)

It appears to be in allusion to John's being by birth a priest that his raiment and food are told us. As a priest he should have worn the fine linen of his priesthood, but he wore instead the camel's hair dress of a prophet (see 2 Kings i. 8; Zech. xiii. 4), which perhaps was also the dress of the poor; and instead of "the shewbread" of priestly diet, his food was "locusts and wild honey;" *i.e.* just that food of the poor which the desert supplied, and which was not ceremonially unclean. (Lev. xi. 22.)

We little know, perhaps, how much our personal habits in the matter of raiment and food add to the effectiveness of our gospel testimony, or else detract from it.

Well might our Lord say of His forerunner, "Verily, I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist." (Matt. xi. 11.) And again (John v. 35), "He was a burning and a shining light." Yet how short his career! Only three years of recorded public service, and about one-half of that time shut up, as we are told, in the lonely fortress of Machærus, near the Dead Sea, in which he had the Christ-like honour of laying down his life for the brief life-day of testimony he had borne. May we be followers of such!

This may suffice for our consideration of this subject now, and we hope to resume it.

H. D.

## MORNING AND NIGHT SONGS.

"Weeping may endure for a night, but joy [*margin*, singing] cometh in the morning."  
PSALM xxx. 5.

"Who giveth songs in the night."—JOB xxxv. 10.

THOUGH tears may flow throughout the night,  
Though weeping may endure,  
The *morning* light shall bring us songs :  
Our coming joy is sure.

How sweet, that morning cometh *soon* !  
Night will not always last ;  
Singing and joy our portion then—  
Weeping for ever past !

What joy divine to be with Christ,  
To see Him face to face,  
To know the fulness of His love,  
The riches of His grace !

Then he who sowed the seed in tears  
Shall o'er his sheaves rejoice ;  
Each mourner's tears shall then be dried,  
And hushed each weeping voice.

\* \* \* \* \*

Though weeping "*may*," it need not, *last*,  
To make the night seem long ;  
For even in the *night* He gives  
To faith a happy song.

He giveth songs throughout the night,  
Which cheer the dreary hours ;  
Joy full and lasting, heavenly songs,  
May even *now* be ours !

Songs of Himself—His life, His death,  
His love, His grace, His might,  
His coming, and the glory then—  
He giveth "in the night."

W. B.

## “BE STRONG.”

“And He strengthened me, and said, O man greatly beloved, fear not : peace be unto thee, be strong, yea, be strong.”—DAN. x. 19.

THE *order* of Scripture is to be observed as well as its matter. The commandment in Eph. vi., “*Be strong* in the Lord, and in the power of His might,” comes *after* the apostle’s prayers in chapters i. and iii.

Now if we would enjoy the blessedness of obedience to the commandment we need first prayerfully to contemplate the words of inspiration which tell us of the power that is not only for us, but which we possess, *in which* we are to be strong.

In chapter i. 19 the apostle does not pray that the Ephesian converts may *have* the power, but that they “may KNOW what is the exceeding greatness of His POWER TO US-WARD who believe.”

That power is ALL-MIGHTY. Let us ponder its manifestations : (1) It raised Christ from the dead ; (2) it set Him at God’s right hand ; (3) it put all principalities and powers under His feet. And then how precious the words that follow ! “And gave Him to be the Head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.”

In chapter iii. the apostle opens his mouth to God still more widely, and prays that He will grant to these believing Ephesians that, according to the riches of His glory, they may be *strengthened with might* by His Spirit in the inner man ; crowning all with these words, “Unto Him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the POWER THAT WORKETH

IN US, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

As we dwell upon these thoughts of God how fitting is the command, "*Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.*" And it is only in His strength that we can carry out the next command—"Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil."

Let us not forget how mighty is the power of the adversaries whom we have to withstand; for God does not conceal it from us. "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against *principalities*, against *powers*, against the *rulers* of the darkness of this world, against wicked spirits in heavenly places." Nor let us think lightly of the wiles of the devil. If in Psalm lxiv. David prayed to be hidden from "the secret counsel of the wicked," and said that "both the inward thought of them and the heart is *very deep*," how much more may we say so of our enemies. How subtle, how well-laid, how deep, and how strong are Satan's wiles. But we have for us Him who is the ALL-mighty and the ALL-wise God, and He can enable us to say, "Now thanks be to God who giveth us the victory through Jesus Christ our Lord."

For our daily sustenance we have the bread of God, which *strengtheneth* man's heart, and the wine which maketh glad his heart; and let us remember those "pleasant words," as fitted to the lips of a greater than Solomon, "Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved."

Dwelling in the banqueting-house, the Spirit of God will teach us that our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, and will make us understand that Jesus Christ and Him crucified, now glorified at God's right hand, is unto us "the *power* of God and the *wisdom* of God."

(1 Cor. i. 24.) Then by the blood of the Lamb we shall overcome, and by the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, we shall resist the powers of darkness, and withstand their wiles.

The inspired repetition of the word "stand" in Eph. vi. should be observed by us; "able to stand," "able to withstand," and "having done all to stand." "*Stand therefore*" armed, is the command; and the first thing in the apostle's mind in connection with the armour is that the loins should be girt about with truth.

It is well with us if our delight is in the law of the Lord (Ps. i.), if we delight *greatly* in His commandments. (Ps. cxii. 1.) Prayerfully meditating on God's word, we shall feed upon Him of whom it testifies, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed. Entire dependence on God will necessarily follow—"praying always." In everything, whether in temptation, in trial, in comfort, let us make our requests known unto God. When the adversary would buffet and tempt us, let us not parley with him or with ourselves. As we feed upon Christ the Spirit of God will enlighten the eyes of our hearts, and we shall see the adversary approaching us. At once let us make this a subject of communion with our Father, spreading our thoughts before Him, and we shall be "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." When Satan sees us occupied with Him who died even the death of the cross, he will take flight.

Many are the true children of God who are greatly afflicted through the power of temptation. They ever find comfort in knowing Christ as their sin-bearer, and as their great High Priest, who ever liveth to make intercession for them, the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother, the depth of whose sympathy none can tell. But, according to the word which we have been considering, it is

needful also to know that the *power* which is *toward us*, and which worketh *in us* is *all-mighty*, so that however strong the temptation and mighty the tempter, our victory is certain, and our spoil rich and abundant, so long as we keep on the whole armour of God and maintain the conflict. This assurance of triumph would greatly add to the comfort of all tried believers.

As we feel our own weakness and insufficiency the circumcised ear will hearken to the voice of Christ, who speaks to our heart, saying, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for MY STRENGTH is made perfect in weakness." Our heavenly Father is watching over His children in the battle-field, and instructs us by His Holy Spirit to use our circumstances as opportunities given us for pleasing Him in the present, and so to learn of Christ that we may deal yet more wisely in the duties, trials, and temptations of the future.

As God's forgiven ones we are enabled by His grace to say with the Psalmist, "Thou art my hiding-place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance;" and in all our perplexities may we hear His response, "I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." W. H.

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## JOSHUA.

### HIS EARLY HISTORY.

THE golden thread of history is the faithfulness of God to His people, His unchangeable love and unfailing care for all who put their trust in Him "in the presence of the sons of men." (Ps. xxxi. 19.) Whether we trace the course of an individual, a family, or a nation, the testimony for

Jehovah is the same—"He is faithful." To this the book of Joshua bears its witness.

Forgetfulness of God's faithful love, or want of simple confidence in it, causes anxiety and sorrow. It accounts for an expression too frequently used of those to whom some faithful servant or Christ ministers, "What will they do when he is removed?" For the moment God's faithfulness is not remembered, and the true end of all ministry is not before the mind; for the proper intent of ministry is to teach the taught to trust in God, and to stand with Him when the servant is removed. Again, the watchful care of the Chief Shepherd, surpassing that of the most faithful under-shepherd, is also overlooked. He can suddenly send to the help of such an assembly one or more whom He has been preparing in another part of the field; or He may suddenly call to the front (as in the case before us) and strengthen for the work one or more who have grown up in their midst, instructed and helped by the departed one; or peradventure God may be pleased to teach them that He (Jehovah) and His word suffice to keep His children together, and for the edifying of one another in love.

Some men of God have taken their fellows by surprise like Elijah, who suddenly stood forth in the hour of need with his familiar word, "Jehovah, before whom I stand;" or like David when he appeared, in the day of battle, from the sheepfold. But in other cases the antecedents of those whom God has prepared can easily be traced.

Of the latter class Joshua is an example. We meet with his name much earlier than the date of the book which bears it.

The earliest record of Joshua is in Exodus xvii., in connection with Israel's first battle after they came out of Egypt—their conflict with Amalek. Moses took his posi-

tion in the mount with Aaron and Hur, and, aided by his helpers, held out the notable rod of Elohim, whilst Joshua led forth the armies of Israel against their foe.

Israel's victorious conflict with Amalek is both instructive and illustrative. It teaches us that those who would be vanquished without Jehovah's *spirit* are with it more than conquerors as they obey His word. It is also illustrative, or typical; for if Egypt with her Pharaoh represents the world, Amalek, the first of Israel's enemies in the wilderness, illustrates the flesh, with which the regenerated soul finds itself in conflict from the moment of the new creation. And if Jehovah declared war with Amalek from generation to generation, until it ceased to be a nation on the earth, so God sets Himself against the flesh, and calls on us to crucify it with its affections and desires, for it never changes; it remains flesh, and evermore lusts against the Spirit. *It is never right; it never profits anything, but ever hinders.* Israel had to learn this, and their history plainly proves that Israelitish flesh, with all its advantages of position, was no better than Egyptian flesh.

Joshua's early experience of war in the wilderness prepared him for that prolonged warfare in the land which represents the believer's more direct conflict with antagonistic principalities and powers in the heavenlies. Our deliverance from the world, and our overcoming it through faith in Jesus as the Son of God (1 John v. 4, 5); our struggle with the flesh, and victory by the power of the Holy Ghost; our wrestling with the powers of darkness, and victory through the Captain of our salvation, are all aptly shown forth in Israel's early history.

The victory over Amalek achieved (Exod. xvii. 13), the next notice of Joshua is his association with Moses as he descended from the mount with the tables of the law in his hand. (Exod. xxxii. 15-19.) Joshua held his place as the



young man and the servant, not presuming to go where he was not called or sent, yet waiting and ready when Moses came down from the immediate presence of Jehovah.

Beloved in Christ, it is surely our highest wisdom to know and keep our place ; to learn and practise that difficult but blessed lesson—*subjection* to God and to His word. The younger are bidden to submit themselves to the elder, “yea, all of you,” says Peter, “be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility.” Sovereign grace saves the members of the body of Christ, and divine sovereignty arranges those members in that body, perfecting the saints for ministry (Eph. iv. 12) ; nor can any one member act out of place or time without committing a trespass and causing sorrow.

As Elisha poured water on Elijah’s hands, so Joshua served with Moses. Thus also did Timothy serve with Paul in the gospel, even as a son with a father, and so have many since.

In descending the mountain a sound lighted on the ear of the young warrior, and he said to Moses, “There is a noise of *war* in the camp.” But Moses, who listened rather with the ear of a priest, replied, “It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome, but the noise of them that sing.”

It is our wisdom to speak with God about persons and things, sights and sounds ; for we may, apart from His counsels, be deceived, and form a wrong judgment and pursue a mistaken course.

In the next chapter in the book of Exodus we find Joshua manifesting the same spirit and observing the same line of conduct.

Moses having pitched the tent outside the camp in consequence of Israel’s idolatry, all who sought Jehovah went

out thither. Joshua, as we might expect, was associated with Moses; and all the people stood at their tent doors looking after Moses as he passed out. As he entered the tabernacle the cloudy pillar descended, and Jehovah talked with Moses face to face, as a "man speaketh unto his friend." The people saw the pillar descend, and understanding what it implied, even Jehovah's presence, they rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door.

When Jehovah had finished communing with His servant, Moses turned again into the camp which had been the scene of sin and of judgment, and was still the place of sorrow. Moses had his service there; but Joshua not having such service, no command from God nor word from Moses to go, departed not out of the tabernacle, but remained in the place of safety, even that of dependence and subjection.

It is one of the believer's difficulties, for which he needs wisdom and strength from God, to know when to be alone with God, quietly waiting on Him, and when and where to go out in service; also to distinguish between trust in God in an appointed path, however difficult, and running into danger and difficulty unsent by Him. May God give us this wisdom!

Joshua is next brought before us in the book of Numbers (chap. xiii.) as one of twelve spies, sent forth by Moses to spy out the land of Canaan, which Jehovah had promised to give them.

On this occasion Moses changed his name from Oshea, or Hoshea, *salvation*, to Jehoshua, or Joshua, *Jehovah is salvation*. He who had distinguished himself as captain of Israel's armies, now stands forth (with Caleb) as a faithful spy, distinguished by faith in Jehovah and faithfulness to Israel.

Thenceforth, for the space of forty years, Joshua shared the wanderings and sorrows of the nation in the wilderness,

whilst the judgment of God wasted the rebels from their midst. As one of the nation he suffered with them, but was saved from the judgment which overtook them; nor did he taste the bitter draught which both Moses and Aaron had to drink, even exclusion from the promised land.

Those forty years were doubtless years of gain to Joshua. He gradually obtained increased knowledge of Jehovah and of man, all of which helped to fit him more fully for his future service.

At length the long years of wandering passed away, and with them the disobedient men and fathers, leaving their children to constitute, as it were, a new nation.

Moses was called to give a last charge to Joshua (with what feelings who shall tell?), and then to die. Yes, to die, and that under chastisement; yet not a common death. Though on one occasion disobedient, Jehovah distinguished him from those "whose carcasses fell in the wilderness;" for He called him up into the mountain to Himself, talked with him, shewed him all the land, took him to rest, and buried him. (Deut. xxxiv.)

This done, Joshua is called to the front, and with Jehovah's special message to him the book bearing his name opens: "Now after the death of Moses, the servant of Jehovah, it came to pass, that Jehovah spake unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister, saying, Moses my servant is dead; now therefore arise, go over this Jordan, thou, and all this people, unto the land which I do give unto them, even to the children of Israel." (See Joshua i. 1-10.)

This command was followed by rich promises, and among them was this one: "*As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee nor forsake thee. Be strong and of a good courage: for unto this people shalt thou divide for an inheritance the land, which I swore unto their fathers to give them.*"

How suited were such words to Joshua! how truly in season! Moses had been removed, and Joshua stood comparatively alone; but alone with Jehovah. The earthly prop had been removed; but there remained the "everlasting arms" of which Moses had spoken in his last words—the under-girding, sustaining power of all the redeemed.

H. H.

## EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS

WRITTEN BY THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

"I MUST write, if it be but a brief line, for the New Year. Looking at 'eternal reconciliation' and 'everlasting righteousness,' we do not 'observe days and months and years.' As creatures still 'we know not what shall be on the morrow;' but 'while we look at unseen things,' we are, as it were, above circumstances, though actually we are children of circumstances, and faith has to find its path through them. As we go on, seeking to maintain a good conscience, we find the way to be the *narrow* way, steep, rugged, and increasingly difficult. And we may well remember the winding up of the discourse of our blessed Lord when on the eve of leaving His disciples: 'These things have I spoken unto you, that in *me* ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world.' (John xvi. 33.)

"The apostle Paul and his companion, the *son of consolation*, reiterate their Master's words on returning to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, 'confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.' (Acts xiv. 22.)

"Things apparently trivial in themselves—a loving greeting, speech with grace seasoned with salt, a kind letter, a new-year card—are refreshing to those who know anything of the trials and sorrows and weariness of the way, as Elim, with its wells and shades, must have been after the bitter waters of Marah."

*Weston-super-Mare, January 3rd, 1874.*

J. L. H.

## II.

"I find it more and more needful to say, as well as to write in full, '*If the Lord will, and we shall live.*' My last year's motto was, '*My times are in thy hand.*' In my diary for the present year it is, '*Abide in Him.*' Changeableness is our characteristic. With God alone is 'no variableness, neither shadow of turning.' I am sure that our need is the *demonstration and power of the Spirit*, to make real to our hearts and consciences truths familiarly recognized. 'Jesus Christ, and Him crucified;' 'Jesus and the resurrection,' are the great basis of all profitable teaching. The Holy Ghost is the glorifier of Jesus; He takes of His things, and shows them unto us; He shows us things to come; but, as the Spirit of truth, He makes what He teaches real to us. Are we not lacking in reality? It is comparatively easy to expound (*e.g.* Rom. vi.); but I desire the Holy Ghost to make the truth there taught a reality to myself *personally*. This distinguishes much of the apostle Paul's teaching in Galatians and in Romans. In Gal. ii. 20 he speaks of his own personal experience, and in this I crave to follow him. '*I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.*' Am *I* this? Do *I* this? Can I truthfully apply this language to myself? It is a searching question. May I be 'of the truth' in seeking to answer it to Him who says, 'All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.'

"It should be a time of great searching of heart. It is an ever-recurring question between self and Christ—which is to have the pre-eminence? 'Take up his cross *daily*,' says our Lord. Self is in the closet; self is in the meetings together; self is in the teachers. Does not this make the example of the apostle a needful one for us to follow? 'Herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men.' Does not this involve deep, solemn, and searching self-judgment in the presence of that very light into

which God Himself has, by His grace, brought us, through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus?

"And here I would remark that there is a danger to which we have been and are exposed. We often set truth against truth, because our minds are so limited; but all is harmony in God. In Christ we find the harmony between grace and truth, righteousness and peace. Apply this principle to communion or fellowship. If our communion with one another is not the result of the higher fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus, there is a danger of lapsing into socialism. Oh, how apt we are to put fellowship *with us* before fellowship with the Father and His Son! It is in the light that we learn the infinite value and preciousness, to God first and then to ourselves, of the blood of Jesus Christ the Son of God. 'This is He' (says the eye-witness) 'that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ: not by water only, but by water *and blood*; and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.'

"My desire is, should God think fit to prolong my days, that they may not be spent as water 'spilt on the ground,' but in the maintenance of the honour of Christ, and of that work of everlasting wonder—His cross; Himself, and His work. He is, in His eternal existence, the Alpha and Omega, 'the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' I wish to learn, and, learning myself, to teach others, the thrice-repeated "We know" of the beloved disciple in 1 John v. 18-20. May the Holy Ghost Himself be our teacher. (1) '*We know* that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.' (2) '*We know* that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.' (3) '*We know* that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life.' Can we attain such knowledge without knowing the Father and the Son? May this knowledge drive out idol after idol from our hearts! An idol is a shadow, a vanity; and nothing drives it out but the knowledge of the living and true God."

J. L. H.

Rock, Saturday.

## NOTES AND REPLIES.

*Is there any difference between the witness of the Spirit (Rom. viii. 16) and the witness of the Word?*

THERE is a distinction, not in the things borne witness to, but in the character of the witness to the soul. The witness of the Word is outward—it is a written testimony; but the witness of the Spirit is inward, and brings to the soul a true knowledge of those things to which the Word bears witness. The one, to use a simile, tells a blind man what there is to be seen; the other opens his eyes to see it. Hence we need the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding (Eph. i. 17, 18), to corroborate and bring home to us all that the Word says. Then, and not till then, can we say, “I know.” The Word says that those who believe in Christ have everlasting life, and are the sons of God; but the Spirit bears witness to the believer that he is a child of God, and is a partaker of life eternal; and without this double witness there can be no certainty in the soul. All things claim a twofold witness. This is abundantly illustrated in Scripture; and we well know how needful it is that the testimony of our own life should agree with that of our lips.

*What is meant in 1 Cor. iii. 17 by defiling or destroying the temple and being destroyed by God?*

The temple is the Church (“which temple ye are”), and he who destroys or mars its beauty, its unity, or its sanctity, will be judged accordingly by God. The one who destroys or corrupts may be an unbeliever from without, or a believer from within. The former will be judged accordingly at the final judgment; and the latter will suffer loss at the judgment-seat of Christ in proportion as he has corrupted, defiled, or marred the church of God. Would that this were more thought of in all that we say and do in reference to God’s children! The beauty, unity, and sanctity of the house of God would then occupy a deeper place in our hearts, and Israel’s language in Psalm cxxxvii. would be better understood by us: “If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy.” We should then fulfil 1 Tim. iii. 15, and behave ourselves as befits the sanctity of that house into which we are brought, which is “the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.”

## "THE NEXT DAY AFTER" AND "THE DAY FOLLOWING."

JOHN i. 35, 43.

It has been already said (page 5) that the successive DAYS in John i. show us *progressive stages* in gospel testimony.

In verses 35-42 we have the *third* of those days. Here the testimony is to the Lamb of God in His *walk*: "John stood . . . and looking upon Jesus as *He walked*, he saith, Behold, the Lamb of God!" No mention is now made of Jesus as the sin-bearer, as on the previous day. (v. 29.) Another aspect of His "fulness" occupies John the Baptist; viz., the pattern we have in Him for our *walk*; yet the two are combined in the title of "Lamb of God," as Peter likewise combines them when he says: "Christ also *suffered* for us, leaving us *an example*, that ye should follow His steps." (1 Peter ii. 21.) And how fitly the one follows the other! To own Jesus as our example, without having Him as our sin-bearer, would be Unitarianism. And if He redeemed us from hell, without being also our *guide*, He would not have been our Saviour from *sins*, but from their punishment only.

Yet it was as the "*Lamb*" that John pointed to His walk. *All* the steps of Jesus were straight toward the place and time of His sacrifice as "the Lamb of God." Isaac's three days' journey by his father's side was all of it toward mount Moriah and the altar on which he was to be laid. So the footprints of Jesus had in them the mark, so to speak, of His coming death upon the tree. The future nailprint of Calvary was seen all along His path, whether in private life at Nazareth, or here in public by the river Jordan.



Self-surrender, and loving not His life unto the death, "even the death of the cross," were always and everywhere seen in Him, and herein He is pointed out as *our example*. In John xii. Jesus calls Himself the "corn of wheat" that must fall into the ground and die; and He instantly makes a like path for us His disciples by the words, "He that loveth his life shall lose it: and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me." And in all John's gospel we see a similar ready surrender of Himself, as it were, unto death.

In John ii. He so boldly confronts the mercenary priests in the very "den of thieves" which they had made of His Father's house, that even His disciples discern the fulfilment of that scripture, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up." In John iv. He sits so weary on the well, that presently His disciples entreat Him to take some of the food they had obtained, but He only answers, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." In John viii. 59: "They took up stones to cast at Him: but Jesus . . . went out of the temple, going through *the midst of them*, and so passed by." In John xi. the disciples remind Him that the Jews of late sought to stone Him in order to keep Him away from Judea; but He only answers, "Are there not twelve hours in the day?" and goes at once to Bethany.

Such were some of the daily ways of the Lamb of God to which this third "day" of testimony points us, that we may follow Him.

"And the two disciples heard Him speak, and they followed Jesus." So also did Paul afterwards follow Him when he said to the Ephesian elders, "None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course." Thus Peter likewise

looked on joyfully to putting off his tabernacle, using the triumphant word "*exodus*." (See Greek, 2 Peter i. 15.) So too Epaphroditus, "for the work of Christ was nigh unto death, *not regarding his life*."

In later days Martin Luther *would* go to the Diet of Worms, though "every tile on every house in that city were a devil" to oppose him; and to Worms he went.

All such ones are indeed "they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth."

But in this path of following the Lamb they are drawn by His own gentle cords of love. "Where dwellest thou?" they ask, and the gracious answer is, "Come and see." They ask His friendship, and they soon find that He wants theirs. As with the two at Emmaus, so with these, the time was all too short, for "it was about the tenth hour," and there were but two hours of the day left. So *brief* seems the sweet day of *following* Jesus when once we heartily enter it. Even men say, "The happier time is, the quicker it goes;" and when is it so happy here below as when spent at Jesus' feet, and in following Him?

Nor will conscience allow us to keep our treasure to ourselves. "One of the two . . . was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother," and he brought to Christ one who became a more prominent apostle than himself. And it is still true that when *we* follow the Lamb, others also are brought to Christ through our means, more or less. "Ye became followers of *us*," says Paul, "and of the *Lord*." Noah himself first entered the ark, and his family and even the very animals followed.

Blessed indeed is this *third day* of testimony to Jesus, and blessed and permanent are its results. But in John i. 43-51 we have "*the day following*." Here the scene changes; it is laid in Galilee, not in Judea, and Jesus is Himself the testifier. Himself, as "Son of God" and

"King of Israel," is the theme of testimony added on to what had gone before; and the millennial reign, with the "heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man," is in full view.

Two more of Christ's future apostles are added to His gathered band of disciples; for Bartholomew (*i.e.* Bartholmai, or son of Talmai) is mentioned alongside Philip in Mark iii. 18, and this may have been the *family* name of Nathanael.

Deeper things are included in the testimony of this "day following." "Moses in the law, and the prophets," are introduced, and Nathanael is seen under the fig tree, apparently reading them; or at any rate Philip appeals to Nathanael on the ground of the sacred writings. Love to God's Scriptures, and the diligent handling of them to which it leads; absence of "*guile*," as seen in the habitual *confession of sin*; and also *simplicity of outward life*—for sitting "under the fig tree" is all we are told of Nathanael in this respect—form a divine preparation for further acquaintance with Jesus as "the Son of God and the King of Israel."

God never lavishes the richer treasures of His good things unwisely or prematurely. It was not until the apostles had entered somewhat into the circumstances of their Master's rejection by the nation, and were taught that He must first "suffer many things," that the kingdom of God coming with power was shown them on the mount of Transfiguration. (Matt. xvii.) And the glorious visions of reigning with Christ given in "the book of the Revelation of Jesus Christ" were to be shown to "His SERVANTS" who were serving Him, in order to cheer their waiting hearts and to strengthen their willing hands. It was for Abram's special time of need, as he was returning from the fight, that Melchisedec brought forth bread and wine

and, in John i., Nathanael's guileless, waiting spirit is the first to get the vision of the coming day of glory.

Such, then, are the four days of progressive testimony in John i. The *first* day is negative, setting aside the mortal and fallible creature, and that specially too in the testifier whom God may be using. The *second* reveals the sin-bearing and sin-atoning Lamb of God. The *third* points to all the footsteps of His walk through an evil world, that we, His redeemed, may *follow* in those steps. The *fourth* day's testimony is from His own lips, and has reference to His full divine glory as "the Son of God," and to His reigning day, when His saints shall reign with Him; and this can only be received as we enter into the world-rejected character of our Lord.

After these there came a two-day silence, and it is not till "the THIRD day" (*i.e.* apparently the third day after the previous Nathanael-day, just mentioned) that the crowning scene of the marriage comes, and "wine" without stint, reminding us of the "fulness of joy" and "pleasures for evermore" which are yet in store for us.

Surely this silent two-day interval is itself instructive. The better and the more glorious the vision that has been shown to God's Nathanaels, the more reasonably may we be expected to wait "with patience" for its fulfilment; as Paul says, "If we hope for that we see not, then do we *with patience* wait for it." And even the Israel remnant learn to say, "After two days He will revive us: in the THIRD day He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight." (Hosea vi. 2.)

And to *us* also of this dispensation, the two days, so to speak, of our present waiting are long enough to school us, and to teach us somewhat of our natural impatience; yet are they but "a little while" to faith, which always "expects a bright to-morrow," when "all will be well."

The marriage occasion at Cana of Galilee has been often and profitably dwelt on ; nevertheless, something may be said on it in a future paper. H. D.

### "SHE WAS NOT HID."

LUXE viii. 47.

To hide from Thy calm eyes, Thy yearning gaze  
Of love unfathomed, pity full and sweet—  
To shrink from falling at Thy gracious feet,  
Anointing them with tears of love and praise ?  
Ah ! no ; that look of Thine through all our ways  
Will follow us, those tender eyes repeat  
Their pleading, till our slow hearts turn and meet  
Thy love with ours, and yield Thee all their days.  
*There is no heart that can be hid from Thee ;*  
Its sins, its foolish ways, its failures sore  
Are open to Thy sight. Dear Lord, may we,  
The measure of whose guilt Thine own soul bore,  
Come straight with hearts that own it, full and free,  
Fall at Thy feet, and there Thy love adore.

### "HE COULD NOT BE HID."

MARK vii. 24.

THE door was closed, the Master sat within,  
Weary from toil of travel, and from strife  
Against the pride and falsehood ever rife  
About His footsteps in this world of sin.  
But one there was who must an entrance win,  
Whose strong heart, stabbed as with a deadly knife,  
Had writhed through days of anguish. Now, oh, life !  
Oh, joy ! HE comes, and hope and peace begin.  
He could no more be hid ; her urgent prayer,  
Her faith, prevailed ; He owned its strong control.  
*Thou never canst be hid*, dear Lord, whene'er  
Into Thy presence presses some poor soul  
Full of the anguish which would be despair,  
But that it knows Thy word shall make it whole.

A. L. B.

## “NESHAMAH ;”

OR, THE BREATH OF LIFE BREATHED INTO MAN.

A CONSIDERATION of this subject may be of use to those who have been troubled and perplexed by current false doctrines touching the soul of man, which deny, wholly or in part, man's future existence and the final punishment of the impenitent.

We need to ponder more profoundly what is intended by that momentous truth in Gen. i. 27, “*So God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him.*” With this must be connected the words in Gen. ii. 7, “*And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life ; and man became a living soul.*”

The word here for “breath” is *neshamah*, which in the Bible is variously translated “*breath,*” “*spirit,*” “*soul,*” &c., and often, when referring to human beings generally, “*those that breathe.*” But in every case the word has but one definite signification — “*the out-breathing of God,*” whether in life, as most frequently, or in destruction. It may mean His creative, life-giving breathing, as in Gen. ii. 7, or the destructive blast of His breath, as in 2 Sam. xxii. 16.

For the help, however, of those to whom the word of God is sufficient in matters of which God only can know anything, it may be well for us to trace the various uses of this word in the Bible.

In connection with the creation of man in the passage already referred to we read, “*And breathed into his nostrils the neshamah of life.*” The verb *breathed* we

would change to *blew*, because it is important not to confound it with the word *neshamah* or "breath," with which it is not radically connectd.

The same expression is also used in Gen. vii. 22, of those destroyed by the flood, and we would render the verse thus: "And all flesh that moved upon the earth, of fowl, and of cattle, and of beasts, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, expired; and all men, all in whose nostrils was the *neshamah* (breath) of the spirit of life, died." As the passage now stands in the English version it is ambiguous, and would seem to make "neshamah" apply to the lower animals. It is well further to notice that the next verse, more carefully translated, keeps up the same distinction between man and other animals: "And every living substance was blotted out which was upon the face of the ground; from man to cattle, to creeping thing, to fowl of the heavens; they were blotted out from the earth."

We will now turn to the book of Job, a book which tells us more of the spiritual and physical mysteries around us than many would imagine. There are two remarkable passages in chapters xxxii. 8 and xxxiii. 4, which taken together throw much light on the all-important subject of the soul of man. The one is, "There is a spirit in man: and the *neshamah* of the Almighty hath given them understanding." The other is, "The Spirit of God hath made me, and the *neshamah* of the Almighty hath given me life." It is this "neshamah" of God that gives to the soul of man its *life* and its *understanding*. Man is not immortal because he has a *soul* (Hebrew, *nephesh*; Greek, *psuchē*), but because that soul has been breathed into by God the fountain of life, and that "neshamah" which came from God is *man's neshamah*; and hence, in Isaiah lviii. 16, God speaks of men as "the souls" (the *neshamahs*)

“which I myself” (emphatic) “have made.” Thus the intellectual and spiritual powers in man, as well as the life in man, come not by a divine fiat, as when God said, “Let the earth bring forth . . . cattle, and creeping thing, and beast,” but they were produced by a divine in-breathing, without which man would have been merely an improved type of the lower animals. Thus, as early as the days of Job, God had unfolded to man some of the mysteries of his being, tracing his spiritual existence, not to the earth, out of which the beast of the field sprang, but to the breath of the mighty Spirit of God.

In connection with spiritual endowment through the “*neshamah*” we have further a very striking passage in Prov. xx. 27: “The *neshamah* of man is the candle of the Lord, searching all the inner chambers of the belly” (comp. xviii. 8; xx. 30; xxvi. 22); that is, it searches the inner recesses of the heart and conscience. It is this candle of God that exercises conscience in man, lacking which, whatever his elevation as a creature, he would have been incapable of communion with his Maker. However dimmed or darkened in the natural man, however seared by sin or hardened by transgression, it is this candle which yet preserves to him the possibility of understanding the voice of God, and which even now makes a sinner tremble at the thought of God, when He speaks to his conscience.

In speaking of God as the creator of heaven and earth Isaiah says, “He that spread forth the earth, and that which cometh out of it;” and then adds, “He that giveth *neshamah* unto the people upon it, and spirit to them that walk therein.” (xlii. 5.) We might connect with this Job xxvi. 4: “Whose *neshamah* came from thee?”

Referring to man’s death Elihu says, “If He set his heart upon him, if He gather to Himself his spirit and his



neshamah, all flesh shall perish together, and man" (Adam) "shall turn again to dust" (Job xxxiv. 15); and Solomon uses a similar form of words: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return to God who gave it." (Eccles. xii. 7.) See also chap. iii. 21: "Who knoweth the spirit of the sons of man which goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast which goeth downward to the earth?" Who knoweth? None but they who have been taught of God, and they can answer the question as it is answered in chap. xii.

When Job contemplates his present existence he says, "All the while my *neshamah* is in me, and the spirit of God in my nostrils, my lips shall not speak wickedness." (Chap. xxvii. 3.) It is interesting to notice how the *neshamah* is identified with the Spirit of God. Special mention of the "nostrils" is made in this passage as in the account of man's creation in Genesis ii., and also in Isa. ii. 22: "Cease ye from man, whose breath" (or *neshamah*) "is in his nostrils." This expression is not used to show that man is frail, but it is characteristic; for it is applied to God in the words—"The *neshamah* of the spirit of His nostrils." (Ps. xviii. 15; see also Job iv. 9.) In 1 Kings xvii. 17 and Daniel x. 17 the absence of the "*neshamah*" implies death.

The word "*neshamah*" is equivalent to a *human being* in the following passages, and is rendered by some such phrase as "that which breathed:" Deut. xx. 16, "Thou shalt not save alive any *neshamah*;" so in Joshua x. 40; xi. 11, 14; 1 Kings xv. 29. In Psalm cl. 6 we read, "Let every *neshamah* praise the Lord," pointing to the time of universal blessing, when man shall sing his hallelujah to his God.

There are a few other passages where the word occurs in connection with the judgments and the wrath of God,

which it will be well to notice. In Job iv. 9, speaking of the sinner, Eliphaz says, "By the *neshamah* (blast) of God they perish, and by the spirit (breath) of His nostrils are they consumed." In Ps. xviii. 15 and 2 Sam. xxii. 16 we read, "Then the channels of the waters were seen . . . at the *neshamah* (blast) of the spirit (breath) of thy nostrils." Isaiah, in describing Tophet, the typical hell (the Gehenna of the Old Testament), says, "He hath made it deep and large: the pile thereof is fire and much wood; the *neshamah* (breath) of the Lord, like a stream of brimstone, doth kindle it," or burns in it. (Isa. xxx. 33.) And in Job xxxvii. 10 we learn that it is "the *neshamah* of God" that makes the frost, and adds its severity to the north wind of divine judgments. In these days, when the judgments of God are ignored by so many, and when His righteous indignation is treated as inconsistent with the divine character, these Scriptures which tell us of the almighty *neshamah* that not only creates but destroys, call for our solemn and prayerful consideration. The *neshamah* breathes life and joy on the one hand, but it breathes fire and destruction on the other. "This God is our God," and "our God is a consuming fire."

We have quoted or referred to all the passages in which the word "*neshamah*" occurs, and we think that no one who reads them through carefully can fail to perceive that the life of man involves an inward and spiritual creation, as well as an outward and physical one, and that the human soul has an existence apart from that of the body, so that while man can kill the body, power over the soul has been reserved by God exclusively in His own hands.

It has been argued that it is unscriptural to say man is immortal, because we read, God "only hath immortality" (1 Tim. vi. 16); but essential immortality in God must ever stand distinct from the derived immortality of the

creature, and therefore our Lord does not hesitate to say that those who are raised again cannot die; that is, they are immortal, and are in this respect like the angels. (Luke xx. 36.) At the same time it would not be consistent with Scripture language to speak of those as immortal whose portion is the second death, though they partake of a never-ending existence through being partakers of the divine neshamah. Therefore while we may hold all that is popularly understood by the expression "immortal soul," it is of importance to avoid a phraseology that Scripture does not use.

It is easy to call the doctrine of man's everlasting nature a doctrine of heathen philosophy; but what if it be a relic of primeval truth that has outlived the idolatries of nations? In that case he who casts it aside sinks lower than the heathen, and ranks himself with the beasts that perish.

Satan is making strenuous efforts to prepare man for that great conflict between the powers of light and darkness which awaits the world, and this he is doing by robbing God of His righteousness, and by depriving man of his high prerogative.

From the foregoing observations on this remarkable word, it is evident that much of the haziness that overlies the momentous subject connected with it arises from ambiguity in our English translation, which unbelievers and misbelievers have taken advantage of to find uncertainties where God has left none, or to broach errors which God emphatically disowns. The *neshamah* is the divine inspiration that connects the "*image*" and the "*likeness*" of the divine glory with the *Adam* formed out of the dust of the ground, imparting to man his dignity as a creature by giving him a "*life*" and an "*understanding*" not possessed by the lower animals, and a conscience that witnesses for God and to the claims of right and wrong. It is this that makes

the spirit in man essentially distinct from the spirit of the beast, so that at the death of the body the spirit of the one goes to God and that of the other to the earth.\*

In other words, that which links man with the lower animal-world is his body, while that which links him with God is the *neshamah*, which being divine is capable of regeneration. Regeneration is not a creation of something new, but a divine *re-creation*. This distinction it is of essential moment to bear in mind, or the identity is lost between the one who is now a child of God and who was previously a child of wrath. But for this divine element in man divine grace would have had nothing competent to work upon.

The relation between our creation and our ultimate redemption is closely connected, as the vision of Rev. iv., presenting God as the God of creation, is connected with the record of redemption in chap. v. Chap. iv. ends with these solemn words, "For thy pleasure they are and were created;" and we learn from Scripture that when God created man in the garden, He created him *capable* of enjoying the exalted position into which He has raised him through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. Thus we read that God created man a *little* lower than the angels, and in re-creation He raises him above them. What that means and what it must involve let those show who seek to degrade man to the level of the animal, and let them tell us whether revelation and nature do not teach us that the distance between sons of God (as the angels are called) and the beasts of the field is as great as between heaven and earth.

God has no afterthoughts. God created man what he

\* An Israelite Christian, learned in Jewish literature, tells us that the Jews thoroughly hold that at the Creation the *neshamah* distinguished man from animals.

was, to enable him to become what he will be. The contrast between the divine *neshamah* and the earthen body is continually alluded to in the Old Testament even, and much more in the New. Read the description of death in Ecclesiastes xii. 6, 7, which we would translate thus—

“Or ever the *silver* cord be removed far off,  
And the *golden* bowl haste away,  
Or the *pitcher* be broken at the fountain,  
And the *wheel* crushed at the cistern.  
Then shall the *dust* return to earth as it was :  
And the *spirit* return to the God who gave it.”

Notice in the above couplets how the silver and the gold are figurative of the spirit, while the earthen pitcher and the wooden wheel point to the body. Notice also that while the gold and silver—the imperishable—are spoken of as removing and hasting away, the perishable—the earth and wood—are spoken of as broken and crushed to pieces—the one returning to God, the fountain of human existence, and the other returning as a crushed and broken thing to the earth, out of which God made it. Compare the golden bowl here, which contains the *neshamah*, with that in Zechariah iv. 3, which contains the oil.

But for profound ignorance of Scripture we should never hear of such a thing as “conditional immortality” or of annihilation of the soul. They both arise from a one-sided contemplation of the nature of man, a nature so awfully grand and glorious that it is still majestic in its ruin and degradation; for man “*is* the image and the glory of God” (1 Cor. xi. 7); not *once was*, not *shall be*, but *is* His image and glory. Let those who doubt the glory of man’s creation ponder these words.

Were it not that simple souls are often blinded by the verbal sophistries of those cleverer than themselves, we might well leave the plain teaching of Scripture to work out its own remedy; but when men of note and men of

power turn aside, many are those who blindly follow. The evil consequences of departing from the faith of God's elect (Titus i. 1) are often manifest in the personal life and teaching of those who hold false views of man's past, present, and future, and convey to us a solemn admonition.

To all enquirers after truth we would say, Remember Hosea vi. 3: "Then shall ye know, if ye follow on to know the Lord." The eye must be following Him, and the heart be seeking to know Him; then will all be plain, "for His going forth is prepared as the morning;" and He is leading to that morning without clouds when all our mists shall disappear, and we shall know as we are known. Till then we see through a glass darkly, and learn to trust in implicit faith the guidance of that Hand which created us, redeemed us, and will bring us to eternal glory through Jesus Christ our Lord.

H. G.

## ESSENTIALS TO GROWTH AND FRUITFULNESS.

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS ON PSALM i. 1-3.

"BLESSED is the man." The word "blessed" is plural in the Hebrew, and the word used here for "man" is rendered in another psalm "a man of high degree." Blessings are on the man of high degree. He is one of the noble order of Bereans, one of heaven's nobility. "Evil communications corrupt good manners;" but he will not have his manners corrupted. He will not take one step in ungodly counsels, nor stand a moment with sinners, lest he be turned out of the way, nor will he sit down to rest with scorners.

The first steps in sin are restless and uneasy, then they are taken more at ease, and at length sin is rested in. The "ungodly" are the *lawless*, those who have set aside the

law of God. "But *his delight* is in the law of Jehovah." Not simply because he delights in the promises or the consolations of the Word, or because he is interested in it, but because it is the *law* of God. In it he *continually* meditates, day and night, esteeming the words of His mouth more than his necessary food. "He shall *assuredly* be" (such is the force of the word) "as a tree planted by the rivulets of water." Not a broad river, but rivulets. If the tree depended on the river, it might be sometimes flooded, and at other times parched; but in eastern lands the little streams are led by the trees to water and nourish them. Now observe he is *planted* by these rivulets. The divine assurance in verse 3 is, that if he makes the law the companion of his hours by day, it will be food during the night, when he cannot see to read. Quietness and rest are as essential to the soul as to the body. We cannot be always at the broad river of a conference. If we were altogether dependent upon that for the nourishment of our souls, we should fare badly; but the little meandering streams find their way into our closets, into our Bible-readings, and into our several assemblies where we meet.

I desire to point out *four things* essential to the growth, flourishing, and fruit-bearing of a tree.

1. *Soil*, and plenty of it. The tree must be *planted*, or it will die. God, the husbandman, is the planter. What soil are these trees of righteousness to be planted in? The soil for a soul to be rooted in is the word of God. "I commend you to God and to the word of His grace." "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him to a wise man."

2. *Water*. Without water the best tree will wither and die. Let the soil be ever so rich, and the manure ever so scientific, unless the water carry the nourishment to the fibres of the roots, there will be no increase in any

plant. I would compare this to the Holy Spirit's taking of the Word and bringing it to our souls in living power. (See John iv. 14; vii. 38, 39; xvi. 14.) However rich the word of God, unless the Spirit of God brings that word home to the soul there is no nourishing or growth in the knowledge of God. We are dependent on the Spirit as we are on the Word.

3. *Air*. A tree may be planted in the richest soil, and water may be flowing amply at its roots, yet if air be excluded, that tree will wither and die; for, like man, it draws nutriment from the air. Now to what are we to compare this in the matter of the soul? It is the breathing of the soul in fellowship with God. As we are dependent on the air we breathe for the vitalization of the blood, so the communion of the Holy Ghost is necessary for our life. It is communion *with* the Holy Ghost. We are to make Him our bosom companion, and seek from Him every day light on the word of God.

4. *Sunshine*. We have seen those poor apologies for plants grown in some dark cellar away from the sunlight, with no colour and scarcely any life in them. There are some Christians like that. We need the sunshine, the brightness, the warmth of the love of God; we want His approval. We must not only feed on the word of God, but have communion with the Holy Ghost, and dwell in the divine presence. Our souls must not live in damp cellars, so to speak, where mildew and mould are, but we must be up in the sunlight as much as possible.

If all these things were true of us, we should have such a stock of spiritual energy and vigour that we should not be found complaining of our leanness, but should be filled with the fruits of righteousness, each bringing forth "fruit in its season." The world likes fruit *out of season*; but God has made everything beautiful *in its season*. We



should be meek at the right time, and stern when it is right to be so. Then, further, our leaf would not wither. We should never fail in our outward confession of Christ, but be always as living epistles. (T. N.)

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## ON HEALING BY FAITH.

IN Scripture we are taught that we know not what we should pray for as we ought, and that we need the intercession of the Holy Spirit regarding the infirmities that cleave to our prayers. (Rom. viii. 26, 27.) True prayer can only be according to the will of God. (1 John v. 14.) It is our part to trust perfect wisdom and perfect love to choose for us in all that concerns our bodily and temporal wants. Our real needs He has covenanted to supply. (Phil. iv. 19.)

The portion of scripture on which the teachers of the new doctrine of absolute healing of the body by faith make their assertions is Matthew viii. 17, which contains a quotation from Isaiah liii. 4. They also attach to Romans xii. 1, viii. 11, the idea of physical perfection. Their argument is, that when Christ made an atonement for our sins He also made an atonement for the sicknesses and sorrows of His people; and all that is required of suffering saints, in order to be healed, is to believe that He bore their ailments in His own body on the tree in the same manner as He bore their guilt.

Thus a Christian, if this new teaching were true, should have neither sickness, deformity, nor loss of any faculty or sense. He should also be exempt from grief, pain, and sorrow.

But this doctrine, attractive and pleasing as it is to many, is not found in the word of God.

It is true that to Israel promises were made, conditional on their obedience, of strength, temporal prosperity, riches, immunity from sickness and trial, with the assurance of a rest and home in Canaan. (See Lev. xxvi., and many other portions.) Very different is the way of the Church. She is called to suffer. The path the Lord calls His people to tread is one of trial and afflictions; for thereunto we are appointed. (1 Thess. iii. 3.) "In the world," Jesus said, "ye shall have tribulation." Such words were never spoken to Israel. In this dispensation we are called to be strangers and pilgrims, as those who are not of the world. While temporal prosperity was the promised portion of obedient Israel, adversity is that of the Church, and her members have many experiences besides that of joy. But an experience of joy only, as the constant condition of true believers, is often taught by those referred to; while sickness and sorrow are considered as evidences of sin, and of unbelief that limits the power of God to heal. (See John ix. 1-3.)

Many godly Christians, who suffer, according to the will of God, through pain, weakness, or some other form of the daily cross, have been troubled much in spirit by this new doctrine of atonement for sickness and sorrow. To such I would say, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." (1 John iv. 1; Isa. viii. 20.)

It is true that it is written that "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly" (Ps. lxxxiv. 11; Rom. viii. 32); but is perfect health and freedom from trial safest or best for us? In such a life the graces of patience and longsuffering could not exist, as there would not be circumstances conducive to their growth. The blessed ministry of the "God of all comfort" (2 Cor. i. 3, 4) would be no longer needed, as saints would live in an atmosphere far removed from the pathway of suffering.

This new school would teach that the experience of Peter, James, and John on the mount of Transfiguration should be the normal condition of believers now, forgetting that "Jesus only" was as truly with His disciples in their conflict at the foot of the mountain as He was with them during the vision at the summit. (Matt. xvii.)

We know that the apostles possessed the gifts of healing, but their use of them was never discretionary. Trophimus, for instance, was left at Miletum sick. (2 Tim. iv. 20.) We do not learn that Epaphroditus was immediately raised up in answer to faith's demand (Phil. ii. 25, 27); nor yet Timothy, whom Paul exhorted to use wine to relieve his often infirmities. (1 Tim. v. 23.) The desire and will of Paul himself was that he should be healed of his bodily suffering (2 Cor. xii.), and for this he besought the Lord. It pleased God in His wisdom to withhold deliverance, while He answered the cry of His servant by ministering such grace and strength that he was able to rejoice in his infirmities, gladly accepting the way of his Father, in humble submission to His will.

In these instances, and as obtains elsewhere in Scripture, we hear of no demand on the power of Jehovah on the ground of an atonement being made, at Calvary, for sickness and sorrow in the Church. Prayer is not a demand, but a supplication, and is to be made in subjection to the will of God. Thus the Lord Jesus prayed (Matt. xi. 21-26; Luke xxii. 42), and so let us seek to pray after His example. (Matt. vi. 10.)

We believe that it pleases God often to raise up His children from sickness in answer to their cries, and the prayers of their friends; sometimes by gradual recovery; on more rare occasions by rapid restoration; at other times apparently by means of remedies and treatment about which divine guidance has been asked and been given.

We know that "healing-by-faith miracles" have been practised even by Papists and Mormons with apparent success; but are all instances of healing invariably tokens of the favour of God? Some who have been thus healed have died soon after their recovery; others have lived so as to forget Him whose hand healed them, and their prolonged life has been careless and unfruitful. (See Psalm cvi. 15.)

Many healed according to the divine will, have lived to testify of the love and mercy of their God.

Affliction is often sent as chastisement, and may be removed by God on the confession of the sins that those so tried were conscious of (1 John v.; Heb. xii. 5-11); it is also sent for discipline (as in John xv. 2); it may be a life-burden from childhood, a portion given by the Lord, and very fruitful to many has the holy gift of suffering proved. (Phil. i. 29; 1 Peter i. 19.) All God-given trials are fruit-bearing in those who receive them in faith, and who let patience have her perfect work. (James i. 3, 4; Rom. v. 4.) In 1 John v. 16 prayer could not be in the form of a demand for life on the ground of a definite promise, as none could know what the issue of the illness would be, whether unto death or otherwise.

It cannot be needful for afflicted saints to take long journeys to houses of healing. Surely their prayer-hearing God will answer their cries, and He will do for them as He thinketh good. (John xiv. 14.) If it is not His will to grant deliverance from the trial, His presence will be given as His children go through the fires of tribulation. He has not said that they will be able to walk on the waters of trial, but He has said, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee." (Isa. xliii. 2.)

When the psalmist cried for help in the day of trouble,

God's answer came; not always by removing the trials, but by the manifestation of His presence in them; so that He praised God for help received, and counted it as one of the many salvations of his God.

As yet the time has not come when there shall be "neither adversary nor evil occurrent;" and when sickness and sorrow shall cease to be. For that day we wait—the day of glory for the Church; the day of redemption for Israel. Not till then will the feet of His pilgrims be finally cleansed from the world's defilement. After the night of weeping comes the morning of joy, when the redeemed will be presented a "glorious church," without spot or wrinkle—to be for ever with the Lord. R. H.

## LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

### III.

#### *"Holding faith and a good conscience."*

"We must not separate these. *Conscience* may be greatly exercised about *evil*, and lead to separation from it; but if there be not faith, when the pinch comes—as come it surely will—there will be fretfulness and probably turning back. *Faith* is occupied with that which is *good*; it is 'the substance of things hoped for' and 'the evidence of things not seen.' Its object is God, the only intrinsic and essential good; and every good and perfect gift comes down from Him. Look at the epistle to the Hebrews. See what a glorious commencement—the Son, the upholder of all things by the word of His power, having by Himself purged our sins, is sitting down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. This enables us to enter into the holiest, and the word to us is, 'Let us draw near . . . in full assurance of faith.' But what a strange contrast meets us both with respect to the Lord Himself and to ourselves. Where is Jesus to be found *here*? He sits at the right hand of the Majesty on high in chap. i., and He is found outside the camp in chap. xiii.

And if we enter into the holiest of all by faith, we must go forth unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach; for here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

"And now as to application. If X—— is shaken to pieces and her conscience exercised about the evil of the establishment, try to show her our heavenly calling and all its blessed results, which the Holy Ghost opens to faith, and then she will be prepared for trial; for we have to learn many disappointments in our expectations from ourselves and the saints, as well as from circumstances. But if we are privileged to go inside the veil, we shall not murmur if we find ourselves outside the camp. Holiness is separation *unto* and *from*. We are separated unto God that we may be separated from evil. 'Be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy: for I am holy.' Faith and a good conscience must go on hand in hand. There may be 'protest against' without 'confession of;' and I believe that 'confession of' is the safer rule, and our best protest against evil. May we together witness a good confession.

J. L. H."

"Plympton, Monday.

#### IV.

"*Whatsoever is not of faith is sin.*"

"This is an interesting and profitable study. Sin shall not have dominion over us, because we are not under law but under grace. 'Thou shalt' and 'Thou shalt not' come somewhat gratingly upon the ear of the believer. They are the customary formula of 'law,' under which he is *not*. Grace places him in a position to exercise himself to maintain 'a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men.' We do not ask ourselves the question, May I do this or that? Is it right or wrong? There are many things which as believers we cannot decide simply on the principle of right and wrong. No doubt the apostle was asked the question, May I go to a dinner-party among my idolatrous friends and relatives? He did not answer the question categorically, but 'if any of them that believe not bid you to a feast, and ye be disposed to go, whatsoever is set before you eat, asking no question for conscience' sake.'

"Had he said '*No*,' would it not have ruffled the flesh, and stirred up its instincts for a liberty of its own? Had he said '*Yes*,' it would have opened the way to all licence. Was there not something that touched conscience more in the words, 'If ye be disposed to go,' than in a peremptory negative? I will not transcribe, but ask you to read the context (1 Cor. x. 31-33; xi. 1), 'Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.'

"For my own part, I should think it more rational to visit the showrooms and inspect the spring fashions of the dress-makers than to inspect an exhibition of church millinery. But when I think of Him who was '*disallowed indeed* of men, but chosen of God and precious,' and that *we* are the very members of His body and the bride of His heart's affections, it does seem to me that the bride in her modest apparel would almost turn away with disgust from the tinsel of the harlot. Perhaps the apostle's brief prayer (Phil. i. 9-11) might be studied to advantage in this connection.

J. L. H."

*"Plymstock, April 10th, 1866.*

## NOTES AND REPLIES.

*Does 1 Cor. x. 27 justify a believer in going to worldly feasts?*

The question of fellowship with the world does not appear to be raised here; *that* is unmistakeably dealt with in 2 Cor. vi. 14-vii. 1. What *is* contemplated is simply the difficulty as to the partaking of food that has been offered to idols. The apostle shows that the question of *food* is not to hinder the child of God from going to the house of an unbeliever and partaking at his table, for "the earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." What is required of us is, that we take the Lord with us. For our guidance we have the example of Christ Himself. Wherever He went He was faithful alike to God, to His host, and to His fellow-guests. To those who desire to be thus faithful, nothing but a deep sense of duty would lead them to go where their Lord would not be a welcome guest, and they would soon find themselves unwelcome also. "If they have called the Master of the house Beelzebub, how much more shall they call them of His household," if they tread in His steps?

## LOVE'S LOWLY SERVICE.

JOHN xiii. 1-17.

IN the end of chap. xii. we reach the close of the Lord's public ministry; in chap. xiii. we see Him in the midst of His disciples. He departed and hid Himself from those who rejected Him (xii. 36), while to those who had received Him He proceeded to manifest Himself more fully; and the first act of this fuller manifestation is a wondrous expression of love, showing itself in lowly service. The words which introduce us to this scene are very striking—"Now before the feast of the passover, Jesus knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end."

On one occasion we are told that "His hour was not yet come," and therefore His enemies could do nothing but plot against Him; but now it had come, and He knew it. In a very real sense it was the hour of His foes and of the power of darkness (Luke xxii. 53); but in a far higher sense it was "His hour," the hour He had looked forward to from eternity, the hour for which He had come, by the portals of human birth, into the world. It was their hour of apparent triumph; it was His hour of real victory. It was their hour because they were allowed to carry out their designs of human enmity and hellish hate; it was His hour inasmuch as all that they did only led to the accomplishment of the deep purposes of divine wisdom and love. It was Satan's hour for bruising the heel of the woman's seed; it was His hour for planting His heel upon the head of the mighty foe, and thus gaining a



victory, the greatness of which cannot be fully known until the new creation of God shines forth in all its glory.

But let us note carefully how that hour is characterized—"His hour was come that He should *depart out of this world unto the Father.*" He knew indeed all that must precede that departure—the dark shadows of Gethsemane, and the yet deeper sorrows of Calvary; but towering above all the gloom and darkness and woe was "the joy set before Him," which could never for a moment be absent from His view. As the One who had fully glorified the Father on earth, He had before Him the joy of returning to Him and of finding in the expression of the Father's delight and satisfaction His highest recompense, and the pledge of all other rewards of His service. He looked at Gethsemane and Calvary, with all that intervened (inexpressible as the sufferings were), as so many *stepping-stones to the glory, and to the fulfilment of that word—"Thou hast made Him most blessed for ever; Thou hast made Him exceeding glad with Thy countenance."*

But nothing that was before Him interrupted His love to His own—"He loved them unto the end." While this expression sets forth the continuity of His love, it may also take in its fulness and intensity. The anticipation of departing to the Father did not take His heart or His thoughts from them; the knowledge that one of that little company had already planned the dark deed of betraying Him did not prevent His giving them a special token of His love. Though He was "troubled in spirit" (v. 21), He had words of comfort and cheer for them. When the officers came to take Him He threw the shield of protection over them—"If ye seek me let these go their way;" and even when He was before the council no care for Himself hindered the outflow of His heart toward Peter in that look which produced repentance not to be repented of.

There is a touching contrast expressed in the words which describe the disciples as "His own which were in the world." He was going to the Father, but He would leave them in the world; He would be in the glory while they were still in the wilderness. For Him the sorrows and storms and conflicts would be for ever past; but they would be in the midst of them as sheep surrounded by wolves; and having all this before Him, the Lord gives them a special manifestation of that love that would ever be active on their behalf. That love embraces us as well as them, and it is a joy to us to know that whom the Lord loves He loves to the end. It is our privilege always to sing that blessed song—"Unto Him that loveth us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood . . . to Him be glory and dominion for ever and ever."

We do well to ponder the third verse, and what it tells us of the Lord—"Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God." Why is this so expressly stated? Did not the Lord always know this? Undoubtedly He did; but it seems as though at this moment He had very vividly before His mind what could never have been absent from it. It was with the full consciousness of His wondrous dignity that He stooped to the lowly act of service here recorded. How simple are the words, but how deep—He came from God, and was going to God! They are beyond exposition, but they call for meditation in the spirit of worship. Then how minute is the narrative that follows! It is the description given by one whose eye followed the Lord with increasing wonder at every step, and from whose mind the scene had never faded. As we read, we are conscious of the dignity of the Lord in the very service. There is a deliberateness about it that tells how truly it was the outflow of His heart towards

them. It was no impulse of the moment, no hasty act, but the calm expression of a settled, abiding love that could show itself in lowliest service towards those who were the objects of it. It was love unchangeable displaying itself according to the circumstances that called it forth.

And this thought leads us to notice the *first* lesson of this matchless narrative, that which is most on the surface. The little company were occupying a chamber that had been placed at their disposal by a householder in the city; they were not his guests, but had the room to themselves. Two of them had made ready the passover, and when the hour was come the Lord sat down and the twelve apostles with Him. (Luke xxii. 11-14.) Part of the furniture of that guest-chamber was the basin for washing the feet of those who entered it. This service was usually performed by a slave, but there was not one there to render it, and none of the twelve attempted to do so. They all allowed their Lord to sit down without even offering to minister to Him the comfort of washing His feet after the dusty walk from Bethany. Their thoughts were differently occupied; for "there was a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest" (Luke xxii. 24), and eyes that are blinded with pride never discern the opportunity for service. The Lord silently rebukes their pride by giving them an example of wondrous humility. He takes the basin they had not attempted to touch, and, divested of His outer garments and girded as a servant, He proceeds to wash their feet and to wipe them.

But a still deeper lesson is brought out by the impulsiveness of Peter. Though he did not offer to wash his Master's feet, his whole soul rose against the thought of the Lord stooping to perform such a service for him, and with astonishment he asks, "Lord, dost thou wash my feet?" The Lord's reply intimates that there was a hidden

meaning in the act that Peter could not discern—"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter" (or afterwards). This, however, did not satisfy Peter, and with self-assertion he replied, "Thou shalt never wash my feet." "Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me." Solemn statement! Thus the Lord introduces more distinctly the truth of that spiritual cleansing of which this was but a symbol. It was needful for Him to stoop to the lowest depth of humiliation to serve those who are to be with Him in His glory. None can have part with Him in the fellowship of His love and the glory of His kingdom but those who are cleansed by Him. And any service that we may do for Him can only be as an expression of gratitude for that which in infinite grace He has rendered to us. Even in service the pre-eminence must be His.

What a revolution was caused in Peter's mind by this one word! With natural impulsiveness he exclaims, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." As much as to say, "I can submit to anything rather than not have part with thee." And this was good; but Peter shows his ignorance, which the Lord at once corrects in such a manner as to furnish lasting profit to His Church. "Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit." As is known by many, the word translated *is washed* differs from the other word used for *wash* throughout the passage, and always refers to the washing or bathing of the whole body.

There is an entire washing, a perfect cleansing, wrought by Him for every one who comes to Him, submitting as a needy sinner to His way of grace. This cleansing, which embraces the whole being, needs no repetition, and never can be repeated. It is that "washing of regeneration" which puts us altogether into a new position, and brings

us into a relationship to God that can never be annulled ; and for which praise is given in Revelation i. 5, where the same word is used.

But there is also a cleansing that is continuous. In those countries where the feet are not covered as ours are, anyone who takes a bath, quickly gets his feet soiled with dust. This made the washing of the feet as customary in Palestine as the washing of the hands is with us ; and this act of every-day life the Lord takes up to show that though the one great cleansing has been accomplished once for all, yet there is a further need, which He also meets. His people have to walk in a world where all is defiling, and yet they are called to tread the heavenly courts and to draw near to God continually ; but this they cannot do with defiled feet. If freedom of access to God is theirs, there must be a fitness maintained for His holy presence ; and it is just this which the Lord does maintain by His unfailing priestly service in the sanctuary above. The more we cherish the habit of drawing near to God as worshippers, the more conscious shall we be of this need of continuous cleansing, and the deeper will be our appreciation of the priestly ministrations of our Lord on our behalf.

Peter's interruption did not hinder the Lord in His service, and when He had finished it He called their attention to the explanation He was about to give, and told them that what He had done was to be an example to them. As such, then, we also are called to consider and follow it.

We may not be called to do exactly what the Lord did ; but we are called to cultivate in the spirit of Christ a readiness for any loving service, however lowly. Where there is the disposition to serve, opportunities will not be lacking, but it needs the lowly mind to discern and take

advantage of them. If our heart is haughty and our eyes are lofty, we may be looking all over the world for some great thing to do, and miss the many little things that are at our fingers' ends. The disciples may have been thinking of the thrones, but their eyes were above the basin; so our hearts may be upon something that we judge to be of importance, to the neglect of a kindly act that would gladden the heart of a brother or sister and yield fragrance to the Lord Himself.

That there is a spiritual sense in which we may follow the example of the Lord, few will question; for there surely is such a thing as fellowship with Him in washing each other's feet, however little we may know of it. It is indeed true that in the matter of dealing with sin the Lord stands alone, and in the honour of putting it away none can share; but if we can help each other to take our defilements to Him, we render true service. Then how often a little loving sympathy or godly counsel may save a brother or sister from a path of defilement, and above all how precious to God is intercession on behalf of any we see in danger! If we were more spiritual, we might discern anything contrary to Christ in another before it grew to such dimensions as to be manifest to the world, and might help to a dealing with it that would lead to deliverance.

In order to acquire keenness of perception true lowliness is needed; for "with the lowly is wisdom." To wash another's feet we must go down. The Lord stooped to His wondrous service, and He did it with the full consciousness of His dignity. This is not without its lesson for us. We speak of being children of God, and we do so with true praise to Him whose grace has brought us to this high estate; but if we better knew the reality of this relationship, it would be more natural to us to render any service,

however humble, to those who with us are also heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ. If we were fully conscious of our true dignity as one with Him, it would be no effort to us to follow Him in His lowly path.

Love was the spring of our Lord's service, and love must be the spring of ours. He calls upon us to love one another as He has loved us, and if there be the love there will be the service. May we prove increasingly the truth of that word, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them!"

W. H. B.

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### "A LITTLE WHILE."\*

"A little while, and ye shall not see Me; and again a little while, and ye shall see Me: because I go to the Father."

THIS expression occurs no less than seven times in John xvi. 13-19, and connected with it (as throughout the chapter) emphasis is laid on the words "ME" and "I."

The disciples repeat among themselves in astonishment the words, "A little while;" and the Lord observes their desire to know His meaning. There is nothing He more delights in than questions asked with a worshipping heart. It is beautiful to notice the way in which the Lord seeks to awaken in His disciples' hearts the hope of His coming. He does this gradually, yet so effectually, that when He is taken away they return from Bethany, from the worship of their departing Lord, "*with great joy*," even though they had seen Him "carried up into heaven." (Luke xxiv. 50-53.)

There is great danger of our being occupied with the manner and time and circumstance of the Lord's coming rather than with HIMSELF; of being chiefly concerned in knowing whether such and such occurrences will or will not take place ere He returns, whether the Church will

\* Notes of an Address.

pass through the tribulation or not, and similar questions; and amidst such considerations, important in themselves, we almost forget the *Person* who is to come. This is Satan's device to keep us from the joy of this hope. In the great matter of the advent let not these questions come between our souls and *Himself*. Let not any points of truth blind our eyes to Him who is "the Truth." The power of all truth is in the Person of Christ, and when the eye is turned away from Him to mere abstract truth we are brought down as from heaven to earth. Let us get above the arena of questions of strife down here to that place above, "where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." As chaste virgins, espoused to Him, let us be occupied with our Lord Himself, and then we shall be gentler and quieter, and shall love one another with a purer heart and more fervently.

In Hebrews x. we are again reminded of the "little while," and the advent is spoken of in a very solemn connection. "Vengeance" has to be recompensed on despisers; that is, the execution of a sentence that has been already passed. (Comp. v. 30 with 2 Thess. i. 7, 10.) "It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." David fell into the hands of the "living God" when God uttered the sentence, "The sword shall never depart from thine house." "Our God is a consuming fire," and all the wood, hay, and stubble that we have built on God's foundation will assuredly be burnt up. "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence," with its "great recompence of reward" (v. 35), reminds us of, "I will see you again." After the patient doing of the will of God the promise will be fulfilled. "For yet *a little while*"—more literally, "a very, very little while;" or "a little while, how short, how short!" "and He that shall come will come." Jacob's seven years seemed to him but a few days for the love he



had to Rachel. (Gen. xxix. 20.) Paul spanned his years of toil and suffering, and called them "a moment," in that wonderful passage, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment." (2 Cor. iv. 17, 18.) Love makes affliction light and its continuance short.

The precious book of Canticles teaches us the same lesson, and is full of direct and indirect references to the advent; for all that belongs to our spiritual fellowship with Christ here is designed to carry our thoughts on to our eternal personal fellowship with Him after the "little while" is past, just as in John's gospel the "I come again" of the future, in chap. xiv. 3, is seen as a *present* thing in the "We will come unto him," of v. 23. Thus faith's present and hope's future are beautifully blended. All that which in the prophets points to the future can be taken up and applied by faith to the present. In Canticles ii. the Beloved comes leaping over the mountains and skipping over the hills, and calls to His bride, "Arise, my love, my dove, my fair one, and come away." This tells of the joy of the advent to Him who went to the cross to secure it. The whole book is full of similar allusions.

It is from the book of Habakkuk that the apostle quotes in Hebrews x. Habakkuk means "the embosomed one," and from out of the bosom of God he learns to look down calmly and quietly on the troubles and trials of his people and of the world, and can say, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom . . . yet I will rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." But to find God as sufficient we must get into that very bosom in which Christ dwelt. In quoting the words of Habakkuk, "*It* will not tarry," the apostle writes, "*He* will not tarry." The prophet was taken up with the *vision*; the apostle with the *Person*, which is what we need. Scoffers may ask, "Where is the promise of His coming?" but we can say

with Habakkuk, "*At the end it will speak.*" We have God's word, and that is enough. Patient waiting there needs be "if it tarry;" but then it is added, "It will *not* tarry." The same root is used in Hebrew; but there is a marked distinction, implying that though He may wait, and centuries pass, yet He tarries for a purpose, and will not loiter. The diligent postman may seem long in coming to our door; but he is calling from house to house, and does not loiter. The Lord does not loiter like one careless of the attainment of the object for which He tarries. He waits to fill His house, to accomplish the number of His elect; and when all is ready He will come, and that suddenly. "The Lord is *not slack* concerning His promise, as some men count slackness."

In Hebrews xi. we see that *faith* made men witnesses for God. They believed what God had said, and when God gave a promise they gave their "Amen" to it; and it is beautifully said in 2 Cor. i. 20, "For how many so ever be the promises of God, *in Him* is the Yea: wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us." (R.V.) That is, to all God's promises Christ gives the "Yea," as in Rev. xxii. 20, "*Yea*, I come quickly;" and to them we give our "Amen" of faith and trust, and say "Amen; come, Lord Jesus."

May then the hope of the coming be more *personal*, and may our thoughts be more immediately directed to *Christ Himself*, and then from loving and longing hearts will arise the cry again and again, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

"*The Lord HIMSELF shall descend from heaven.*"

"Thou art my joy, Lord Jesus!

Thou art my glorious sun!

In the light that shineth from Thee

I gladly journey on."

(H. G.)

## JOSHUA.

## II. THE CROSSING OF THE JORDAN AND ENTERING UPON THE LAND.

ENCOURAGED by the special message of Jehovah, Joshua takes his place as leader of Israel after the death of Moses. He gives direction to the officers of the host to prepare the people for passing over, or rather through, the Jordan, that they might go in and possess the land which Jehovah, their God, had given them. (Joshua i. 10, 11.)

Thus Joshua evinced his courage, even by simple obedience to Jehovah's word. It had been said to him, "Be thou strong and very courageous . . . *to do.*" Unswerving obedience was to be the result of his constant reading and meditation in the law of Jehovah; whilst prosperity in his ways and good success were to be his reward.

Dear fellow-Christian, this is surely God's voice to us in our day. We are to be of good courage to *read* and *meditate* day and night; for indeed diligent, patient exercise in so doing is among the sharpest tests of true courage. We are to read in order to *obey*; and to obey with the *certain assurance* of blessing, of prosperity, and success.

Paul had this in mind when he exhorted, charged, and encouraged his genuine son Timothy. Let us ponder his words. "Meditate on these things; give thyself wholly to them [be in them]; that thy profiting may appear to all." And again, "Take heed unto thyself, and to the *doctrine*; *continue* in them: for in so doing thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee." (1 Tim. iv. 16.) This is true prosperity.

To resume, Jehovah had promised to be with Joshua as He had been with Moses; and He is now about to give a

pledge of His gracious purpose to Israel, and a testimony to Joshua's divine appointment, by a miraculous passage through the Jordan, even as the passage through the Red Sea had testified that Moses was then Israel's divinely-appointed leader. "Ye are to go over this Jordan."

Joshua next recalls to the memory of the two and a half tribes the solemn charge delivered to them by Moses, the servant of Jehovah. He reminds them that Jehovah had given them rest; that the land this side of Jordan (which some of the nation must have possessed; for it was a part of the conquered territory) had also been given to them, but on condition that they went over armed, to journey and to fight until their brethren should inherit *their* portion. Thus Joshua upheld the authority of Jehovah's word by the mouth of Moses, His servant, and called the people to obedience. Our responsibility also is to maintain the authority of God's word, by "contending earnestly for the faith once for all delivered to the saints;" neither courting the favour nor fearing the frowns of men, but manifesting the truth by lip and life, and "commending *ourselves* to every man's conscience in the sight of God."

In upholding Jehovah's word Joshua honoured God, and God honoured him; for the two tribes and a half, in response to his appeal, not only promised obedience to him, even as they had hearkened unto Moses, but echoed back Jehovah's word to him, "Only be thou strong and of a good courage."

Joshua proved that which his glorious Antitype experienced when He said, "I seek not mine own glory; there is ONE that seeketh;" for He could also say, "I *do* always those things that please Him." We also, beloved, shall prove this if we take the same path. If we make it the one care of our life to please God He will care for us; if we seek to honour him in all things, we shall not lack

honour from others; but those who despise Him shall be "lightly esteemed." Abraham, the man of the tent, was a *prince* among his neighbours (Gen. xxiii. 6); whilst Lot, the man who sat in the gate of Sodom, was rejected as "*this fellow*." (Gen. xix. 9.)

The next step taken by Joshua was to send spies. What can we say to this act? History is silent; it contains no command from Jehovah, nor is any censure recorded. For the sending of the *twelve* spies (among whom were Caleb and Joshua) there was desire on the part of Israel (Deut. i.), and clear command to Moses from God. (Num. xiii.) As Joshua was now assured that God would guide, and that He had promised to give them the land, it may seem to us that no more spies were needed; but for the strengthening of weak faith, and for the fulfilment of His purposes of grace, God doubtless permitted them to fulfil their service. On this occasion Joshua sends only *two* men.

In considering the moral questions connected with the mission of those spies, it may help us if we remember that as God "winked at," or rather "overlooked," the times of Gentile ignorance (Acts xvii. 30), so did He then deal with His people's faults according to the measure of their light. In the days of Pentecostal light He struck the hypocritical and lying couple dead on the spot (Acts v. 5-10), whereas in these early days He even bore with cases of deceit and falsehood. We must remember that there never was but One whose faith was perfect, and who did not call forth the pity and patience of God, even Him of whom Joshua was a feeble type, and who could truly say, "I will put my trust in Him." (Heb. ii. 13.) He alone is the perfect example of trust. (Heb. xii. 3.) In this matter some believers appear as giants compared with others; but the giants placed beside the perfect Truster are, comparatively

speaking, but dwarfs. Let us thank God for *their* trust, and press on to stronger, more simple, and more constant faith in God—to “have the faith of God.”

The mission and report of the spies, although it involved deception and lies on the part of Rahab, furnished Joshua with information which encouraged Israel and perhaps himself, even as Gideon was encouraged by hearing the Midianites repeat and interpret his dream.

The substance of the report was this, that the fear and dread of Israel had fallen on the inhabitants of the land because of the fame of Israel's passage through the Red Sea and their conquests on this side of Jordan; that Jehovah had delivered into their hands all the land, and that all the inhabitants of the country fainted because of them. (Chap. ii. 8-12.) All this and much more *Jehovah had already promised*. (See Exod. xxiii. 26-28.)

Joshua lost no time. Rising early the next morning he and all Israel removed from Shittim, and came on towards the Jordan, where they lodged three days, after which the officers went through the host with instructions for the march.

These instructions referred primarily to the ark of Jehovah, and by it their movements were to be regulated. They were to wait for the advance of the ark, carried by the Levites, and were to keep at a given distance in order that they might not miss their way, and were quietly and steadily to follow, because they had not passed that way before. There is no intimation that the spies were guides; but the ark, upborne on priestly shoulders under God, led the people.

Those who wait on God will, we know, never lack instruction or guidance, and it will be quite as minute as may be requisite. “Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness,” and “the way of the Lord is *strength* to the up-

right." "If any man will *do* His will he shall *know*." In harmony with this, Paul prayed for the Colossian believers, "That ye may be filled with the knowledge of His will . . . that ye may walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God."

The officers having given their orders, Joshua issues his command; that is, he speaks for Jehovah: "*Sanctify yourselves*, for to-morrow Jehovah will do wonders among you."

At the foot of Sinai Joshua heard from the lips of Moses a like command (Exod. xix. 10), and we have thus a two-fold lesson—that in order to hear Jehovah's words and see His wonders the soul must be prepared by true separation to God. The circumcised ear and anointed eye alone can hear to obey, and behold to admire and worship. "He that hath an ear let him hear." "He openeth mine ear to hear as the instructed one."

But what were the wonders Jehovah was about to do? He who made Moses great by dividing its waters was about to magnify Joshua by making the waters of the Jordan to stand as a heap; and both miracles were for Israel.

Joshua gave command to the priests to arise, and they arose, taking up the ark to lead the people; but before they marched Jehovah again spake to Joshua soul-stirring and encouraging words, such as might make a coward brave. "This day will I *begin* to magnify thee in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that as I was with Moses so will I be with thee." This was just what Israel had desired for him. Oh, the wisdom, beloved, of leaving God to magnify us, instead of labouring to exalt ourselves!

Joshua, having heard, calls Israel to listen, saying, "Come hither, and hear the words of Jehovah your God." And what were they? "Hereby shall ye know that the living God is among you, and that He will without fail

drive out from before you the Canaanites, and the Hittites, and the Hivites, and the Perizzites, and the Girgashites, and the Amorites, and the Jebusites. Behold, the ark of the covenant of the Lord of all the earth passeth over before you into Jordan."

The passage of the ark over Jordan, and Israel's passage in association with it, was evermore to be to Joshua and to them Jehovah's pledge of all that they would need—guidance, sustenance, preservation, conquest, and possession.

Our confidence also is based on that which was typified by the going down and ascending of the ark—the death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus, the Son of God. (Rom. viii. 22; Eph. i. 19–21.) It is from hence we draw our arguments against the unbelief of our hearts, or the evil suggestions of others. God's own Son delivered unto death for us is His gift of gifts, and the pledge of everything else; and the power to deliver, to preserve, to give us victory, and to put us in possession, is displayed in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and His exaltation to His present seat of authority and power at God's right hand.

By Joshua's obedience to Jehovah's word, and by the obedience of priests and people to the command of Joshua, the Jordan was safely passed by all Israel. To sight, this was impossible; for the river then overflowed "all its banks:" but Jehovah took occasion thereby to manifest His power. As soon as the feet of the priests who bare the ark were dipped in Jordan's brim, the mighty stream stood uplifted till all Israel had crossed on dry ground, the ark of the covenant of the Lord remaining in Jordan's bed and staying the waters till the last one had passed over.

Thus Jehovah effected by Joshua that which Moses through his failure could not do; namely, bring the people into the land of their inheritance. "For what the *law*



could not do in that it was weak through the flesh" (for man's sin renders God's law powerless to justify him), God has done by Jesus, the true Joshua. Through the finished work of the cross He has brought believers into their present rest of faith, the earnest of that which is to come.

But how different was the experience of Joshua and Israel in passing over Jordan from that of Moses and their fathers in their passage through the Red Sea! *That* was an *escape* from those who hated them, a *flight* from the infuriated king and people of Egypt, who pursued them, expecting either to recover them as slaves or to annihilate them as a nation. But *this* was an orderly, deliberate march through the Jordan to *confront* their enemies, to engage in warfare, and to conquer, in order to possess their land.

This difference has its answer in Christian experience. There is a great difference between the experience of a soul under conviction of sin and fear of wrath, fleeing to Christ for refuge as the hope set before him in the gospel, and that of the same individual after the knowledge of pardon and possession of peace. Conscious of his acceptance in the Beloved, knowing that the indwelling fulness of the Godhead in Christ is his resource, and clothed in the entire defensive armour of God, he wields the offensive weapon, the sword of the Spirit, and deliberately advances to encounter evil angels, and principalities, and powers (from whom he is not supposed to flee, indeed cannot), to make *them* flee, and to press on to enjoy the *best* that God can give him; to eat the corn, to drink the wine, and anoint him with the oil, praising the Lord.

The passage through the Jordan opened out another fold of the much-varied or "*manifold* wisdom of God," and manifested His love and power. Jehovah is the object, the end of His own counsels. "Of Him, and through Him,

and to *Him* are all things." He is source, channel, and end of all; and those whose eye is single to His glory find themselves blessed in all.

Joshua having *in obedience* piled the stones of memorial in the midst of Jordan's bed, next erects the pillar of witness on dry land, instructing the people thereby to perpetuate the memory of Jehovah's deeds of love and power. Beloved, the honour God puts on us in the path of obedience should evermore move us to exalt Him, not ourselves, and He will *again* put honour on us. There will thus be action and reaction for time and eternity.

Obedience is a life-long lesson. This one word "obedience" comprehends and describes the entire life of the Son of God made flesh; and by *voluntary* subjection to the Father and His will He now graces His position at God's right hand, and proves His equality with Him.

Jehovah's motto for Joshua was, "*Be of good courage to do;*" and although the place, circumstances, and form of obedience vary, yet this one principle must govern his life. He had been obedient to Jehovah's word in the passage of the Jordan, and now he must obey in another way. Israel was out of Egypt, and on the Canaan side of Jordan; but the reproach of Egypt was still upon them.

"At that time Jehovah said unto Joshua, Make thee sharp knives, and circumcise again the children of Israel the second time." This commandment, which had been neglected in the wilderness, Joshua promptly obeyed, and Jehovah could say, "*This day* have I rolled away the reproach of Egypt from off you: wherefore the name of the place is called Gilgal;" *i.e.* Rolling.

Circumcised among the uncircumcised Egyptians were their fathers, and now they by the same rite are separated from the people in the midst of whom they live. Nor was this all; for as their fathers, under the shadow of the

blood, lived when death reigned around, and as they fed on the lamb, ready for their march, so now their children must keep the Passover, calling to mind their deliverance from Egypt, and taking their place of separation to Jehovah by keeping His feast, ready for conflict.

Dear fellow-believers, let us do likewise; let us seek to maintain our Nazarite character, and in all our increase of light, in all our service and sufferings, sorrows and joys, conflicts, victories—yes, and defeats too—having a sanctified remembrance of the cross of Christ, let us rejoice in our shelter and feed on the Lamb. Israel's journey through the wilderness, where they had been miraculously fed and supplied with water, having ceased, the manna ceased also, and they ate of the old corn of the land. H. H.

### AFFLICTION'S MERCY.

BY AN OLD WRITER.

TILL from the straw the flail the corn doth beat,  
 Until the chaffe be purg'd from the wheat—  
 Yea, till the mill the graine in pieces tear,  
 The richness of the floure will scarce appear;  
 So, till men's persons great afflictions touch,  
 If worth be found, their worth is not so much;  
 Because, like wheat in straw, they have not yet  
 That value which in thrashing they may get.  
 For, till the bruising flail of God's corrections  
 Have thresh'd out of us our vain affections—  
 Till those corruptions, which doe misbecome us,  
 Are by Thy Sacred Spirit winnowed from us;  
 Until from us the straw of worldly treasures—  
 Till all the dusty chaffe of empty pleasures—  
 Yea, till His flail upon us He doth lay,  
 To thrash the husk of this our flesh away,  
 And leave the soul uncovered—nay, yet more,  
 Till God shall make our very spirit poore—  
 We shall not up to highest wealth aspire,  
 And then we shall—and that is my desire.

## LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

## V.

*On receiving a gift from a friend.*

"I cast my eyes around and see many tokens of your kindness, and this last one is doubly valuable, as coming from you in the midst of your heavy sorrow. '*Let brotherly love continue;*' and there *is* continuance in it, because it does not flow from human relationship, but from the new relationship which we have the one with the other in Christ Jesus. 'He is *the same* yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.' It was not beneath the record of inspired history to mention the 'coats and garments' which Dorcas made for the widows. Paul magnifies the 'gift' sent to him by the Philippians into 'an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice *acceptable to God.*' How any, the least thing, even 'a cup of cold water,' given in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to a disciple, is made honourable because of Him in whose name it is given. Doubtless you have remarked how the apostle Paul winds up his 'charity sermon'—if I may be allowed so to call it—in 2 Cor. viii., ix. with 'Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.'

"Again, in writing to his much-loved Philippians, see how largely the apostle could reckon on the bounty of *his* God—'But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. Now unto God and our Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen.' Will He not supply my need? Will He not supply the widow's need? Are we not, in His eternal counsels, called *according to a purpose?* (Rom. viii. 28.) We may not, says the apostle, '*know*' what to ask for as we ought, *but* (not *and*) we *do know* that all things under His wise hand are working together '*for good.*' Sometimes I find it needful to cry out, 'Lord, I believe; help mine unbelief.' God can only act from Himself and for Himself, and condescendingly argues the case with us. 'He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?' (Rom. viii. 32.)

“Look back to that first great oracle given to the father of the faithful in Genesis xv. It is introduced by ‘*Fear not,*’ the first time that blessed word is mentioned in Scripture (it is a study of itself to look through God’s ‘fear nots’), ‘I am thy *Shield and exceeding great reward.*’ God has tied these two things together, but man has ever tried to separate them; and He is now teaching us with a strong hand that they are inseparable. How blessedly the Spirit of God in the Psalmist takes up this ancient oracle! ‘Behold, O God our Shield, and look upon the face of thine Anointed. . . . For the Lord God is a Sun and Shield: the Lord will give grace and glory; no *good thing* will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.’ (Ps. lxxxiv.) Between grace and glory the provision is made that no good thing shall be withheld from us. ‘Lord, increase our faith.’ If we put *God* in His right sovereign place, and *His Anointed* in His right place, everything will fall into its place.

“J. L. H.”

## VI.

### *On church trials.*

“We would humbly apply the words of the apostle respecting his own deep pressure, both in personal danger and anxious exercise of soul about the state of the Corinthians, to the case of the present anxiety of so many of your friends, in which we at this distance feel it our privilege to share—‘Who delivered us from so great a death, and doth deliver: in whom we trust that He will yet deliver, ye also helping together by prayer for us, that for the gift bestowed upon us by the means of many persons thanks may be given by many on our behalf.’ It is not difficult to discern how ‘mercy rejoices against judgment,’ and it adds earnestness to our prayer when we begin with thanksgiving, according to the apostolic precept—‘In everything by prayer and supplication, *with thanksgiving*, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.’ This is not exactly ‘a mind at perfect peace with God,’ but rather that calm serenity which results from placing our trials and anxieties in the hand of God, to dispose of as

seemeth Him good. It is the practical peace which God giveth. The word 'keep' is rendered 'kept with a garrison' in 2 Cor. xi. 32; it only occurs besides in Gal. iii. 23 and 1 Peter i. 5. Blessed thought it is! 'The peace of God shall *keep as with a garrison* your hearts and minds.' In that most deep and mysterious exercise of the soul of the Holy One Himself in Gethsemane, immediately that He had committed all to the will of the Father, with what calm and dignified serenity of soul do we find Him meeting all the shame of the cross at the hands of man, and that bruising of His soul at the hands of God, into which we are able so feebly to enter.

"It is no small gain to get our Christian sympathies enlarged by personal intercourse with any of our fellow-members of the body of Christ. It is in the time of trial that we learn in some measure our dependence on one another—'That the members should have the same care for one another.' An isolated Christian is an anomaly. If we will go after Jesus, we must each take up the cross and follow Him. But it appears to me that knowing what the Church is, and seeking to act in it as becometh our behaviour in the house of God, however feebly, we do find the Church to be the school of God for crushing self; but, notwithstanding that, it is a blessed school. And I must add that, after upwards of two and thirty years of seeking to walk in fellowship in the light with other Christians, the gain has far outbalanced the trials. And I can only thank God for bringing me where He has brought me; and notwithstanding blunders and failures, shortcomings and heart-backsliding, He has by His grace kept me to this day, and will keep me for His name's sake.

"Romans viii. 32 comes to me with more than usual power. In 2 Cor. ix. the apostle *ascends* from the grace of God given to the Corinthians to, 'Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.' But in Romans viii. he makes the unspeakable gift the *ground* of our enlarged expectation for all needed blessings. He has given the greater, will He not give the less? He has not spared the most costly, will He not give in with Him every really good thing?

J. L. H.

"*Plymstock, April 12th, 1865.*"

## NOTES AND REPLIES.

*Does "Wisdom" in Proverbs personify Christ? and why is it in the feminine gender?*

WISDOM in Hebrew is a feminine noun, and therefore needs feminine pronouns, &c. ; but a deeper reason for this may be that it represents the faithful wife in opposition to the strange woman, or the wisdom of the flesh. (See Prov. v.) Wisdom stands as the great helpmeet of man, securing to him, if faithful to her, all he needs for time and for eternity ; as in chapter viii. it stands as the helpmeet of God in all His works ; as that in accordance with which He always acted, and from which He never swerved. In this way the word may be used frequently of Christ, God's Almighty Architect, as the expression in v. 30, "One brought up with Him," is rendered by Gesenius. But it applies to Christ as the Word, or *Logos*, more indirectly than directly. The impersonation of divine wisdom is seen in our Lord's words in Matt. xi. 19 ; Luke xi. 49. Compare Prov. i. 20-33 ; ix. 1-12.

*Is there any difference between "by (ek) faith" and "through (dia) faith" in Rom. iii. 30?*

The meaning in the two clauses of this verse is substantially the same. The verse might be rendered, "Seeing that God is one who will justify the circumcision by faith (*i.e.* on the principle of faith and not of law), and the uncircumcision through the (same) faith." The Jew is justified not out of (*ek*) anything in which he stands, or might boast as a Jew, but out of that faith which lays hold of what Christ is, and the Gentile is justified likewise through (*dia*) the faith that saves the Jew. God is one, and our justification and salvation is one and the same, and rests on a common basis—Christ Jesus.

*In what way does faith establish law? (Rom. iii. 31.)*

Faith establishes law in that it accepts the obligations of law as met in full by the sacrifice of Christ. In the same way Christ *magnifies* the law (Isa. xlii. 21), not by His obedience to it, for as man He was under obligation to obey, but by voluntarily submitting to die the guiltless on behalf of the guilty, for which He was under no legal obligation. His death established for ever the righteousness of the claims of the law. It is well to notice the presence and absence of the article before the word *law*. As a rule the absence of the article points to law as a whole and in the abstract, and not specially to the Mosaic law, or any other. The article is absent in both instances in this verse. Compare verse 21, where "righteousness without law" is borne witness to "by the law and the prophets."

## "HIS WORKMANSHIP."

IN the epistle to the Ephesians God's delight is seen in chapter i. 4—"That we should be holy and without blame *before Him* in love;" and Christ's delight is seen in chapter v. 27—"That He might present it *to Himself* a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing: but that it should be holy and without blemish." In chapter i. 12 we read, "to the praise of *His glory*;" but in verse 5, "*to Himself*." Glory is a servant to love. All that God can give us is a token of something higher, namely, the love of His heart.

In chapter ii. 10 the apostle says: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Being *His* workmanship, we desire to be less than nothing in our own sight. God delights to make the best and highest uses of us if we are only fit to be used. Here among men there are golden vessels, clean and of exquisite workmanship, yet unused and only for ornament; but there is no such thing in the house of God; *there* all clean vessels are used. The same vessel may be put to different uses, as Paul when in prison was put to use in one way, and Paul when preaching, in another way. If a vessel be but clean, used it must be, and that for honourable purposes. Let us not only bear in mind *how* we were made nigh—by a life derived from the Son of God; the remembrance of which will help to bring us low—but let us see how *high* we are in God's sight. "We are His workmanship." How pleasant then must we be to God! The wonder of wonders is *Christ offered up*; yet we are beautiful to the eye of God and of angels as *one with*



*Christ.* If I verily believe this I cannot be otherwise than well-pleasing to God, as created anew in Christ Jesus. What then will my great business be? First, to have God's thoughts in my heart, as we see in Psalm cxxxix. 17, "How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! How great is the sum of them!" We are so one with Christ in God's thoughts and affections that His thoughts should always be as music to us.

Our prayer should be according to Eph. iii., as well as according to Eph. i. The knowledge of the greatness of the *power* that is toward us should lead us to seek to know the greatness of the *love* that is bestowed on us. We are only *at home* in the Father's house, and as to our place on earth we are *always abroad*, wherever we may be. This needs to be understood by anyone who has a desire to labour in another land. If the affections of Christ possess us we shall always find a field of labour at hand; everywhere we shall find room for the mind of Christ to reveal itself. The very look and greeting which we give one another will be a sweet savour of Christ, if we know one another as Christ commends us to God. "We are His workmanship." If we were more humble we should say *ten* times, *How worthy* we are in Christ, to *one* mention of our own *unworthiness*. If, like Isaiah, in chapter vi., our lips are cleansed and our consciences purged, we shall say most humbly, readily, and quickly, "Send me." We shall begin and end with pleasing God, regardless of the question of numbers, whether we go to the thousands or the few. The "good works" in which we are to walk are "ordained" of God. David received his anointing to be<sup>l</sup>king when he kept his father's sheep, and it was all one to him whether he bore cheeses to the camp or kept the sheep at home. He was taken up with pleasing God. If we realize this it will take many difficulties out of our path. (R. C. C.)

## SICKNESS IN THE CHURCH.

## I.

WE all recognize that sickness and death are the results of sin, and that had sin not entered into the world we should never have known the one or the other. Hence He who came to bear sin, bore all its penalties, and consequently to the child of God neither sickness nor death are *penal*. Their whole character is changed. Before the believer came in faith to the cross of Christ, every consequence of sin partook of a penal character, and was to him as the droppings of the wrath to come; but no sooner is the hand of faith laid on the head of the Sacrifice of God than all this is changed. Death becomes an entrance into the presence of Christ, and sickness and sorrow become the hallowed and profitable discipline of a heavenly Father, who thereby trains His children as each may need, and chastises as our shortcomings may require. The bitterness of the curse is removed from all these trials, and by the blessed power of the cross of Christ everything is transformed. Of death we can say, with Paul, it "is far better;" for "a name" (one written in the book of life) "is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth;" and we are told "it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting." (Ecc. vii. 1, 2.)

The believer dies, but he does not taste the bitterness of death; and therefore the Lord says, "If any man keep my word he shall never see death." The same is true of sickness and other calamities which befall the Christian as they befall the unsaved. Yet is Psalm xci. fulfilled to every believer; for while the arrow may slay him, or the plague lay him in his grave, he meets neither the one nor

the other as the "reward of the wicked." (v. 8.) Thus the martyrs suffered, and gloried in their sufferings. They died by sword or fire, by famine or pestilence, it mattered not which; in either case, like Stephen under his stoning, the glory shone from above, and the pit beneath opened not her mouth. They were "more than conquerors" through Him that loved them. The saint of God triumphs over sickness and suffering as over death itself; while the wicked find in *their* troubles the premonitions of their doom.

It is of immense importance not to misread the purposes of God, nor to confound that from which we are redeemed as saved sinners with that to which, with an unredeemed body and unredeemed surroundings, we are still liable, and to which we must remain subject till the change come. It is this partially unredeemed condition that causes our redeemed spirit to groan with the creation around, and to await our adoption, even "the redemption of our body," when we shall not "die any more," when "there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

That sickness, as well as other suffering, is a normal condition at present (by reason of the abnormal circumstances in which we find ourselves), we have abundant proof from the teaching of the New Testament. Let us look a little in detail at cases in point, which usually come to mind in this connection, and let us begin with that of the apostle Paul. In 2 Cor. xii. this blessed man of God tells us what occurred fourteen years before, when, because of the abundance of the revelations vouchsafed, he was afflicted with a thorn in the flesh. He speaks of this afterwards as his bodily infirmity, which the good hand of God allowed to befall him, or rather was "given" to him, as a part of the necessary discipline that was to keep him

humble; for the seeds of self-exaltation lay in his heart still, and needed only a fitting opportunity to manifest themselves. God foresaw this, and in infinite grace allowed the "messenger of Satan" to afflict him, lest his apostolic ministry should be marred through pride or some other manifestation of self; and so, immediately after, he classes these "infirmities" with reproaches, necessities, and persecutions, as things in which he took pleasure, although he had thrice asked the Lord to remove the thorn, thinking, no doubt, it terribly interfered with his work. God thought otherwise, and refused his prayer, but promised what was far better—His all-sufficient grace.

It is thus we see the apostle arriving in Galatia, suffering through the "infirmity of the flesh," which he touchingly calls his "temptation which was in the flesh." It was that which was calculated to make him despicable in the eyes of others, and might have appeared a hindrance to his usefulness. But God sees hindrances to our usefulness much more in ourselves than in our condition of bodily health, or in our outward circumstances. Did we all remember this, we should be less anxious about our bodily health and surroundings, and more anxious about our *spiritual* condition.

The sickness of Epaphroditus is dwelt upon in Phil. ii. 25-30. We have more said of the sickness of this man of God, this "brother, fellow-labourer, and fellow-soldier" of the apostle Paul, than of any other in the New Testament after Pentecost. Of the severity of the illness the apostle speaks in these tender words, "For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but the Lord had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow." And then further down he gives us the cause of his sickness in these words, "Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his

life, to supply your lack of service toward me." What precious, costly service was thus rendered to the Master, at the cost of health and at the risk of life, in service to His servant Paul ! It was like the devotion of those three worthies who, without waiting to be told, went and drew water from the well of Bethlehem for David, when he was thirsty, so that David's grateful heart called the very water their blood, and poured it out as a loving oblation to his God, who alone deserved such devotion. Was God testing the reality of Epaphroditus' love to Christ in allowing him to sink so low ? Did He say, "I will see if he can stand the test, and whether love will make him willing to yield up his life if needed" ? Did the Lord want to give another proof to meet Satan's taunt, "Skin for skin ; all that a man hath will he give for his life" ? Perhaps it was so, and in this willing suffering of sickness nigh unto death Satan was again defeated by one who from love to Christ loved not his life unto the death. In a martyr spirit and with a martyr's faith did this blessed servant in his sickness make his very sick-bed fragrant with heavenly perfume of self-renunciation, of patient endurance, yielding songs of joy to the praise of God. Truly this sickness was not unto death, but for the glory of God, and He has told us more of Epaphroditus' sickness than of his labours. We little know what glorifies God most, our active toil or our patient suffering ; let us therefore leave it with God to appoint whatever He sees fit.

A spared life is a mercy, whether it be a toiling one or a suffering one ; for our life is to yield fruit to God, and perhaps no fruit is so costly and so fragrant as that which comes from the sick-bed of one who has been brought low, like Epaphroditus, for "the work of Christ," and not in self-willed labours, or from careless disregard of the body's claims. We want martyrs, not devotees who immolate

themselves; and there are many of the latter whom the devil persuades that it is for the work of Christ.

We have another case of bodily infirmity in Timothy—Paul's genuine son in the faith—to whom he writes in divinely-recorded and loving sympathy (1 Tim. v. 23), and says, "Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake, and thine often infirmities." There is here no putting forward of *faith* for a miraculous cure of the often-recurring sickness and weakness of this servant of God. Paul had known the value of bodily weakness too well, rashly to advocate anything beyond the godly use of ordinary means and care. This he enjoined by an inspired command, which left the result absolutely in the hand of God. Hence we learn that life and health are to be preserved and strengthened by any means conducive to that end, and it is well to remember that the Spirit of God gave Timothy no further instruction in the matter. Would that sick ones and their friends could quietly rest here more frequently. How would many a chronic ailment in a child of God be then calmly brought under requisition to glorify God, and the sufferer would become a bearer of fruit which eternity would reveal. A well-known writer tells out a true and blessed experience in these words—

"On Thy compassion I repose  
In weakness and distress;  
I will not ask for greater ease  
Lest I should love Thee less:  
Oh, 'tis a blessed thing for me  
To need Thy tenderness!"

"While many sympathizing hearts  
For my deliverance care,  
Thou in Thy wiser, stronger love,  
Art teaching me to bear,  
By the sweet voice of thankful song,  
And calm, confiding prayer."

Again, when Paul speaks of his loneliness, and of one companion as having gone to one place, and another

gone back to the world, and others as scattered about, he adds, "But Trophimus I left at Miletus sick." (2 Tim. iv. 20.) There is something particularly touching in this simple little record. Trophimus had gone with Paul to Jerusalem, and it was because the Jews *supposed* that he had brought "Trophimus the Ephesian" (that is, a Gentile) into the temple, that the uproar arose which led to the apostle's prolonged imprisonment and voyage to Rome; and now that he was a second time going to Rome, probably in arrest, he came to Miletus, and there had to leave his friend behind him. Had Paul's miraculous powers of healing failed him? He who was so soon to close his mighty ministry, and whose martyr crown was so near at hand, could he not now raise up Trophimus, his only companion beside Luke? We answer not; but we see a divine calmness in the simple utterance that he had left Trophimus sick at a port near his native city, and we discern a bowing to a divine purpose as with holy hands Paul leaves his Gentile brother in the hands of Him who does with us what He will. There is more in these simple recitals than we are prepared to allow, and Trophimus and Paul accepted what infinite love ordained, and the sick saint allowed the blessed apostle to go on without him, and gave him his last farewell on earth, because God had so appointed it, and sought no miraculous interference.

We would further notice that, except in the raising of Dorcas, and the bringing to life of Eutychus, it is not easy to find in the apostolic ministry an instance of a miracle of healing performed on one inside the pale of the Church. Miracles were rather for those outside, as attestations of that which the Church already knew.

Another aspect of this subject remains for our future consideration.

H. G.

## “THE THIRD DAY :” THE MARRIAGE SCENE.

JOHN ii. 1-11.

It has been already remarked (page 29) that this “THIRD day” apparently completes the entire *week* of gospel testimony to Jesus as the Divine One; for it seems to mean the “third” day *after* the call of Nathanael in the previous chapter. In this single week we see the diligence of the earliest public ministry of our Lord.

The voice and operation of God in the successive days of this week may well remind us of the days of the first creation in Genesis i. With reference to that old creation, how truly it is said, “In the beginning was the Word,” and, “All things were made by Him;” and in God’s more abiding new creation work the same is true; all of it issues forth from the voice of God in Christ, and all of it witnesses of the fulness of God and the Lamb. “He that sat upon the throne”—*i.e.* Jesus Christ—“said, Behold, *I make* all things new. . . . I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.” (See Rev. xxi. 5, 6.)

By the marriage at Cana of Galilee we are reminded of the seventh, and even also of the resurrection “eighth day” of God’s new creation-work. Looking at the scene especially in the light of Israel’s future, it points on to the millennial age, in which “the purifying of the Jews” by the abundant water of Levitical washings will have given place to the purifying of “their hearts by faith,” and to a new covenant *joy* in the Lord, which will be their strength. (Neh. viii. 10.) In that age the wine of joy will be their characteristic rather than the water of chilly poverty and sorrow. But it still more, perhaps, points on to the “day of eternity” (2 Peter iii. 13; see Greek), and



to the eternal state of "new heavens and a new earth." In that final state of blessedness sorrow will be banished from the *entire creation*, as it will previously have been from the glorified redeemed of the first resurrection. God's will shall then be done *on earth* even as it is in heaven, and there shall be "no more sea." Divine rest shall fill the scene, and God's own joy shall so overflow it that nothing shall then be wanting, and no voice shall ever again be heard saying, "They have no wine."

This combination of seventh day and eighth day teachings is seen also in the mount of Transfiguration. For while Matthew and Mark both speak of it as "after *six* days," thus giving it a seventh day or millennial aspect, Luke, reckoning the days inclusively, says, "And it came to pass about *an eight days* after these sayings" (or things) "He took Peter," &c. The twofold date of this scene answers to the two different classes of saved sinners which it presents to our view; viz., Peter, James, and John as believers still in mortal bodies, and living on this earth, but under an opened heaven of divine visible glory—a state of things that can only be millennial; while Moses and Elijah represent those who, in the *eternal* state of bodies glorious, are "clothed upon" with their "house which is from heaven." Thus constantly do the dispensations of God combine and overlap each other.

All the details of the marriage at Cana supply the same two lines of thought and instruction. Jewish elements are prominent, and the "waterpots of stone" showed the Jewish piety of the family. Also from the words, "the mother of Jesus *was there*," it would seem as though Mary were some relative or connection of the family, and it was probably through *her influence* that "Jesus was called and His disciples to the marriage." Meantime the diligence of Jesus' ministry had so increased the newly-

formed band of His followers (all of whom had to be included in the invitation), that their number proved too large for the possessions and resources of any private family. Not that it was a poor family, for "servants" are spoken of. But Jewish blessing overflows all family limits when Christ is in the midst and the Spirit of God works, while *mere* natural relationship is insufficient and disappears; for Christ's own "brethren," His "mother's children," (see Ps. lxxix. 8) are not mentioned, for as yet they did not believe in Him (see John viii. 5), although His mother did.

At the passover feast in Exodus xii. the households were not limited to mere family size, nor were they formed by natural relationship or private preferences. They were to be large enough to enable them to eat up the whole lamb at a single meal, and if for this purpose an increase in their number was needed, the head of the house had to call in "his neighbour next unto his house" to take it with him, and not a self-chosen friend or a relative.

So in this godly Jewish family at Cana of Galilee family limits are left behind, and those are made fellow-guests who have only just lately come to the knowledge of "the Lamb of God." Legal washings and purifyings by water are all duly respected, for the "waterpots" are filled "to the brim;" for Jesus "magnified the law, and made it honourable," both in life and in death. Even down to John the Baptist's ministry His word was, "Thus it becometh us to fulfil ALL righteousness." But these vessels were no longer *water* pots: wine takes the place of water. The very servants obey a voice of which they only then knew the sweetness and the power, and all the guests are worshipping, and wondering as they worship, all confessing that the truly "good wine" had not come till then.

How true all this will be of Israel's millennial and

marriage day! What an "Isaac" of laughter and of joy will that whole nation be! What enlarging of the place of their tent, and what strengthening of the stakes there will be when they do at last learn that their Maker is their "Husband; Jehovah of hosts is His name" (Isa. liv. 5), and when they have to take in multitudes of believing Gentiles along with themselves to their gospel and marriage feast!

But wine is a fruit of the *earth* as well as that "which cheereth God and man." The glory of Jesus in relation to the very earth itself surely is hinted at in such a vast supply of wine as was made at this simple Galilee marriage. Some hundred and thirty gallons of wine—and that of a kind so choice that none of the juice of the grape of this earth had equalled it—must surely have reference to the fruitfulness and joy of a NEW EARTH, in which Jesus shall for ever be the last Adam with His redeemed at His side as His glorious "Eve"—an everlasting marriage! And all that eternal joy shall be obtained out of the waters and floods of death, over which Jesus triumphed for His saints.

In verse 11 it is said, "This beginning of miracles" (rather "signs" or tokens; *i.e.* of something in the future) "did Jesus . . . and manifested forth His glory." In God's word beginnings and endings meet together, and the earliest type becomes a pledge and promise of the latest and richest of fulfilments. Thus do Adam and Eve in Eden become a type of Christ and the redeemed in a new earth and heavens, and this first and earliest of Jesus' "signs" points on to that fullest and completest manifesting forth of "His glory." No wonder it is added, "And His disciples believed on Him." May the very reading and pondering of it increase our faith!

In Rom. viii., when Paul is dilating on the blessedness of

the sons of God, and comes to the day of their "manifestation," he speaks of the *creation itself* also as released from the bondage of corruption and brought into "the liberty of the glory of the children of God," an end being for ever made to its groaning and its Adam-caused curse.

In Hebrews xii. too he cannot be content with only the "heavenly Jerusalem" as the portion of God's pilgrims ("Hebrews"), but quotes also God's promise, that for them He will "shake not the earth only, but also heaven." And this "shake" he interprets to be "the removing" of all things present, that "those things which *cannot be shaken* may remain." This can mean nothing short of the "new heavens and new earth." (See 2 Peter iii. 13.)

Revelation xxi. 1 becomes to us the climax of these other Scriptures, and all of them are given us that by faith and patience and the Spirit's power we may daily turn earth's chilly water into God's own joy within our own souls. Be it so. Amen.

H. D.

"HE LOVED ME."

GAL. ii. 20.

"He lovèd me, and gave *Himself* for me!"

My heart, Lord, cannot comprehend *Thy* love --

Its own is all too weak; yet I would prove

By daily dying to myself what life

In Thee *does* mean. Oh that *Thy* love to me

A strong constraining power for good may be!

I need *Thy* peace, my Lord, to cast out strife—

My heart drawn out in fervent love to Thee.

Help me first to believe, and then rejoice

In *Thy* great love, my Saviour; then my voice,

My heart, *my* life, will *always* be *Thine* own—

Not wavering back and forward. For my sake

*Thy* life Thou gavest! Oh, my Saviour, make

*Thy* wondrous love to me more deeply known!

L. M. W.

## JOSHUA.

## VICTORY AND DEFEAT.

MUCH might be said on Israel's position and circumstances at Gilgal; but as the subject of these papers is not the nation's history, but the life of their captain and leader, I pass on to the next notice of him in that history.

Having obeyed the command respecting circumcision, he and the people wait for further instruction. Let us, fellow-believers, see to it that this is evermore our position, *waiting* for light from God; and let not *God* be *waiting* for our *obedience* to light He has already given us. "Light is sown for the righteous."

Joshua had not long to wait, for as he was by Jericho, peradventure surveying the city to be besieged (and who shall say he was not forming plans for the attack?), lifting up his eyes, "he saw a man with a sword drawn in his hand." Not dismayed, but advancing with courage, he plainly questioned him, "Art thou for us or for our enemies?"

Let us ponder his answer. "Nay, but as Captain of Jehovah's hosts I am now come." These few simple words of power brought Joshua on his face to the earth, a worshipper and an enquirer—"What saith my Lord unto his servant?"

Jehovah's presence and words brought Abraham on his face to listen, and Jehovah continued to talk with him. (Gen. xvii. 2.) Jehovah's presence and words checked Moses' inquisitiveness at Horeb, and He demanded worship. (Exod. iii. 4-7.) So also in this case worship is given and accepted; reverence not due to any mere creature is demanded, and that in words similar to those spoken to

Moses, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet;" for the presence of this Captain *consecrated* the spot, even as did Jehovah's presence at Horeb. No mere created being in heaven or earth has power to do this. Whatever sanctity superstition may suggest, or the foolish idolatry of the human heart may attach to persons or places, consecration is not thus effected. The gathered saints ensure the presence of the Lord, and they delight to worship Him; *they* as *persons* are consecrated, but not so the floors and walls of the building in which they assemble.

The Messenger of the covenant, in whom Jehovah's name is, and who is His delight, the Son and Word of God, *visited* this earth before He *dwelt* among men; and before He *partook* of flesh and blood, or was "made flesh," He appeared in human *form*, even as the Holy Spirit who never was made flesh, never incarnate, descended in the *form* of a dove, and abode on the Lamb of God.

Joshua had his lesson to learn here. The appearing of the Captain of Jehovah's hosts, His command and instructions, taught Joshua that though in the eyes of Israel he was their captain, and his word had power, yet in truth and before God he was but the *shadow* of the Captain of the hosts of Jehovah; he was therefore to hearken and be obedient.

Chapter vi. opens with a description of the state of Jericho as straitly shut up, and the inhabitants shut in because of Israel's approach; for the terror of Jehovah had fallen upon them. Then follow Jehovah's instructions to Joshua for the siege and capture of the city, and also for the treatment of its inhabitants. This siege was intended (as indeed are all the counsels and deeds of our God) to display His power and magnify His name. Therefore the plan was such as neither Joshua nor any other man would have dreamt of forming. If the simplicity of a warrior's

faith and his implicit obedience were ever tested, and manifested, it was in the siege and capture of Jericho. Israel was to march round the city once a day for six days, and six times on the seventh day, following the ark of Jehovah, without speaking, shouting, or blast of trumpet—twelve orderly, silent marches; but during the seventh march of the seventh day, at the bidding of Joshua, they were to shout and blow the trumpets.

They did so. Joshua was strong and of a good courage *to do* that which his own heart would never have devised. Israel obeyed their captain, and when their obedience was fulfilled by the mighty blast of trumpets and shout of human voices, down fell the walls of Jericho and up marched the armies of Israel to fulfil Jehovah's purpose concerning a city wholly accursed, or devoted *to Him*, whether for the preservation and future blessing and honour of some, or for the utter destruction of the rest; but both for Israel.

Beloved fellow-Christian, simple trust in God and full obedience to His word, whether in private life or public walk, in the church or before the world, are still contemptible things in the eyes of men; yes, and even in the eyes of some of God's own children, who with mere professors adopt the *world's ways* of doing the *Lord's work*, going as near to the world and conforming as closely as they can to its ways, without losing their reputation as professors of the name of the Lord. Nevertheless obedience to God's word is still the only *safe* path, and will secure blessing and honour in the end.

Let us therefore, beloved, "be of good courage *to do*." Joshua's next act was to commission the young men to accomplish the oath laid upon them by Rahab, who had received, concealed, lodged, and sent them off in safety. This done, the city was burned with fire, and all that was

in it, except the gold, silver, copper, and iron, which were put into the treasury of Jehovah; and with Joshua's curse, pronounced on the man who should rise up to rebuild the city, the scene closed. "So Jehovah was with Joshua, and his fame was noised abroad throughout all the country." Such prosperity is not easily borne.

Thus far Joshua and Israel had proved *by victory* that the path of obedience was the sure path to honour; but they have next to learn it by contrast, *by reverse*, and to find that disobedience leads to defeat and shame. May these truths be impressed on our hearts.

The next city to be taken was Ai, and Joshua sent men to view the city, and acted on their advice in attacking it; but, alas! instead of success defeat was the result. The silence of history as to any word from Jehovah regarding the taking the city, together with the very different method given afterwards by Jehovah, seem to imply that His counsel was not sought on the occasion.

Beloved reader, it is difficult, yet safe, to own our dependence on God at *every step*; never to judge by the sight of our eyes, nor lean to our own understanding. This is not a lesson learnt at once for a lifetime; our memory and heart are both treacherous through the fall, and we need to be reminded continually that we have no wisdom to guide our steps, nor power to endure or to conquer, any more than to save our own souls.

Whatever had been the conduct of Joshua on this occasion, Israel was defiled; for the children of Israel had at Jericho committed a trespass in the accursed thing, and for it "the anger of Jehovah was kindled against them."

This sin Joshua had not suspected, neither did Israel as a nation know of it. Joshua may have thought a little too highly of human nature, or may have imagined that the solemn prohibition had been sufficient to deter them



from sinning ; but it was not so, and the people had failed to watch against the sin of covetousness, had failed to watch over one another in the matter, and the guilty deed had been committed. The eyes of One, even Jehovah, had seen it, and He by their defeat intended to bring it to light.

Distressed in spirit, apparently in anguish of soul, Joshua rent his garment, and, with the elders of the people, fell on his face before Jehovah to speak, or rather *complain*, to Him.

Let us ponder his words — “Alas, O Lord Jehovah, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan, to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us ? would to God *we* had been *content*, and dwelt on the other side of Jordan ! O Lord, what shall *I* say, when Israel turneth their backs before their enemies ! For the Canaanites and all the inhabitants of the land shall hear of it, and shall environ us round, and cut off *our* name from the earth : and what wilt thou do unto *thy* great name ? ” What can we say to this language ? Can we in the utmost stretch of love justify it ? Surely not ; neither would Joshua have done so when in a right state of mind. He upbraided Jehovah by asking, “Why hast thou brought this people over Jordan ? ” regretted their passage through the sea — “Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side ; ” and said the nation was consigned to the sword of the Amorites to cut off *their* name from the earth, by which Jehovah’s name would be dishonoured !

Such language was the echo of Moses’ lamentations, and of the people’s murmurs, calling for the rebuke of love which followed. “And Jehovah said unto Joshua, Get thee up ; wherefore liest thou thus upon thy face ? *Israel hath sinned*, and they have also transgressed my covenant . . . taken of the accursed thing, and have also stolen, and

dissembled also, and they have put it even among their own stuff. *Therefore* the children of Israel could not stand before their enemies, because they were accursed: neither will I be with you any more except ye destroy the accursed from among you. Up, sanctify the people . . . against to-morrow."

This communication did but disclose to Joshua that which he might have expected as being at least *possible*.

H. H.

## SONS OF DAY.

"Ye are all sons of light, and sons of day: we are not of night, nor of darkness."—1 THESS. v. 5.

THE records of the Old Testament are not only narratives of facts, they are also parables. Take, for instance, Gen. i. 3: "And God said, Let there be light: and there was light." Compare this with John i. 9, 18: "The true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world . . . The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father."

Again, take Gen. i. 14-18: "The greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night." Does not this typify for us some of God's dealings with man?

First, we have Israel living in a time of darkness, under the "lesser light," the light from the law. This was a reflected light. Law could not give life (Gal. iii. 21); it had no independent light. The face of its great administrator declared this. He brought down with him the glory gathered from the real Light, which had been shining upon him; too bright indeed for the children of Israel to gaze upon. They were not able to look steadfastly to the end of the law, even Christ. Only faith can do that; and they were eminently a people who walked, and insisted upon

walking, by sight. (1 Sam. viii. 19, 20.) Thus their own law was veiled, and will remain veiled to them until their hearts shall turn to Jehovah. (2 Cor. iii. 16.)

But now the darkness is past (1 John ii. 8), and the day has come. (2 Cor. vi. 2.) To us the Sun of Righteousness has arisen, the real Light (John i. 4, 9), the "Greater Light," which rules the day. If we stumble it is not for want of light. In the darkness a Voice was needed, and it was provided. (John i. 23.) In the night man must listen; in the light he has but to look. (Heb. xii. 2.)

During the night *fear* was the guiding principle. Fear belongs to darkness. (Deut. iv. 10; xiii. 4.) Jehovah was veiled in the thick darkness, and when He entered into covenant with Israel He was accompanied by lightning, and thunder, and earthquake. But in the light *love* is the guiding principle. (1 John ii. 10.) Jehovah veiled Himself in the Man Christ Jesus, and entering into covenant with His people, said, "Let not your heart be troubled. My peace I give unto you." Love casts out fear. *Now* have we confidence towards God.

It is our joy and blessing to be sons of light, and it is our responsibility to be walking in it. "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." This is not the pathway the flesh would choose; though it is safe, and happy too—the only safe pathway through the wilderness. But it implies obedience, not partial, but complete. It means every thought brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ; for our feet are the servants of our thoughts. Our thoughts then must be the servants of the written word. "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me." "This is love, that we *walk* after His commandments." "Keep yourselves in the love of God." Let us be sure that the word of God and our own lives chord

harmoniously together, making heavenly music ; then we may know that we are praising Him. The Word is a cleanser if we obey it ; not otherwise. (Eph. v. 24-26.) If we are disobedient, it becomes a judge. (John xii. 48.) "But whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the love of God perfected."

Perfect love is indicated by complete obedience, and of him who thus obeys, the Lord Jesus says : "He shall be loved by my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." "If a man love me, he will keep my words : and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

This is daylight indeed—to have the real Light within, dwelling there, and shining out in the life, proving us to be "sons of light," and sons of day ; sons of "the Father of lights." God saw the light that it was good ; and God divided between the light and the darkness. As soon as the light shines within us we become aware of this division, and conflict ensues, for each is ever endeavouring to overlap the other ; but the time is coming when the two shall no longer exist in the same person, or in the same world. "And night shall not be any more." (Rev. xxii. 5.) The division begun here, and, kept up by God's power (Col. i. 13), shall be completed in "that day." There will then be no more conflict, no more lusting of the Spirit against the flesh. For those who have become one with sin, there shall be darkness and death unto the ages of the ages ; for those who have become one with God, light and life also unto the ages of the ages.

May our Lord strengthen us now to walk in the light, and to bear to have the light dwelling in us, consuming that which is earthly, causing a "daily dying," and bearing witness during the world's night to the eternal facts of Light and Life.

E. S. W.

## LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

## VII.

*The life of faith.*

“Israel groaned in Egypt, and cried unto the Lord for deliverance; and the Lord heard their cry, and redeemed them out of Egypt by a strong hand and by an outstretched arm. They sang His praise for their deliverance, and were confident of being speedily brought in to the land the Lord had promised to give their fathers; but ‘*murmuring*’ characterized them in the wilderness, and made them forget the groanings and the afflictions of Egypt. They murmured at Marah; and because they lacked bread, and then water; and these murmurings God at first answered in grace. In the wilderness they forgot the bondage, and could think only of the flesh-pots of Egypt. The mighty redemption wrought for them was no longer remembered; death in Egypt *now* was, in their thoughts, better than to be killed by hunger in the wilderness. At the very borders of the land, even with the grapes of Esheol before their eyes, they ‘drew back’ because they feared the sons of Anak, and murmured against Moses. ‘Would God we had died in Egypt or in the wilderness!’

“And what is the great moral of all this for us for whom it is written? They could not enter in *because of unbelief*. How simple, yet to us how hard, is the *walk of faith* after we know and enjoy redemption! The epistle to the Hebrews appears written for this very object—to admonish us by what happened to Israel, and to cheer us on our way by presenting Jesus to us to meet us in all our need, and most especially in His priestly ministry. What admonitory words these are to all—‘They might have had opportunity to have returned.’ ‘If any man draw back!’ We are prone to halt and stop outside, instead of drawing near with boldness. We are discouraged by the way, and are apt to make a calf for ourselves, and to rejoice in the work of our hands, as they did when Moses was in the mount. Jesus is at the right hand of God, and we crave something

visible and tangible. Anything suits our hearts better than simple dependence, than holding fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end. It is after redemption is known that the real difficulties of our walk begin. It is after we know that Christ gave Himself for our sins, to deliver us out of this present evil world, that we begin to do battle against the world, and discover that all that is in it is not of the Father, but of the world. 'God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ,' is the noble boast of the apostle, not only because of his personal salvation thereby, but because of his victory over the world thereby; and, remember, to Paul it was the *religious* world.

"If we go on with Paul, and follow him as he teaches us that we are not only delivered out of Egypt, but brought into Canaan — 'giving thanks to the Father . . . who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son;' if we have learned that we are members of that body of which Christ is the risen and glorified Head; if we have had the least glimpse of the dignity of being seated in heavenly places in Christ—*then* our walk becomes more difficult. "See that ye walk *circumspectly*" is the word to us. There is the liberty of ignorance, but there is the responsibility of light; and I fear lest we should gladly take the light and shrink from the responsibility. There were trials in Canaan of a different order from those in the wilderness; and even noble Joshua, who had gone so firmly and resolutely through the wilderness, fails for a moment in the land. When Israel turned their backs on their enemies the word of unbelief escaped his lips: 'O Lord God, wherefore hast thou at all brought this people over Jordan to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites? Would to God we had been content, and dwelt on the other side Jordan.' Cannot you understand this? It is difficult to maintain a dignified position and to walk worthy of it. The higher the standing, the more lowliness and dependence is needed to walk worthy of it. We have enemies before, against whom we have to contend. To be seated in heavenly places in Christ is our high and dignified calling, and this assuredly is to be outside the camp. The

camp undoubtedly is the place of ease; but after the golden calf we read: 'And it came to pass that every one which sought, the Lord went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation, which was without the camp.' And this is interpreted to us, 'Let us go forth therefore *unto Him* without the camp, bearing His reproach.'

J. L. H.

"August 19th, 1866."

## NOTES AND REPLIES.

*What is the meaning of "hate" in Luke xiv. 26?*

THAT it does not mean *personal* hatred we know, from the command to love our enemies; but the world will often regard our subjection to God and our following of Christ as hatred to itself, and will call it so, looking upon it as a rejection of its claims and of its relationships. This we must be prepared for, if we would take up our cross and follow Christ. Compare with this passage our Lord's words to Mary, "Woman, what have I to do with thee?" and to Peter, "Get thee behind me, Satan"—words having a solemn significance to any who would bring in anything between the soul and the will of God, for He will allow of no interference in that which concerns Him and His will. We must ever let the creature occupy only his due place, and must give holy pre-eminence to the first great command, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength."

*What is to be learnt from the expressions, "Peace on (epi) earth," in Luke ii. 14, and its contrast, "Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on (en) earth? I tell you, Nay; but rather division," in Luke xii. 51?*

The song of Luke ii. points on to the ultimate result, when the fruit of the advent in Bethlehem will be seen in a new heaven and a new earth in which the Prince of Peace shall rule. In Luke xix. the disciples thought the time for heaven's peace to rule the earth had arrived as Christ rode into Jerusalem, and they shouted, "Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest." But had they understood our Lord's words in chap. xii. 51, they would not have made this mistake. The result of the first advent was in one sense to bring a sword to the earth, and not an olive branch—division and discord, and not peace; for till evil is put down, truth can only stir up strife. True, there is inward peace to all who accept the truth, but that very acceptance brings on tribulation from the world. Hence our Lord's words in John xvi. 33, that so it must be.

## SICKNESS IN THE CHURCH.

## II.

TURNING to another side of the question of sickness, we find it among the means whereby God chastens His children when they fail to exercise self-judgment. From 1 Cor. xi. 30 we learn that, in consequence of disorderly behaviour at the Lord's table, God had manifested His displeasure on the church at Corinth, and, as the result, the apostle writes: "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Sickness and death had come in to avenge the Lord's dishonour, because they had not judged themselves. In the matter of sickness, as in every other form of discipline, exercise of soul is demanded, and there is, we fear, far too little of it in the Church of God now. Without it the peaceable fruits of righteousness are not yielded, and the careless soul either sinks unblessed under the trial, or rises out of it but to fall under the rebuke and sorrow of another, or to prove the truth of that solemn word, "Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone," and then passes away to the judgment-seat of Christ, there to learn with an eternal loss what might have been learned here with an everlasting gain.

That sickness is a natural result of sin, as well as a divinely-appointed infliction, we learn from our Lord's words to the sick man in John v., "Sin no more, lest a worse thing befall thee;" and this it is interesting to contrast with what our Lord says of the blind man in chap. ix., "Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents; but that the works of God should be made manifest in him."

These we may take as typical cases, showing two totally different causes to which sickness and suffering may be traced: (1) directly, because of sin in the creature; and



(2) indirectly, that God may be glorified in the creature. The former we see illustrated in the sickness and death that befell some of the Corinthians; and the latter in the bodily ailments of Paul, Epaphroditus, and others, already alluded to.

We will now briefly consider, in connection with this subject, the oft-referred-to passage in James v. 13-20. In verse 14 we read, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord."

In the first place we would say that the "let him call for" is permissive, as in the previous verse—"let him pray," "let him sing psalms," and cannot be looked on as imperative. The sending for the elders of the church is the act of the sick man himself, and it then rests with them to anoint with oil and to pray.

The gracious design of God seems to be to draw out sympathy and prayer in this way on behalf of the sick members of the family of faith. The anointing with oil is what Mark tells us the apostles did in healing the sick (chap. vi. 13), and prayer to God, in holy submission to His will, ascends to the throne according to the command to pray for one another; and then there is the waiting for the yea or the nay of that blessed God, who is ever ready to grant us all He can. Thus, according to verse 14, there may be the anointing, the praying, and the waiting; but faith has no absolute promise from the word of God on which to rest for healing; for, as we have seen, to Paul God's answer was, "No;" and to Timothy the command was neither to anoint nor pray for healing, but to use a little wine, and patiently bear all that a living God saw fit to allow in the way of sickness and suffering.

So far only does verse 14 go, but now we come to what follows in verse 15, which we think is by most very feebly

understood. James says, "And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up." The real question is, What is "the prayer of faith"?

Faith must be based on God's word, or it must come as a direct gift from God in any matter of which God has not spoken. In reference to any *absolute* promise of healing, we say at once that none can be shown on which faith can be put in exercise. There are general promises of answer to prayer, but we have in all such cases to accept the answer as the blessed Giver sees fit to give it, yet will it ever be found true, as one has said, that "God always gives what we ask, or something better;" and this something far better than healing, may be patience to suffer and preparedness for dying.

Of faith as the gift of God we read, in 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, "To one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another *faith* by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit." Here faith is a direct gift from God, and differs from that saving faith which belongs to all the family of God, and which rests upon the written Word. It is distinctly to this gift of faith that we would attach the thought of "the prayer of faith" in James v. 15. Had there not been a very special force intended to be given to this faith, the passage might have read thus, "And prayer shall save the sick." To designate as "the prayer of faith" all prayer for objects outside the direct revelation of God, is presumption. In any matter in which faith is exercised, it is given by the Spirit "as He will."

We assuredly know that the prayer of faith *will* save, because no prayer of faith can come but from God direct in reference to any matter about which His word has not spoken, and this it has *not* in regard to any individual case of sickness.

This question of the prayer of faith, and what it really is, is of great practical importance to ascertain, apart from the matter of sickness. For instance, many persons take up a good work to which they are not called of God, and then are disappointed because prayer in reference to it seems unheeded. But there must be a direct commission from God to the soul before such prayer can become the prayer of faith, and a general faith in God in connection with prayer must not be confounded with this specific believing prayer. Of the former we can all say, and in every matter, "*If* we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us;" but the prayer of faith has no "*if*" in it; it *knows* the mind of God, and prays accordingly.

In the case of sick ones generally, referred to in James v., we have no *a priori* knowledge that God wills the restoration of each one, and therefore the prayer of faith concerning each is impossible. To him who is in communion with God, the inward conviction of God's purpose may be vouchsafed in certain cases, and then, but not till then, can prayer to God become to the soul "the prayer of faith." Then we can say with John, "*If we know that He hear us*" (and, as in the previous verse and elsewhere frequently in Scripture, *to hear* implies *to answer*), "whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him." (1 John v. 15.) These remarks hold good in reference to all such passages as Luke xi. 22-25. Ponder the phrase there used, "Have faith *of* God," as in the margin of our Bibles, not "in God."

Another observation we would make on this passage in James is, that sickness is not regarded necessarily as the result of direct sin—"if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him"—and this confirms what has been already stated.

In conclusion, some remarks are necessary on Matt.

viii. 17, from which most unwarrantable conclusions have been drawn, alike contrary to clear Scripture statements and to facts and experience—conclusions which have made the hearts of many of the Lord's weak ones sad, and cast a dark cloud over the bright hours of happy fellowship with God in times of suffering and sickness. One writer on this passage says, "He bore, and you need not bear the sickness. It is not the bearing of sympathy, but of substitution, the bearing of which takes all the burden, and leaves you for ever free. And not only did He take our infirmities, but He kept them; He carried them. He has not dropped them back on your path or on your shoulders. His redemption is complete and lasting." This is a sample of what is being taught in regard to sickness, thus placing the bearing of sickness as a part of the bearing of sin in atonement. When Christ is said to bear sin, the meaning is, He bore its penalty and punishment. So absolutely does God identify *sin*, *the punishment of sin*, and *the atoning sacrifice for sin*, that in the Hebrew language one word suffices for all three. The sin is ours, the penalty is His. This is substitution in the language of Scripture. Death and sickness, sorrow and tears, thorns and briers, are the result and consequences of sin, and the blessed Lord bore the full penalty, even to the crown of thorns that pierced His sacred brow. It was because of this sin-bearing that He could, as Son of man, forgive sin (Matt. ix. 2); and for the same reason, as Son of man, He healed the sick, cleansed the leper, and raised the dead; for there could be no uplifting of the results of sin but by Him who came to meet sin's claims and to discharge sin's debt. But because He bore our sin, is sin eradicated? is death set aside? If not, why should sickness and disease be singled out alone as that from which we are left "for ever free." Blessed be His holy

name, death's penalty and sting are gone, yet death remains! The penalty and sting of sickness are removed, but the sickness remains, like death, a legacy and a blessing. Death, as we have said, becomes the portal into the presence of the Lord, and sickness and pain a heavenly discipline, leading into yet deeper and richer fellowship with God. The cross of Christ has transformed death and sickness, and made them instruments of blessing to us. "All things" are ours, even "death" itself.

But this error lies deeper; for it assumes a present redemption of the body, which is not true. We are still waiting for our sonship in the redemption of our body (Rom. viii. 23), as that which lies before us in the resurrection. The spirit is raised, not the body; the spirit is created anew, not the body; the spirit can walk in unclouded sunshine, but the deeds of the body have to be mortified, and it has to pass through the corruption of the tomb or the change of transformation at the coming of the Lord. Therefore, with all creation around, we groan within ourselves, waiting for the glorious liberty of the children of God, called by the apostle "our adoption" or "sonship," even though now, in the new man, we are sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ.

Is there then no such thing as the prayer of faith to heal? Surely there is, and there will be more and more, as self-sacrificing devotedness to God takes the place of worldly conformity and carnal self-indulgence. But there are terrible delusions abroad, wherein false doctrine and bottles of oil go hand in hand, and "faith healing" is made a panacea and a snare to beguile unstable souls and to unsettle the minds of the weak. It is against this we raise a warning cry; and while rejoicing over the realities of those things that are of God, we can but warn against a false dogma and a suspicious practice which are destroying the

divine landmarks of God's word and plunging souls into fanaticism.

It is well to be reminded that the devil can work miracles (Deut. xiii.), and that magicians could turn their rods into serpents (but we do not read that they could turn them back again); and our only safety is in adhering very closely to the written Word.

If it be asked, "Ought miracles ever to have ceased in the church?" we are disposed to answer, "No;" but we will remind all such enquirers that from the time Israel's sins drove them to Babylon all miraculous interferences ceased, as far as the Bible records; and while God left them not, all His interferences on their behalf were providential, and providential only. As we consider how far the professing church has apostatized from the simplicity of God's truth, can we be surprised if God has taken away in anger, yet in mercy, the outward demonstrations of His presence and power?

H. G.

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PATIENCE.—Deep, inwrought patience is the precious fruit of suffering God's will according to God's mind. If we desire that patience have her perfect work, we shall thank the only-wise God for all things whatsoever that afflict us. A child of God may be greatly afflicted, yet be far from murmuring against his heavenly Father. Sorrow sanctified obtains God's embrace; rebellious grief spoils the soul of communion. The cluster must be bruised to yield its wine; and the sufferings of heavenly patience procure for the soul an overflowing cup of consolation, both for its own comfort and that of others. (2 Cor. i. 4-6.) How many snares, how much harm, and loss, and shame, would the people of God avoid and escape, had they a little more patience in waiting for the Lord! Had Saul but waited a few minutes longer for Samuel, then "would the Lord have established his kingdom upon Israel for ever." (1 Sam. xiii. 13.)—*Choice Sayings.*

## JOSHUA.

THE TROUBLER; REST; WILES AND WARFARE.

THE defeat at Ai, viewed in the light of the promise of prosperity and success consequent on obedience—a promise guaranteed by the passage over Jordan, and confirmed by the victory over Jericho—should have raised the suspicion of something being wrong in the camp. The warning which had been given not to touch the accursed thing, should have made all watchful, each over himself and also over his fellow; but in this Israel failed. The accursed thing was among them, and they fled before their enemies.

Joshua was, however, at once obedient to Jehovah's word; he arose from the earth and commenced his solemn search for the offender. Tribe by tribe, family by family, man by man, was examined until the guilty one was discovered. Achan, the son of Carmi, the son of Zabdi, the son of Zerab, of the tribe of *Judah*, was taken, and to him Joshua gave the following admonition: "My son, give glory to Jehovah, God of Israel, and make confession unto *Him*, and tell me what thou hast done; hide it not from me."

Achan responded, making general and particular confession of his sin, a full disclosure of his deed of darkness. Acting on this information, messengers sent by Joshua collect the accursed things from his tent where he had hidden them—the gold, silver, and goodly Babylonish garments. These, with Achan, his family, his tent, his all, are taken out to the valley; and, after a solemn appeal made to him by Joshua, all Israel stoned him and his to death, and afterwards burned them with fire, with all

that pertained to him. They then raised over him a great heap of stones, a monument of Jehovah's displeasure against sin. Thus was Achan troubled for troubling Jehovah's people. Joshua then gave to the place the name *Achor* (trouble), and the scene closed; but this place is yet to be to Israel the "door of hope."

Surely, dear reader, we have something to learn from all this. Achan's conduct, and the evil effect on a whole nation of one man's sin, together with the fearful end of this troubler of his brethren, might admonish us; but it is with Joshua we have especially to do.

What, then, shall we say of him at this point of his history? Shall we exalt ourselves by disparaging this child of God and blessed servant of Jehovah and his nation? God forbid! Or shall we seek out and magnify his failings in order to screen our own imperfections, and find excuse for *our* trespasses? *This* must not be; yet, as the Holy Spirit has told us that "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning," we may enquire and learn lessons of wisdom.

First of all, then, let us seek afresh and more effectually to distrust ourselves, and live *a life* of faith on the Son of God, never imagining that our hearts are not capable of practising the evils committed by others, but remembering that as face answereth to face in water, so the heart of man to man, and let us cry, "Hold thou me up, and I shall be safe." Again, let us seek such a knowledge of God's character and ways, such confidence in His love and delight in blessing us, as shall enable us to justify Him and *judge* ourselves when things are not as we would desire, or when our plans seem to fail. Let us never allow the shadow of a reflection on the love and wisdom of God to rest on our souls, but search and try *our* ways, knowing that something undiscovered, or, if known, not fairly



judged by us, may account for it all. Moreover, let us learn never to think well of the flesh, never to expect any good from it; rather let us *suspect* evil and mistake when we do not discern either. Let us also watch against discouragement, and let faith in God and hope of success stimulate us to a more fixed purpose to be obedient in all things.

To return: the circumstances connected with Ai and Achor must have exercised Joshua's soul, and tended to depress him, and he needed comfort. Jehovah saw this, and spake the needed timely word, "*Fear not*, neither be thou dismayed." Having encouraged him, He instructs him how to go up against Ai, commanding him utterly to destroy it as he did Jericho, with this exception, that the prey was to be for the people, the restriction placed on the spoil of Jericho being at least in measure withdrawn. Joshua strictly obeyed Jehovah's word regarding the battle, and conquered, utterly destroying the inhabitants, and burning the city with fire. He was of good courage to *do*, and had "good success."

It was not always warfare for Joshua and Israel; they were not always measuring swords with the enemy. They had then, as we have now, times of rest from battle, seasons of rejoicing and sacrifice, of triumph and feasting, but always as obedient ones, both captain and people. Our *times*, whether of warfare or triumphant joy, are in the Lord's hand, but our *time for obedience* is *always* ready. Israel's time of rest was one of obedience; for as they had now reached the passage between Ebal and Gerizim, Joshua, according to the word of Moses, having first built the altar to Jehovah and sacrificed, caused the blessings and curses to be read out—blessings for the obedient, and curses for the disobedient—even to the very letter. "There was not a *word*" which Joshua omitted.

But their rest was of short duration; indeed, while they were feasting and rejoicing, both force and fraud were at work against them. All the kings on this side Jordan were forming an alliance, and the Gibeonites were preparing their deceitful plans.

Six combined powers against one might well make Joshua thoughtful; yet it was not in facing this formidable foe that his chief difficulty lay, but in meeting the wiles of the Gibeonites, the artfulness of a single company. The desires and intentions of the six united powers could be discerned at a glance; but the scheme underlying mouldy bread, old clouts, and worn-out shoes, was not so easily detected.

This is as true to-day as then. The wiles of the devil and the smiles of the world are more dangerous than the lion-roar of Satan and the world's violent opposition. The latter put us on our guard at once, and cause us to look out for help; but the former take us by surprise, and unless we do that which Joshua and the elders failed to do, viz., ask counsel of the Lord, we shall be entangled as they were. "They asked not counsel of Jehovah."

It is written that God will with the temptation make a way of escape, and surely there was a way for them had they availed themselves of it. Had Joshua and the elders presented the men with their bread, clouts, and shoes before Jehovah, and enquired if they were truthful men, if their bread and shoes truly represented their distance from home, wisdom would have been given to discern whether they dwelt outside the borders of Israel's future inheritance, on which ground alone they might be allowed to live, since all within those limits were by Jehovah given up to perish by the sword, and all league with such was strictly forbidden. (Deut. vii. 2.) Joshua failed to escape by this way. He did not refer to God, even as the woman

referred not Satan's words unto Adam, from whose lips she would have heard the prohibition, "Thou shalt not eat of it." As for Adam, the word of the Creator should have bound the creature to obedience. But what is man at his best? Concerning the Gibeonites, we read that "Joshua made peace with them, and the princes sware unto them that they should live."

May we in all doubtful cases seek unto God for wisdom and preservation; but when the Word plainly directs our conduct we should not, and need not, ask, "Is it right?" but should seek wisdom and strength to *obey*.

Neither Joshua nor the people were left long in uncertainty. It soon became known that the Gibeonites were their neighbours. That which was a *possibility* was soon found to be *fact*, and all the congregation murmured against the princes, and probably against Joshua. But the oath had been sworn that they should live, and by appealing to it they quieted the people, consigning the Gibeonites to perpetual slavery, as hewers of wood and drawers of water to the congregation. The Gibeonites were then rebuked and dismissed.

Let us seek to avoid the mistake that Israel here made, and be even more careful, through this mention of it, to refer everything to God. Thus shall we ensure His wisdom and strength on our behalf. If the matter appear clear, tell Him so; but confess the *possibility* of our being deceived; and if it be perplexing, refer it to Him whose wisdom is deeper than the subtlety of men or devils, as His power is superior to theirs. Let us not lean to our own understanding, nor judge by the sight of our eyes or the hearing of our ears, but trust Jehovah, God our Father, with all our heart.

No sooner was the matter of the Gibeonites arranged, and their peace with Israel known to their neighbours,

than their city became the object of assault by the allied kings and their armies. The Gibeonites, alarmed, appealed to Joshua for help against the enemy.

Dear fellow-believer, let us remember that leagues made with the flesh, with Satan, or the world, whether we are beguiled into them or make them with our eyes open, will most assuredly bring sorrow and trouble.

Joshua responded to the appeal for help, and, leading the armies of Jehovah by night, came suddenly on the five kings and their combined forces. Jehovah encouraged Joshua, perhaps during the night march, saying, "*Fear them not*; for I have delivered them into thine hand: there shall not a man stand before thee."

Encouraged by God, he could encourage the people; and coming unexpectedly upon the enemy, Jehovah discomfited them before Israel, and slew them with a great slaughter, casting down hail-stones on those who fled, which destroyed more than the sword; and, as if to show that His purposes must stand, in spite of the weaknesses in the very instrument which He used to accomplish them, God hearkened to the voice of a man, and, in compliance with Joshua's command (divinely suggested, doubtless), caused sun and moon to stand still, and lend their aid for the utter destruction of Israel's enemies. It was a day of days, which had no precedent, and was never to be forgotten.

But what of the five kings who fled away? They were overtaken, captured, and imprisoned in a cave, until Israel had routed and destroyed the enemy. Then, at Joshua's command, they were brought forth and prostrated before him as conquered foes. He then called the princes and elders—representatives of the nation—to *put their feet as conquerors on their necks*, saying to his men, "*Fear not*, nor be dismayed; be strong, and of good courage: for thus shall Jehovah do to all your enemies against whom

ye fight." They were then hanged up on five trees until the evening. (Compare Rom. xvi. 20.)

With like confidence Joshua commenced fresh action, and marched on from victory to victory. King after king, city after city fell before him and his people, whose *sword* was as Jehovah's *scythe* of judgment sweeping over the country, destroying their enemies, and putting Israel in possession of their land.

Joshua and all Israel then returned to Gilgal triumphant, having proved afresh the blessedness and the success consequent on *obedience*.

H. H.

### "FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH."

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Sit not idly down to weep ;  
 Precious souls, in countless number,  
 Round thee lie in fatal sleep.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Dream not thy short life away ;  
 All the time thou hast to labour  
 Is comprised in life's brief day.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Watch against besetting sins ;  
 He who *self* has nobly conquered,  
 More than half the battle wins.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Let *thy* joys, *thy* sorrows go ;  
 Think upon the souls immortal  
 Hastening on to endless woe.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Everywhere there's work to do ;  
 See how vast the field of labour !  
 See the labourers how few !

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Go well armed into the field ;  
 In thy Master's name advancing,  
 Every enemy must yield.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Christ, thy Captain and thy Guide,  
 In the thickest fight will shield thee,  
 Nought of ill shall thee betide.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Work for Jesus while you may ;  
 E'en though faint, yet still pursuing,  
 All the weary, pilgrim way.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Soothe the sick ones, cheer the faint ;  
 Thou art ministering to Jesus  
 In the person of each saint.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Sin and grief are everywhere ;  
*And in easing others' burdens*  
*Thine will be more light to bear.*

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Nobly, bravely, own His name  
 Who for thee, in love amazing,  
 Bore the cross, endured the shame.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 He that winneth souls is wise ;  
 By the joys of heaven urge them,  
 By the worm that never dies.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Say not, " I am poor and weak ; "  
 'Tis for Christ thy powers thou usest,  
 He will give thee words to speak.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 Satan's bands know no delay,  
 They *unceasingly* are warring ;  
 Wouldst thou be less brave than they ?

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 In the Holy Spirit's strength ;  
 Though the battle seem uncertain,  
 Thou shalt overcome at length.

Up, be doing, Christian soldier !  
 For a rest remains for thee ;  
 Soon thy toils will cease for ever  
 In glad songs of victory.

## THE ORDINANCE OF THE "RED HEIFER."

NUMBERS xix.

### THE PERIOD OF ITS INSTITUTION.

AMONG all the commands which God was pleased to enjoin upon His people Israel, there are perhaps none more remarkable than those relative to defilement by the dead, and to the removal of that defilement. He perfectly knew the heart as well as the feelings of the man whom He had formed, and likewise his depravity. He has all along been on the side of His creature, to protect and to redeem him from the consequences of his guilt. All His treatment of man, from the period when He placed him in Paradise to the present hour, has been designed to do him good. To this end His wisdom has devised various plans, which His power has brought into operation, and His love, His ceaseless love, has led Him to carry out.

If in the examination of the present subject a question should arise in any mind as to the propriety of such orders as this chapter contains, a full answer may be given in the words of the apostle: "Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to Him who formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?" He who has created this fair world, placed His creature man thereon, and maintained him in possession, notwithstanding all his rebellion and wickedness; He who has still further proved His love by the gift of His only begotten Son, may well claim the surrender of our judgment to His own, as to the means best adapted to the accomplishment of His own purposes of mercy, even when those means should have the appearance of being opposed to the exercise of benevolence and tenderness.

When Israel came out of Egypt, they were a people

void of understanding (Deut. xxxii. 28), rebellious, and idolatrous. (Ezekiel xx.) God issued to them His orders, comprised in the law, of which the apostle, comprehending much more than ourselves, testifies that it is "holy, just, and good." The speaker in Psalm cxix., fully acquainted with its character, again and again testifies to the same effect. Of that law the chapter under consideration forms a part, and is entitled, with every other portion, to this high distinction.

But Numbers xix. occupies a very remarkable position in the law.

It will be remembered that, as a mighty Monarch, Jehovah had just defeated and destroyed His adversary the king of Egypt, and had brought the people whom He had rescued to the foot of mount Sinai. There He promulgated to them the statutes of the new kingdom. There He arranged and encamped the four divisions of His army, making, with their wives and children, by far the largest assemblage this world has ever seen. There He appointed also His personal attendants, with their several offices, granting to certain persons a nearness of approach to His presence which to others was prohibited. If they transgressed His commands, they were amenable to punishment. In certain cases Israelites were excluded from His presence; in others, forbidden to enter their own dwellings; and in some, even turned out of the encampment.

In all these cases of exclusion the King had, in His goodness, arranged measures whereby those who had incurred His displeasure might be reinstated in His favour, and again be allowed their former privileges, after a shorter or longer interval, according to the particular circumstances. He was not willing that any of them should be kept away, and He therefore provided for their readmission.



Among the various statutes of the realm was this: "Command the children of Israel that they put out of the camp every leper, and every one that hath an issue, and whosoever is defiled by the dead: both male and female shall ye put them out, without the camp shall ye put them; that they defile not their camps in the midst whereof I dwell." A stranger on reading this enactment would naturally feel surprised. He might say, "On medical grounds there may be reasons for removing patients suffering under contagious or infectious diseases; but in two out of these three cases there is no question of contagion; and even as regards the leper, some private corner might be found where he might be in seclusion, and yet within the pale and protection of the camp."

An Israelite, however, would explain the apparent want of consideration and tenderness in this way. "Our God, who issued these orders, has in such a multitude of ways shown Himself so unspeakably merciful to us that there cannot possibly be any imputation against Him regarding want of tenderness. His favour towards us in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, His daily supplying us with food from above, and His condescension in coming to reside among us, fully establish this. Our God is holy; He hates sin, and though He knows us to be sinners, yet He shows us all this consideration. And in addition to this He has pledged Himself to do us good in every way, making us large promises such as no other nation has heard of. One of them especially bears upon this subject: 'Ye shall serve the Lord your God, and He shall bless thy bread and thy water, and I will take sickness away from the midst of thee. There shall nothing cast their young, nor be barren in thy land; the number of thy days I will fulfil.' If there be then any sick people among us, it shows that we have not obeyed His commands, and if He is pleased

to direct that some few of them should be put outside the camp, it plainly indicates His displeasure on account of sin committed. Happily He has provided means of restoration, always available, so that the exclusion is only temporary."

The statute law in Numbers v., already mentioned, for the putting forth from the camp every leper, every one with an issue, and every one defiled by the dead, was not enacted till a few days before Israel's departure from mount Sinai towards the land of promise. Some time previous to this, arrangements had been made by God for the re-admission of the leper, and the person with an issue. (See Lev. xiv., xv.) But for the re-admission of those defiled by the dead no provision was made till Num. xix. Many remarkable events had occurred in the interval. At Taberah the fire of the Lord had consumed the complainers. At Kibroth-hattaavah, after the supply of quails, very many of those who lusted had died of the plague, through the anger of the Lord. Miriam's guilt and leprosy had been manifested, and on her account there had been a detention of the whole body of Israelites. The camp had made eleven marches, and had arrived on the confines of the land. The spies had been sent forward to survey the country, being forty days thus engaged. The great rebellion then took place, in consequence of which the people generally were sentenced to die in the wilderness; also another rebellion, under Korah, with the death of more than 14,700 persons. (See Num. xi.-xvi.)

The next two chapters, Numbers xvii. and xviii., speak of the selection of Aaron's family, and the maintenance of them, and of the Levites by tithes. After the whole Mosaic economy had been thus far organised, the crowning institution is given by the ordinance of the red heifer; for all that follows in the book of Numbers and the whole of

Deuteronomy (a second law) are events of the fortieth year of the desert wanderings. Numbers xx. commences the account of the fortieth year, all the intervening years, from the second to the fortieth, being left entirely blank as regards historical events. Only two things are recorded of what Israel did in these thirty-seven years. Numbers xxxiii. relates the marches they made, and Amos v. 25-27 the further course of their depravity.

The "red heifer" is then the winding up of the Mosaic code. From the distinguished place it occupies something more than ordinary might be expected, and truly its provisions are altogether wonderful. The living God has been pleased hereby to declare His own sentiments in a way which, while it humbles to the dust the pride of man, enables him to look up with a tranquil and happy spirit to his justly-offended Creator and God, whose constant desire is to display His lovingkindness to the guilty and the lost.

The subject divides itself into three parts :

- (1) The process by which the ashes were obtained.
- (2) The peculiar nature of the defilement.
- (3) The mode of cleansing the defiled.

Each of these may also be looked upon in a three-fold aspect—the literal, the moral, and the figurative. It may be convenient to regard each part separately, and to the *preparation of the ashes* our attention will next be directed.

R. N.

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FRAGMENT.—"When God gave Paul the thorn in the flesh, he knew not at first the value of the gift, and would have cast it away had he been left in his own hands. The Lord was his keeper, and taught him, and us by him, that the strength of Christ is made perfect in weakness."

## ON DESIRING THE LORD'S COMING, AND SERVICE MEANWHILE.

IN looking for the coming of our Lord, it does not become us to think of it merely as putting an end to our sorrows; for that would bespeak little communion with God. We should rather think of it as fulfilling God's pleasure and unfolding what His counsels have planned. The fragrance of the highest heaven was brought up by Christ from His death. As the result of His cross all God's dealings with the world and with Satan will be one great matter, and will fully please Him. God's bruising of His Son will be the joy and delight of the world to come.

Paul says, "*In due time* Christ died for the ungodly" (Rom. v. 6); and Peter says, "Humble yourselves therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you *in due time*." (1 Peter v. 6.) Let us give thanks every day that we are left on earth. The true secret of never being disappointed or weary is to begin where Jesus began—with God the Father. "I do always those things that please Him." The pattern of the mind of Christ is to be seen in the apostle's words regarding his own nation. Paul says not to God, as Moses did, "Blot me out of thy book." (Exod. xxxii. 32.) Paul had learnt better, having had the Son of God so fully revealed to him, and says in effect, in Romans ix., "I could endure any wrath, any curse, if my people might be saved." His love to Israel arose from his love to God, and from his delight in Christ as doing God's will. The higher and deeper our reverence for God becomes, the more shall we be content that God, as the Potter, should do as He pleases with the clay, and the more will our affection to our fellow-men, and particularly to our kindred, be nourished. See how Paul dwells on the sovereignty of God's will, even regarding his own nation, in Romans ix.; and yet in

Romans x. his "heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved," and he then delights to dwell on the fulness and freeness of the gospel. The Jews were continually plotting against Paul's life, but his love burned all the stronger towards them. We must learn to rise above all other springs of action to God Himself, then we shall always find occasion for praise and service. Let the heart be able to say, "Hath not the Potter power over the clay?" and we shall then pray for the work of the Lord far and near; but let us not forget a "well of Sychar" ministry. Christ's heart is especially seen in John's gospel. The majesty of the "I AM" comes out in the other gospels, but not His tenderness, as when He says to the solitary sinner, "Give me to drink." May His love continually fill our hearts, and may we be ready to begin with small matters !

(R. C. C.)

## LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

### VIII.

#### *On chastening.*

"Yesterday the question of chastening came before me in the course of a lecture on Hebrews xii. 4-17. In going through this epistle I have been much struck with the thought how superficially I had entered into it, and further light only makes me long to know what I do know, 'in the demonstration of the Spirit and of power,' so as 'to walk in the truth' and to be 'of the truth.' One thing I think may be of interest to you, and that is the reading, according to the corrected editions, of the seventh verse of chap. xii. Martyrdom might indeed be before them; but there were trials short of martyrdom, the meaning and end of which they were to consider and not forget. 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin'—*the sin* evidently of verse 1, to which they were particularly exposed; viz., relapsing back into Judaism to escape the trial of confessing Jesus both as Saviour and Lord. *The sin* which, as it were, entangles us at all times is, drawing back from our confession of

Christ—in a word, ‘*the sin*’ of *unbelief*; for we might well tack on the beginning of chap. xii. to the end of chap. x. ‘Now the just shall live by *faith*: but if any draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of *the drawing back* unto perdition; but of *faith* to the saving of the soul.’ I say we might, without the intervention of the witnesses to faith in chap. xi., go on directly to the Lord Jesus Himself as the great Witness of enduring faith—the ‘Captain’ (as it is translated Heb. ii. 10) ‘and Finisher of faith.’ He is *the Faithful One* as well as the *Holy One*. He ran the race of faith, and has reached its goal, *enduring*, as none ever endured, unto the end. ‘Now then,’ says the inspired writer, ‘do not forget the exhortations of verses 5, 6, and those of verse 7.’ The better reading I refer to is, ‘It is for chastening’ (discipline, instruction) ‘ye are enduring; God is dealing with you as sons.’ ‘No discipline,’ he says afterwards, ‘for the present is joyous.’ The schoolboy looks for his holidays, the apprentice to be out of his time, and so we look forward to getting beyond the present discipline or instruction of our Father. It is good (though not pleasant) for us to be disciplined by our Father; it is *always for our good*, ‘that we might be partakers of His holiness.’ ‘Let him alone’ is the severest discipline of God to His children, as we read plainly in the case of Hezekiah, 2 Chron. xxxii. 31.

“December 12th, 1873.

J. L. H.”

## IX.

### *On the limit of parental authority.*

“It is one of our most important duties to show the sanctity of home. We know that God has set a limit even to parental authority, and that is, subjection to His own authority as paramount.

“It seems to me that the *prohibitory* authority of a parent is wider than his *enforcing* authority. A parent might say, ‘I do not allow you to go to such a meeting,’ and submission would be the child’s duty. But if a parent were to say to a Christian child, ‘I insist on your going to the Popish mass,’ I think the case would then come under the word, ‘*We must obey God rather than man.*’ What a narrow path! Who is sufficient for these things? Seeking to prove what is the good and perfect and acceptable will of God, will, I think, make our path clear.

J. L. H.”

## NOTES AND REPLIES.

*Is a believer whose parents are in debt justified in giving to the Lord's work, or should all gifts go exclusively to help the parents?*

Two scriptures bear directly on this question. In Mark vii. 9 and the parallel passage in Matt. xv. our Lord warns against the Pharisees' doctrine of "*Corban*," or professed giving to God while father and mother are neglected; and in 1 Tim. v. 4 the apostle, in speaking of widows, insists upon the requital of parents by children or grandchildren, and emphatically declares that it is "good and acceptable before God." It is well to observe that our Lord's charge against the Pharisees was that they did not allow their disciples to do *anything* for father or mother; but He did not *command* the opposite. That the need of parents should be met is very clear; on the other hand, debts may arise from very different causes, and in each case the believing son or daughter must learn, in communion with God, *how* to "honour" father and mother, while wisdom is sought, in the light of the word of God, and according to the circumstances, to discern how far the child's love should share the parents' burden.

*How are we to understand the last clause of 2 Cor. v. 10, "That every one may receive the things done in his body"?*

WE learn here that at the tribunal of Christ His judgment will be in reference to what has been done by His servants through the agency of the body, whether it be good or bad. In the latter case they will suffer loss, and in the former they will obtain His reward. There is no thought of *punishment* in this verse, as all stand accepted in the Beloved. This marks the distinction between what is said here and what is intended in the parables of the talents, the pounds, and the virgins, where the question is in each case about personal *acceptance*. The unfaithful servants and the unprepared virgins are alike rejected, for in these parables they are taken on the ground of their profession. Our finding a place at the judgment-seat of Christ, of itself proves that we have been caught up to meet Him in the air, because we are His. Luke ix. 25 seems to contemplate two distinct cases, that of a sinner who "loses himself," that is, is lost, and that of a believer who, though saved as by fire, "suffers loss" (*ζημιωθεῖς*), which is preferable to the rendering "be a castaway." This latter coincides with the thought in the passage under consideration.

## THE EARTHQUAKES RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE.

Exod. xix. 18; 1 SAM. xiv. 15; 1 KINGS xix. 11; AMOS i. 1.

THE recent occurrence of violent and alarming earthquakes in this country has afresh called the attention of many of God's children to this solemn subject; and this not only because an earthquake is a thing in itself so sudden and so appalling, but also because it is one of the signs given us by the Lord Himself of these being the last days, and one of those things which are "the beginning of sorrows" or birthpangs. (Matt. xxiv. 7, 8; Luke xxi. 11.)

But it is on the earthquakes of the past we would now dwell, not on those of the prophetic future. Seven earthquakes are recorded in Scripture—four in Old Testament and three in New; all of them intended by God to give additional solemnity to His truth when listened to by His own people, and to arrest and impress the careless who know not the God who speaks to them. Taken with their varied contexts, they form a chain of solemn instruction, which we may well lay to heart.

God's first record of an earthquake is of that at mount Sinai—"And mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because Jehovah descended upon it in fire . . . and the whole mount QUAKED *greatly*." (Exod. xix. 18.) This shaking of mount Sinai, as a part of the entire globe, was a genuine earthquake, and it was as truly an expression of the holiness of the law and of God's favour and love to Israel in giving it to them (see Deut. xxx. 3, 4) as was the blood which was afterwards sprinkled both on the book of the law and on all the people. (Exod. xxiv.) The one told of the death of any Israelite who transgressed it, and of a Substitute for transgressors who should one day die



in the stead of such ; and the other told of a holiness that will one day "shake" this sin-stained earth, and even the heavens, causing them to pass away so as to make room for that new heavens and new earth "wherein dwelleth righteousness," which is the eternal home God "hath promised" to all His saints. (See 2 Peter iii.) Paul also (in Heb. xii. 25, 26) definitely links together this first earthquake of Scripture with that final shake on the day of the great white throne. The one was at the announcement of law ; the other will be at the fullest and most awful execution of its penalties, which will be the time also of the eternal triumph of sovereign grace.

Very different is the scene of the next recorded earthquake in 1 Sam. xiv. 15 ; but it serves again to illustrate God's love to Israel, and His watchfulness over all their matters, even in saddest days of sin and failure. They had sinfully asked for a king that they might be "like all the nations," and God had given them Saul in His anger. Helpless were they before the Philistines, under the weakness and tyranny of Saul ; but no sooner is the spirit of believing courage found in Jonathan and his armour-bearer than God manifests Himself as One "mighty to save." The boastful Michmash garrison falls before them as they only climb the rock, and the same God who shook the earth at Sinai long before, shakes it again for only these *two* feeble ones ; for the Word not only says, "There was trembling in the host, in the field, and among all the people : the garrison and the spoilers, they also trembled," but it adds, "And the EARTH QUAKED ; so it was a very great trembling." Human hearts were indeed failing for fear, and were quaking in the whole scene. The Hebrews were trembling under Saul's leadership (1 Sam. xiii. 7), as also were the Philistines ; but the hearts of Jonathan and his companion remained unmoved, and God

showed Himself mighty on their behalf, and on behalf also of His own great name. Thus in New Testament days we see Paul and Timothy, his "like-minded" one, side by side, full of the spirit "of power and of love and of a sound mind," unshaken amidst all the failures of God's Church, and able to say, "The firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal," &c.; able also to look on to the crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give "at that day."

In 1 Kings xix. 11 we again have earthquake — "Behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains . . . but the Lord was not in the wind: and after the wind *an earthquake*." In this case it occurs at the scene of the one first mentioned, viz., Horeb or Sinai, and is given by God for the instruction of Elijah *only*; for every *single* saint and servant of God is precious in His sight. Elijah was weary and discouraged with the wickedness of Ahab and the impenitence of Israel. Twice in this chapter he "maketh intercession to God" (Rom. xi. 2) against them; so God again made use of earthquake. True, like the "strong wind" and the "fire" which preceded and followed, it was but to prepare Elijah for the "still small voice" of the living Jehovah, as it was used long before to prepare Israel to listen and obey. Surely the earthquake and the fire must have reminded Elijah of Moses at the same Horeb before him. At Horeb Moses had known God in the *burning* bush, and had gone up into the mount in the midst of darkness, and tempest, and earthquake, albeit with shoes off his feet, and with holy awe filling him; and now Elijah had to be in the felt presence of One greater than wicked Ahab or rebellious Israel. Would that earthquake, pestilence, and famine carried with them any such profitable teaching in our time!

But the *written* word is from God as truly as was of old His living voice. "They have *Moses and the prophets*," said our Lord; "let them hear them." (Luke xvi. 29.) And it is in connection with the book of the prophet Amos that we have the last recorded earthquake of the Old Testament. "The words of Amos, who was among the herdmen of Tekoa, which he saw concerning Israel in the days of Uzziah . . . two years *before the earthquake*." (Amos i. 1.) As Jeroboam II. died in the fifteenth year of Uzziah's reign, this earthquake could not have happened later than the seventeenth year of Uzziah. It was apparently a specially awful one; for it is distinguished as *THE* earthquake, and is alluded to again long afterwards in Zech. xiv. 5. Yet we have no mention of it in Israel's or Judah's historical books, and should not have known of its occurrence but for its connection with the simple but solemn pages of Amos, the herdman.

It was according to the wisdom of God that just "two years" after the despised Amos issued his warnings to the nation this awful event took place. May not God have meant to show by this that the prophetic scroll of Amos was as truly from Himself as was the trumpet voice that sounded to all Israel from Horeb long before, or the "still small voice" that afterwards spoke to Elijah?

Amos' first words had been, "Jehovah will *ROAR*" (*i.e.* as a lion) "from Zion, and utter His voice from Jerusalem;" and again, "The lion hath *roared*, who will not fear? the Lord God hath spoken, who can but prophecy?" (Amos iii. 8.) And the awful rumblings of earthquake two years afterwards might well move with alarm the readers of Amos' words. Many had been the afflictions God had sent them—"cleanness of teeth" (*i.e.* famine) in all their cities; such drought that "two or three cities wandered to one city to drink water," and had

not enough; "blasting and mildew and the palmerworm;" "pestilence and the sword." "Yet have ye not returned unto Me, saith the Lord. Therefore . . . *prepare to meet thy God*, O Israel." (See Amos iv.) And the terrors of the earthquake followed two years afterwards.

Surely this was but another form of meeting their offended God; and something to tell them, by its subterranean fires, how terrible was Jehovah's anger when once it was awaked. Such are the recorded earthquakes of the Old Testament. They are things "written aforetime, and written for our admonition, on whom the ends of the ages are come." Oh that there were a heart in the millions of these British Isles to hearken to the scripture pages, with which they are so familiar, and to use aright the solemn signs of the times as they occur!

The three earthquakes of the New Testament are more generally remembered, but it may be well to point them out shortly.

H. D.

## "JESUS HIMSELF DREW NEAR."

LUKE XXIV. 15.

"JESUS Himself drew near and went with them."

O Saviour, now draw near and with *us* walk!

We often "reason" of Thee, often "talk"

Of Thee, when what we really want and need

Is Thee Thyself *abiding* with us, Lord,

We are so "slow of heart;" we read Thy word,

But do not recognize *Thee* as we read,

Till Thou dost make our hearts to "burn." We condemn

Those two who knew Thee not, as strangely blind;

Yet, walking on, *we* know Thee not! We find

Our risen Saviour just as near as they,

And if we do but ask Thee to "abide,"

We know that Thou wilt *keep* us near Thy side,

And guard, and bless, and teach us every day.

L. M. W.

## "DAVID'S PSALM OF PRAISE."

PSALM cxlv.

THE heading of this beautiful psalm at once arrests attention. Many psalms are very full of praise, but in this respect Psalm cxlv. seems to stand out in peculiar prominence.

If we were to enquire, What is worship? we might well turn to this psalm for the inspired answer. Worship is the celebration of what God is and of what God does. God's name as He has declared Himself to His people, and the mighty works He has wrought for them, must ever be their chief themes of praise. We see this in the book of Revelation, and we find it throughout the book of Psalms.

The psalmist stands in a known relationship to God; for he can say, "*My God*." These are words that no child of Adam can use apart from the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; for sin has put man at a distance from the Holy One, and has broken every link that bound him to his Maker. It was on no ground of creation, but in pure and perfect grace, that God made a covenant with Abraham to be a God unto him and to his seed after him; and it is as one who stands in the bonds of that covenant of grace, as a true child of Abraham, that the writer says "*My God*." Those who are now brought within the bonds of that covenant are blessed with the fuller declaration of God's name, and find it their privilege to respond to the utterance of Him who in matchless grace stooped to the position in which He could say "*My God*," that He might link us with Himself and say, "*My Father and your Father, my God, and your God*." It is as those who stand in this definite relationship to God, and have access to His imme-

diate presence, that we worship the KING. Such is His absolute title, as Paul also expresses it in his note of praise drawn forth by the remembrance of the mercy that had reached him as a sinner, "Now to the King eternal, incorruptible, invisible, the only God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen." (1 Tim. i. 17, R.V.)

David begins with the King and goes on to the kingdom, first setting forth the greatness and majesty of the Lord, and then the eternity of His dominion: "Great is Jehovah, and greatly to be praised; and His greatness is unsearchable." (v. 3.) We may dwell upon His greatness, we may search into it and learn out something of it; but the more we ponder it, the more shall we be convinced that of that greatness "there is no end," as an old version expresses it. It is far above the comprehension of the creature, even though that creature be a child of God indwelt by the Holy Ghost, who "fathoms all things, even the depths of God."\* (1 Cor. ii. 10.) Not the least of the joys of a limitless future will be unending growth in the knowledge of Him whose glory all shines forth in the Son of His love; but not entirely for the future is that joy reserved. It is the present privilege and responsibility of saints to be increasing in the knowledge of God, and such growth is the sure and the only means of preservation from that spirit of lightness in dealing with holy things which is natural to the world, and into which unwatchful saints may quickly fall. If the subjects of this psalm form the theme of our meditation; if we are accustomed to dwell upon Jehovah's power, His mighty acts, His wondrous works, the honour of His majesty, and the glorious majesty of His kingdom,

\* Mr. Conybeare's translation. The expression "depths of God" has reference to His very nature as well as to His works and ways, and the "search" is not that of ignorance or even enquiry, but of deep and accurate knowledge.

we are not likely to speak of Him or of His doings with lightness of manner or irreverence of speech.

The *eternity* of God's kingdom is a constant theme of his word: "Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom" (or a kingdom of all ages), "and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations." (v. 13.) The day of the *manifestation* of His kingdom is indeed future, but faith already sees it and owns His absolute sovereignty. He who before His incarnation could say, "By me kings reign" (Prov. viii. 15), is, as the risen One, known and worshipped by His people as the "Ruler of the kings of the earth." (Rev. i. 5.) From the beginning to the end of the world's course it is true that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever He will" (Dan. iv. 17); and when the sin-stained history of this world shall be finished, it will in the new creation be the delight of redeemed saints and elect angels to own the *eternity* of that rule which is the guarantee of their uninterrupted blessedness.

God's kingdom is full of His goodness, and of the subjects of that kingdom it is said, "They shall abundantly utter" (or pour forth) "the memory of thy great goodness, and shall sing of thy righteousness." (v. 7.) How expressive is that word "pour forth!" "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." This is worship, the overflow of a heart that is filled with the sense of the grace and goodness of the God of salvation. Where shall we find such a display of God's goodness and righteousness as at Calvary? and where such a memorial of it as in the feast instituted by Christ Himself? Do we go to the Lord's table with our hearts so full of the memory of God's great goodness, that we find joy in pouring it forth? Do we fulfil that word, "Bring an offering, and come into His [courts]"? Does He who searches the heart behold there that pouring forth of praise which is ever acceptable

to Him? It is in this way that His saints bless Him who has so blessed them. All His works praise Him (v. 10), though the witness they bear is a silent one; but His saints bless Him; for by speaking peace to their hearts He has opened their lips to "show forth all His praise."

It is very beautiful to mark how near to the expression of God's power and majesty comes the intimation of His tenderness and pity. In another psalm (cxlvii. 2-5) we are told that He who in the heights above "telleteth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names," is the One who gathers together His scattered people in the world, and numbers and heals the wounds or griefs of the broken in heart. And in this psalm, after such wondrous statements of God's greatness, we get the beautiful assurance that "the Lord upholdeth all that fall, and raiseth up all those that be bowed down." His kindness extends to all the works of His hands; as He alone is the mighty Creator, so He alone provides for His creatures, causing His sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sending rain on the just and on the unjust. (Matt. vi. 45.) But while thus kind or gracious (v. 17, marg.) in all His works, He is "righteous in all His ways;" for His eye is ever on the cross of His dear Son; and on this ground He can deal in longsuffering with a world of sinners.

In the closing verses of this psalm we get a threefold description of the people of God of all times. They *call upon* Him, they *fear* Him, and they *love* Him; while on His part He is nigh unto them, fulfilling their desire and preserving them. They call upon Him *in truth*; their words are no mere utterance of the lip, but the cry is from the heart. They call upon Him as did Abraham (Gen. xiii. 4), and as did Moses, and Aaron, and Samuel, who "called upon the Lord, and He answered them." (Ps.



xlix. 6.) They fear Him like Joseph, who in solitude in Egypt was by his fear of God preserved from wickedness, in spite of strong temptation. And they love Him as those who have proved His saving grace.

How solemn, by way of contrast, is the last clause of verse 20: "But all the wicked will He destroy!" The wicked, or the lawless, are those who do *not* fear Him, or love Him, or call upon Him in truth; those who pursue their self-chosen course, and never even consider what His will is. Such will He destroy. To destroy is exactly the opposite of to build up, as may be seen from Ps. xxviii. 5: "Because they regard not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them, and not build them up."

May our meditation on this beautiful psalm lead us more heartily than ever to join in the determination expressed at the close: "My mouth shall speak the praise of the Lord: and let all flesh bless His holy name for ever and ever."

W. H. B.

## THE ORDINANCE OF THE "RED HEIFER."

### THE PREPARATION OF THE ASHES.

THE Lord, through Moses and Aaron (Num. xix. 1-10), commanded Israel to bring a red heifer without spot or blemish, and on which no yoke had ever been placed. The requirements that it should be of one uniform colour, and without blemish, would of necessity make it more costly than another; and it was to be presented in its natural state—untrained, unbroken. They were to give it, not to Aaron, the high priest, but to Eleazar, his son, and afterwards his successor in the priesthood, who was to bring her outside the camp, where she was to be slain in his presence. He was then to take of her blood and go inside

the camp as far as the tabernacle, in front of which, not inside, he was to sprinkle her blood seven times with his finger. He then returns to the outside of the camp, where they burn the whole heifer before him—skin, flesh, blood, and dung—casting into the fire cedar-wood, hyssop, and scarlet. The priest then washes his garments, bathes, returns to the camp, but remains unclean till the evening. The person who burns her has likewise to wash his clothes and bathe, yet he remains unclean until the evening. A clean man gathers up the ashes, and deposits them in a clean place outside the camp, where they are to be carefully kept by the congregation of Israel for a water of sprinkling, a purification for sin. The gatherer of the ashes also has to wash his clothes, and remains unclean until the evening.

Thus far the preparation; and what is its significancy as intended to be understood, not by intelligent and enlightened Christians, but by the ignorant population there assembled, who had just emerged from Egypt? In the first place, it has none of the ordinary characteristics of a sacrifice, such as we see described in Leviticus i. iii. iv. The heifer is not offered to God, nor presented at the door of the tabernacle; its blood is not sprinkled on the altar, nor is its fat burnt there. On the contrary, the place where it is slain is remote from the sanctuary, even beyond the precincts of the camp. It is true the blood is sprinkled before the tabernacle; but this is done *outside*, as if solemnly recording the fact of the death, without any prominent or immediate presentation. This, with the official superintendence of the priest, are the only indications that God is recognizing the transaction.

All the rest is performed outside the camp in the wilderness, beyond the place where God dwells and walks. (Deut. xxiii. 14.) There the burning takes place, not with the sacred fire of the altar, which indicates God's accept-

ance, but as declaratory of judgment performed and executed, of indignation poured out. The very remarkable accordance of this with a peculiar feature of the antitype will presently come under notice.

Another prominent feature is, that whatever is done by man renders him unclean. The priest, he that burns, and he that gathers the ashes, all become defiled. One would say, "Surely those employed by God in a rite so essential to the restoration of His people must be dignified thereby, and stand at least as high as others in His favour." But no. He esteems and pronounces them defiled, unfit for His presence, disqualified until the evening for any service unto Him. Though their act is to be of such public importance, they themselves are for the time in a worse position than others—unclean. This must have some deep significancy.

But, again, why was not Aaron, the high priest, selected on this occasion rather than his son Eleazar—the higher rather than the lower official, seeing that the service to be rendered was so great? The answer seems to be, that it was not God's purpose to dignify either the act or the service. The presence of the high priest, as on the day of atonement, would have conferred lustre on the ceremonial; whereas the intention was that the whole should be obscure, in order to subserve the grand design He was about to establish.

This is further to be perceived in the choice of the victim. It must be of large size, because of the quantity of ashes required; but it must not be a bull, the noblest of the kind, because of the absence of certain qualities intended to be prominent, and the presence of others which in this instance would interfere with the design. The inferior of the species, the heifer, is selected, as more thoroughly indicating the idea of subjection, the female being, both in the Scriptures and in the works of creation, placed in subordination to the male.

The colour must not be white, as too attractive to the eye, but red, indicating an origin not diverse from that of man, Adam being of the earth, his name, given him by God, signifying "red earth."

But the heifer must be without spot and without blemish. Nothing must interrupt the oneness of the idea, as exemplified by colour, and there must be nothing distorted or deficient; it must be perfect.

The last feature is "upon which never came yoke." It might have been thought that the trained ox, accustomed to the yoke, would have conveyed a more suitable representation of Him who said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart," than the untrained, untaught, unbroken heifer. And in other points of view it would surely be so. But here prominence was to be given to that which from His birth characterized Him of whom it was said, "That *holy* thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."

Gathering up the points herein contained, we find that Israel, when defiled by the dead, were to owe their readmission into the camp to the ashes of a victim not marked by what would generally be considered the highest qualities. The grand, the glorious dignity and attributes of the true Victim, with all His arduous work on earth, as well as His expiatory sacrifice on the cross, are in this type purposely left out of sight, instead of which certain other excellencies which man either overlooks or despises are prominently brought forward, such as His subjection, His condition as Son of man, His spotless character, His essential holiness. These were all seen of God in His beloved Son before He entered on His public ministry.

But, in addition, the wonderful disclosure is made that this perfect One must be slain, otherwise nothing would avail. He must be put to death outside the camp. (Heb.

xiii. 12.) This type does not reveal the reason why He must die, only that His death was essential, indispensable to Israel's restoration. It shows He was to be put to death in an obscure spot; that is, outside of what God recognized, under Gentile dominion; and moreover that the reminiscence of Him, indicated by the ash-heap treasured up, was to do that which otherwise was impossible, to bring in those who but for this were for ever shut out.

But the process of the burning must not be overlooked. The whole heifer was to be consumed, one part being equally important as another. In *sacrifices* the hide was never burnt, but was given to the priest; the entrails also were washed. Here they are not washed; but the contents are to be consumed with the other parts.

The blood likewise was to be burnt; whereas in sacrifices it was poured out at the bottom of the altar. So precious in figure is every thing connected with the Holy One here represented, that not any part can be omitted. The "ashes" are the residue of the whole.

Into the midst of the burning, cedar wood, hyssop, and scarlet are to be cast. From 1 Kings iv. 33, where the two first are mentioned, they seem intended as the extremes of the vegetable creation, the cedar being the grandest, the most durable, and applied to the loftiest uses; the hyssop the most insignificant, and the most perishable, and that which is applied to the meanest use. Scarlet, from 2 Sam. i. 24 and Prov. xxxi. 21, may convey the ideas of prosperity and ornament. These being included in the destruction of the heifer, seem to point in the same direction as Isaiah ii. 9-17,—a sentence passed upon all, low as well as high, and upon all man's efforts in his own behalf. An end is made to all by the putting to death of God's Son. Unless grace restores, all is irremediable ruin.

The ashes were to be stored up in a clean place outside the camp. Since the camp alone was clean in the higher sense, because of the presence of Jehovah, this may import that the spot was not to be made unclean by the children of Israel, but appropriated to this special purpose. Being kept outside the camp, the ashes would at once be available for the defiled, which would not have been the case had they been kept inside, since they could not go there to procure them. It conveys a thought of mercy; and it likewise seems to intimate to Israel that their restoration is not to be by anything done inside their own peculiar position, but that they must seek the place where the Gentile finds mercy, where Jesus suffered—outside the gate. (Heb. xiii. 10-13; Acts xv. 11.)

Grace has indeed prevailed. Man's long-continued hatred of the God who made and preserves him, brought to a climax by the murder of His beloved Son, far from exhausting or even diminishing the love of God to His poor fallen creature man, has only brought forth the still deeper resources of His kindness and favour towards us. Jesus, by His death of agony on the cross, is at once the cause of the blotting out of our sins, and of our redemption from the authority of Satan. By His resurrection and ascension He takes with Him into the heavens all who cling to Him, the multitude of captives redeemed from the hand of the enemy, to introduce them into the presence of His Father and their Father, His God and their God.

But it is not in this point of view that the type now before us presents Him. Here there is no question of pardon, justification, salvation, or redemption. It is simply the idea of exclusion from the presence of God and of His people, with the means of readmission. The subject will again be brought to our notice.

R. N.

## JOSHUA.

## THE WARFARE ENDED, AND THE LAND DIVIDED.

THE season of rest at Gilgal having closed, Israel and their captain are again in conflict, carrying out Jehovah's command to extirpate their enemies and take possession of their land.

Chapter xi. gives account of some of their engagements and victories, and makes special mention of Joshua's *obedience*. "As the Lord commanded Moses His servant, so did Moses command Joshua, and *so did Joshua*; he left *nothing undone* of all that Jehovah commanded Moses. . . . So Joshua took the whole land, according to all that the Lord said unto Moses; and gave it for an inheritance unto Israel according to their divisions by their tribes. And the land had rest from war."

Chapter xii. gives us the number and names of the conquered kings, and a description of the land possessed. Chapter xiii. opens with the next notice of Jehovah's servant Joshua, who had thus far lived to prove that which his name implies, that Jehovah was his Saviour, and that he was Jehovah's salvation for the people.

In all this he was a type of the "Captain of our salvation," who has effected for us every deliverance and preservation which we have experienced, and will effect all that we hope to prove, until He has brought the many sons to glory. (Heb. ii. 10.) He will also yet give to Israel, in the millennial age and in the new world, palms of victory, rest, and blessing, of which their blessings in Canaan were an earnest, a pledge of that which is to come.

For many years Joshua's service had been that of warfare; he was now far advanced in life, but there was yet

more for him to do for Israel, and his remaining service was the division of the land among their tribes.

We are servants *for ever*, children in service, now in different places, under varying circumstances, with changing temptations; but we shall be servants even in the glory.

For this service of dividing the land Joshua's age and experience, his knowledge of God and of Israel, fitted him. He heard the voice of Jehovah saying to him, "Thou art old and stricken in years, and there remaineth yet very much land to be divided." The land yet to be conquered was then described (chap. xiii. 2-7), and he was told, "Now therefore divide this land for an inheritance unto the nine tribes, and the half tribe of Manasseh." This was done, Eleazar, Aaron's son, and Joshua, Moses' successor, with the elders of the people, undertaking the distribution of the land. (Chap. xiv. 1-5.)

There is never a lack of opportunities for service if we have only a heart for it, and are waiting on the Master to be used by Him.

In the chapters which describe the division of the land, there are several special notices of Joshua's conduct, which it may be interesting to mark.

The natural order of the tribes had been interfered with by Reuben's sin. He had forfeited the birthright, and Jehovah in sovereignty had elected Judah, the Messianic, the royal tribe, to that place; and when the land was to be divided the children of Judah came to Joshua first, on this side Jordan, in Gilgal. (Chap. xiv. 6.)

Of this tribe the man whose presence and words were the most likely to move Joshua's soul to its depths appeared before him, and addressed him, "Caleb the son of Jephunneh the Kenezite, said unto him, Thou knowest the thing that Jehovah said unto Moses, the man of God, concerning me and thee in Kadesh-barnea." He then refers to the



facts of his wilderness life, his age at that time, his mission as a spy, his integrity, his faithfulness to Jehovah and to Israel, and Moses' oath that the land whereon his feet had trodden should be his and his children's for ever. He then testifies to Jehovah's faithfulness and sustaining power, saying, "Lo, I am this day fourscore and five years old. As yet I am as strong as in the day that Moses sent me : as my strength was then, even so is my strength now, for war, both to go out, and to come in. Now therefore give me this mountain, whereof Jehovah spake in that day ; for *thou* heardest in that day how the Anakims were there, and the cities great and fenced : if so be Jehovah will be with me, then I shall be able to drive them out, as Jehovah said."

Such language was worthy of the man of faith, and corresponded with his name—Caleb, "whole-hearted." Such an appeal from one veteran's heart and lips to another veteran's ear and heart could not but bring forth a full response. "Joshua blessed him," and then gave him the grant of the land.

There is always something interesting in the meeting and fellowship of two or more who have been companions in service ; persons of similar age, experience, faith, and prowess. It is like the coming together of warriors who have grown old in earthly warfare, and who recount their past campaigns with their hardships and rewards. Thus Caleb and Joshua met and conversed, *hallowing* their intercourse with Jehovah's name.

Truly, dear fellow-Christian, it is worth living for to prove for ourselves the faithfulness of God, and to testify of it to others. And the true and proper use to make of all the varying circumstances of each day is to increase in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.

Joshua continues his business of obeying Jehovah in

the division of the land which He had chosen for Israel's inheritance long before; for "when He separated the sons of Adam, He set the bounds of the people according to the number of the children of Israel," who were "His portion, the lot of His inheritance." (Deut. xxxii. 8.)

In chapter xvii. 3-7, we see Joshua meeting the claims of the daughters of Zelophehad, *bowing to Jehovah's word* through Moses. (Num. xxvii. 6, 7.)

After this (chap. xvii. 14) the sons of Joseph, on the ground of their being a great people, and of great power, pleaded for more than one lot. Joshua took them on their own ground, and bade them prove it by exerting their power—cutting down the wood, and driving out the Canaanites.

If we make professions of great wisdom and power, it is only reasonable that others should expect from us wise counsels and mighty deeds. It is far better for us to *use* what wisdom God has given us, and to the utmost of our ability *do* His will, and leave results to speak.

In chapter xviii. Israel's captain is presented to us as standing with them after having set up the Tent of the congregation. Here he takes the place of a reprover, gently chiding the people for their slackness to possess the land given them by Jehovah, and proposing a plan for surveying, describing, and dividing the unapportioned land among the seven tribes who had not yet received their portion.

Joshua's plan was carried out, and the description and division of the land was laid before him. He then cast lots for them in Shiloh before Jehovah, as described in chapters xviii. and xix. He was still of good courage *to do*, for if he had not been he would have lacked fitness to reprove their slackness, and direct their action; he also prospered in *this* service, as he had in others. Exhortation to obedience requires that the exhorter be bent on obeying.

Obedience is never fruitless, nor can we fail of good or of *God's end* when we do *His will*, for His will always effects that only which is worthy of Himself.

Having, in fellowship with Eleazar and the heads of the fathers of the tribes, finished the division of the land before Jehovah in Shiloh, Joshua received at the hands of the children of Israel *his inheritance*. "According to the word of Jehovah they gave him the city which he *asked*, even Timnath-serah in mount Ephraim: and he built the city, and dwelt therein. So they made an end of dividing the land." (chap. xix. 49-51.)

Joshua is next seen as a listener, hearkening to the voice of Jehovah. He bids him enforce His commandment by Moses to separate cities of refuge for the safety of the man-slayer, who fled from the blood-avenging kinsman in the case of unintentional murder. Jehovah's word was obeyed, and the cities are named in chap. xx.

In his varied service Joshua doubtless learnt much of Jehovah's character by means of the circumstances through which he passed, and he also learned much of himself, and of Israel. In doing this he made the right use of circumstances, for Jehovah's object in all he *said* and *did* was to reveal Himself.

Israel's preservation in Egypt, their deliverance out of it, their passage through the Red Sea and the Jordan, were means to this great end. So also every step in the wilderness was intended to make known Jehovah's name, and to get for Him a name and fame; even as now our salvation from wrath, and all the circumstances of our path are but means to this great, all-worthy end—the glory of God. He is saying to us every day, by everything that befalls us, "Acquaint *now* thyself with Him, and be at peace."

The service of each servant of Christ is his school, and to grow in the knowledge of God his lesson; and all

faithful ministry involves to the minister or servant both sweet and bitter. Ezekiel's roll, and the little book given to John in Patmos, contained these two ingredients, and both of them by grace subserve our increase in the knowledge of God and of His Son, Jesus our Lord.

In chap. xxi. 43, 44, we read, "Jehovah gave unto Israel all the land which He sware to give unto their fathers, and they possessed it, and dwelt therein. And Jehovah gave them rest round about, according to all that He sware unto their fathers."

This being true, the two tribes and a half must have kept their promise made to Moses (Numb. xxxii.), and repeated to Joshua (Josh. i.). Having fulfilled the conditions on which their inheritance had been granted them on the other side of Jordan, as they desired, the time had arrived for their return to it and to all dear to them. Chap. xxii. shows how Joshua assembled them, after many years of toil and warfare, to hear his acknowledgment of their fidelity, and to receive his final charge.

The assembly being gathered, Joshua owns their obedience to Jehovah's commands, as given by Moses and through himself. He commends their faithful service to their brethren, bears testimony to Jehovah's faithfulness, and charges on them whole-hearted obedience in the future. Then with his blessing he dismisses them, and they depart to their tents.

This service, doubtless, was pleasant to Joshua, and grateful to the two tribes and a half. It is pleasant to meet the wishes and the need of our brethren, by seeking to please God and obey His word; and it should be painful to us to differ from them, and to withhold our presence or our fellowship in their service. Yet in these days, alas! it is sometimes necessary, and we must eat the bitter as well as suck the sweet.

H. H.

## LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

## X.

*The debt of love.*

"I have been reminded of the good saying of 'old Richard,' that 'creditors have better memories than debtors.' But is not the great God the great Creditor? And He frankly forgives all our debts, yea, and He does what appears to us impossible—He *forgets* as well as forgives. If He were to reckon with us as men are wont to reckon one with another, we must be cast into prison until our debts were paid. It appears to me that there is a very proper sense in which to use the words, 'Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors,' as well as, 'Be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.' There are no contradictions in God; His will is supreme; and the gospel of God harmonizes what appear as contradictions to our limited minds; from a '*just* God and a *Saviour*'—the most wonderful instance—downwards. What a blessed thing to have to do with God! It dignifies everything down to the meat which sustains our bodies.

"You may well ask, 'And wherefore all this lengthy preface?' The answer is, *I owe you a letter*, and am now seeking to discharge my debt. . . . But there is a debt always running up which we never pay, not even as much as a farthing in the pound. 'Owe no man anything, but to love one another.' The former clause, though it may include paying for our bread and butter regularly and honestly, is by no means thereby exhausted. We are to pay our taxes without any attempt at evasion, and there are those to whom we owe honour, others to whom we owe fear. 'A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a Father, where is my honour? and if I be a Master, where is my fear? saith the Lord of hosts.' But after all our other debts are paid, *the debt of love* runs on and remains. 'And now abideth faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love: follow after love.' That which was so practically manifested in

Acts ii. and iv. is like a beautiful picture; the more it is studied, the more its beauties come out. I have been thinking whether there is a hint of this in Heb. xiii. 1, 'Let brotherly love *continue*.' Addressed to Christians at Jerusalem, it would have great force. 'Love rejoices in the truth.' How instructive is 1 Peter i. 22: 'Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.' We have so little love because we do not in everything obey Him who is '*the truth*'—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself.

"Well, I must wind up my yearly accounts by applying closely to my own heart and conscience the texts in the epistle of John, and among them this searching one, 'By this we know that we love the children of God when we love God and keep His commandments.' I have heard it said, and see much truth in it, that John lived long enough to see the errors arising from one-sided truth, and of being occupied with a mental conception of truth, rather than with obedience to it; so we find that every subtlety by which we might willingly allow our hearts to be deceived is met by some sentence of the epistle of John. Divine truth baffles human theories.

"I heard of ——'s precious gift to the poor. I suppose you read in Psalm xli.—'Blessed is He that considereth the poor'—the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and regard His poor as objects of special care, a legacy left by the Lord to the church. 'The poor ye have always with you,' but not me, says Jesus. He will be as pre-eminent for poverty as He is in glory. He was the poor man, and will not allow any of His disciples to outstrip Him in this respect. Through His poverty we became rich. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul.' J. L. H.

"*Weston-super-Mare, December 30th, 1873.*"

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## NOTES AND REPLIES.

*Are pastorship and rule the same?*

THERE is a similarity in pastorship, rule, and oversight, and the sphere of service in the church is the same, but each has its own specially prominent feature. Thus in *pastorship* the tender care of a

shepherd over the sheep, in leading, feeding, guarding, seeking, healing, is the point especially presented. (Ezek. xxxiv.) *Rule* or guidance implies something more of authority, and hence the command is, "Obey them that have the rule over you." (Heb. xiii. 17.) Intelligence and responsibility are expected in those guided; whereas in the figure of the sheep helplessness is the prominent idea. In *oversight* we have the thought of diligently overlooking the work or the condition of those needing supervision. These *three* varied modes of care bestowed upon children of God are to be exercised by the same person. In such scriptures as 1 Tim. iii., Acts xx., and 1 Peter v. the blending of oversight and shepherd-care is very marked, and, as we see in the description of a bishop, the fitness of anyone to rule in the church of God is manifested by the ability to rule his own spirit and his own house. The unfading "crown of glory" from the hand of the Chief Shepherd and Bishop of souls, at His appearing, will be the blessed recompense of all who thus serve according to His mind.

*Are those who "cause divisions," mentioned in Rom. xvi. 17, 18, within the church, and what is the meaning of "avoid them"?*

The apostle's words, in Acts xx., "Of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," show that these persons are probably within the church, and of such drawing away, ecclesiastical history, down to our own day, gives only too many instances. The command is to mark or watch such persons narrowly, and to avoid or keep aloof from them. Had these instructions been fulfilled, children of God would not have been divided and scattered as they now are, and those who sought to cause divisions would have been put to shame. But the "good words and fair speeches" have been listened to and have gained the day, and the safeguards of careful observation and turning away from such as were not true under shepherds have been neglected. To "avoid" is one of those means of discipline *within* the assembly which, if carried out, would often save from the extreme act of discipline—excommunication. From the Old Testament we may learn much from the care that was exercised, where any uncertainty existed, before an Israelite was "cut off" from his people. Evil requiring excommunication will in time manifest itself by eating as a canker, and the course to be pursued will be perfectly plain to all godly consciences; and until it is so, prayer, watchfulness, and due care are the measures called for.

## THE WAVE BREAST AND THE HEAVE SHOULDER.

THE peace-offering in the Levitical ritual is readily recognized as the great *communion*-offering of Israel. Part was offered on the altar to God; the priest had his portion, and the offerer also partook of it. Hence we may connect it with the great truth of John vi., in which Christ is presented as "the bread of heaven," as well as "the bread from heaven," on which all who are of faith are commanded to feed. It is to this precious truth that the provision of the Lord's table bears witness, becoming to all saints the "*communion* of the body" and "the *communion* of the blood" of Him who said of the bread and wine, "This is my body;" "this is my blood."

The wave and heave-offerings were the portion of the priestly family "by a statute for ever," and every one who was clean might eat thereof; for God had given it to them, "a covenant of salt for ever." (Num. xviii. 11, 19.) It is thus that Christ is given unto us; and in token of this gift, and as a symbol of all the precious truths connected with it, did the blessed Lord institute His Supper, that therein we might have exemplified our fellowship with God, our fellowship with Christ in His death and resurrection, and our fellowship with one another. In this ordinance we learn that "we, the many, are one bread and one body;" that is, we are all members one of another. At our Lord's table we profess the truth of the "one body," as unfolded in 1 Cor. xii., a chapter which immediately follows the one which contains the direct command given to the apostle by the ascended Lord respecting this memorial feast.



We would now transfer to the Lord's Supper a few thoughts which suggest themselves in connection with the wave breast and the heave shoulder of the peace-offering.

The shoulder and the breast were the parts of the victim selected for the priests, as indicating something that it was needful they should enter into, which was figuratively represented by those particular parts. The shoulder is the symbol of strength, and the breast of the affections. In our great High Priest we see the strength which sustains the burden that is upon His almighty shoulders; and in Him we see also the love and tenderness that dwell in His holy heart, both combining to make Him the mighty and merciful Saviour, and the Shepherd and Priest of His people. Now we, as priests to God and to the Lamb, are required to feed on the heave shoulder of the Sacrifice, to enable us to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ; and to feed also upon the wave breast, that we might know the tenderness of the heart of Christ in all our relations one towards another, and might manifest the same care, one for another, that He exhibited in His intercourse with His disciples.

These two portions of the offering indicate the two great requisites for the fellowship of the body of Christ; and the table of the Lord is given to us that, seeing there the strength and the grace of Christ, as exercised on our own behalf, we might, through feeding by faith on Him, be enabled to bear the infirmities of the weak, and to please not ourselves, but our neighbour, for his good to edification.

From the vestments of the high priest we are taught the same divine characteristics. The high priest lifted or heaved up Israel's names upon his shoulders before God, telling us, in symbol, how we have been lifted up out of the horrible pit and the miry clay. But the names were

also waved on the breastplate before God, reminding us of the bosom of Christ's holy, heavenly, priestly affection. What might in that shoulder! What tenderness in that heart! And all this is included in the Sacrifice whereon we are called to feed, not only that we may enjoy its preciousness for ourselves, but that we may grow up into the likeness of Him on whom we feed, and live it out to His glory. Thus only can we learn how to behave ourselves aright in the Church of God.

The table of the Lord ministers the strength of Christ to bear all our burdens, and the grace of Christ to meet all our failings, ignorances, and shortcomings. It then demands of us strength to bear one another's burdens, and grace to wash one another's feet.

As Christ is the bread *of* God as well as the bread *from* God to us, so the peace-offering is not only the food of the priest, but also the food of God, as we read, "It is the food of the offering made by fire unto the Lord" (Lev. iii. 11); and it is called "the bread of his God" (Lev. xxi.), which the priest had to offer, and also to eat.\*

Hence it is that the priests are regarded as God's guests, at whose table they sit, and at whose command everything is to be ordered. The same thought is true of the Lord's table and the Lord's Supper—the *Kuriakon* supper; *i.e.* the supper in which the *lordship* of Christ is owned. The guests are His, the provision is His, the enactments are His. He only has any right in connection with it, and our responsibility is simply to see that His rights are maintained and His requirements fulfilled. The table is not a token, in the first place, of our fellowship one with another,

\* We would just note here in passing, that a priest not unclean, but having some personal defect, while not allowed to minister at the altar, was permitted to eat of the sacrifice. This contains an important principle. (See *vs.* 22, 23.)

but of our fellowship with the Lord, out of which *alone* arises our fellowship with each other. God brings into the body, and He sets the members in the body, and we have to act in accordance with the place given to us as members of the risen Christ, who is the Head of His body the Church, and who uses each member as He pleases.

Both in the Old and New Testaments God has given instructions as to who are to be excluded. In the Levitical law uncleanness necessitated exclusion; but God alone legislated concerning that uncleanness. It was not left to man to say what was clean and what was unclean. Again, there were defilements regarding which the priest could take action, as in the case of leprosy. But there were defilements the knowledge of which could alone rest with the individual, and in such cases God alone was the avenger of the wrong, as it is said, "he shall be cut off;" or, "he shall bear his iniquity"—the matter resting between the individual and God alone.

In the New Testament the immoral person is to be put away, as also those who reject the doctrine of Christ, and those who hold "damnable heresies," as illustrated in the holders of the doctrines of Balaam and Jezebel. The command then is to put away; but there are other things, such as are referred to in 1 Cor. xi., for which the guilty were not to be put away by man, but the Lord would Himself directly deal with them on account of unjudged evil, as we read, "For which cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."\*

There is much in the discipline of the house of God that needs to be carefully examined by the light of the Word. In these days much is left undone that ought to be done,

\* In the epistles many forms of godly discipline *within* the assembly are indicated, such as rebuking, avoiding, &c.; but we do not here enter upon them.

and very much is attempted that God has never commanded. Not only so, but in all our life and ways faith in God, in His action direct and immediate, is little realized. So in discipline—matters are taken into the hands of man that ought to be left in the hands of God alone. He will judge, He will vindicate the honour of His own house, if we are content to move therein only in the lines of divine appointment. There is *haste* in discipline, because there is no conscious strength in the power of the heave shoulder that has come to us from the cross to feed upon; and there is *harshness* in discipline, because there is little fellowship in the wave breast of the Good Shepherd, who laid down His life for the sheep. May we learn to exercise discipline, when commanded of God, in sackcloth and tears, and get our inspirations in regard to it at Calvary's lowly cross.

H. G.

## THE EARTHQUAKES RECORDED IN SCRIPTURE.

### THE NEW TESTAMENT.

MATT. xxvii. 51, xxviii. 2; ACTS xvi. 26.

EARTHQUAKES are recorded in the New Testament as well as in the Old, and in both they take the same character of solemn warning. In both they tell of a divine power that *can*, and that soon *will*, shake the whole creation and make it pass away. In this respect then, as in so many other ways, the unity of the Scriptures is seen. *One* God is the Author and Inspirer of the whole. One and the same stream of grace is seen flowing through both Old Testament and New, however varied the ways it takes or the dispensational channels through which it runs. The one truth of "shedding of blood" for remission of sins pervades the whole, and one eternal glory is the common

home for ever of all the redeemed. No wonder then that, more or less, the same agencies of God's holy wrath and of His terrors are found all through Scripture; and earthquake is amongst them.

Only three past earthquakes are recorded in the New Testament, but these are very significant; and their significance is much increased by the evident connection existing between them.

Who, then, can wonder that the death of the only-begotten Son of God should have been attended with signs and wonders in the visible creation? The expiring mortal sigh is a continually recurring thing in this sad world, and only a few hours after the Lord Jesus had "yielded up the Ghost" the two thieves must have breathed their last. But God marked the dying of His eternal Son with miraculous tokens of its infinite worth. There was the three hours' darkness, ending with His cry of God's having forsaken Him; there was the rending of the veil; and there was also an earthquake sufficiently great to rend the rocks of Jerusalem's limestone foundations. (Matt. xxvii. 40-51.) If the miraculous darkness tells of the *dark* doom of sinners, and of Jesus bearing it, and if the rent veil tells of access to God, even into "His marvellous light," for all who trust in Jesus' death, then surely the third miracle of the earthquake has its meaning also. It has a dark and also a bright lesson. It tells of the doom of this creation, and it tells also of "the first resurrection," consisting of the righteous only. The sin-hating God, who had smitten His own Son because of our sin, must needs shake and dissolve the earth and the entire creation in which the sin has been committed. When once Adam sinned in the garden, the whole creation over which man had been made to have "dominion" was doomed. As Paul says (Rom. viii. 20), "The creature [creation] was made subject to

vanity, not willingly [*i.e.* not by act of its own], but by reason of him [*i.e.* Adam] who subjected the same." Of this an earthquake was surely a fitting token. The stroke that had smitten Immanuel smote also the earth which that same slain One had ages before called into existence.

But curse-smitten and doomed though earth be, it still has in it the precious dead; it is the treasure-chest of the dust of the righteous. And this violent earthquake was so ordered by God as to show this. Not only were the rocks rent, but the graves of many sleeping saints were opened; and after three short days, when Jesus arose from the dead in Joseph's garden, they also came forth to life. As wind and wave, and the grave of Lazarus, had obeyed Jesus in life, so earthquake and rock, and bodies of sleeping saints, now obey God at Jesus' death. Well may we sing—

"He everywhere hath sway,  
And all things serve His might;  
His every act pure blessing is,  
His path unsullied light."

Four leading characteristics of "the *first* resurrection"—the resurrection of saints only—may be learned here. (1) The difference of the *time* of their resurrection from that of the ungodly; (2) the *openness* of their graves as compared with the graves of the wicked; (3) their entrance at resurrection into the HOLY city; and (4) their appearing (*i.e.* shining forth) unto many.

Surely this earthquake did as truly give a glimpse of the coming kingdom as did the transfiguration mount!

In the next chapter of the same gospel (Matt. xxviii. 2) we have the record of the *second* New Testament earthquake. And the same lesson as to the doomed character of this creation is taught by Christ's resurrection as by His death. This sin-stained earth can no more bear the glorious face of the rising Jesus than it could the hour of

His death-stroke. The final fleeing away of earth and heaven at the day of the *great white throne* is from before the FACE of Him who fills it; that is, Jesus. (See John v. 22.) Of this the earthquake at His rising from the dead is a premonition. It is as a *Judge* God has raised Him as well as a Saviour. (See Acts xvii. 31.) But here also saints are distinguished from sinners. To the feeblest ones who seek Jesus, the crucified One, it is said, "Fear not ye." The glories of their rising and triumphant Lord bring them only comfort and joy. So surely and so speedily do the peace and the joys of a new creation follow the shaking and passing away of the old.

Acts xvi. 26 gives us the *last* recorded earthquake of Scripture, and in its definitely miraculous character it is very remarkable. It may be fitly called the *gospel* earthquake; for as the earthquakes of Old Testament were so ordered as to solemnly attest and confirm the messages of God at Sinai and by the prophets, so the earthquake at Philippi was a solemn sanction and attestation of the preached gospel. Man's puny anger had laid hands on Christ's servants, and confined them within prison walls and bars, securing them, as the jailer thought, by making their feet fast "in the stocks." But as nothing could chain or imprison the aspirations and joys of their souls (for they prayed and sang praises unto God), so neither could prison gates nor chains resist an earthquake which was so violent that "the foundations of the prison were shaken," and which was yet so divinely guided that it crushed neither the jailer nor his prisoners beneath any falling stone, but did the definite work of the God who sent it by "immediately" opening the prison doors and loosing every prisoner from his "bands."

Elihu says of the thunderstorm (Job xxxvii. 3), that God "*directeth* it under the whole heaven and His light-

ning unto the ends of the earth." And in the Philippi earthquake we see the same minutely-directing power of God. How like is all this to our Lord's own word, "All power is given unto me in heaven and on earth: go ye therefore," &c. Jesus moves heaven and earth on behalf of gospel testimony.

Not less noticeable is His power over minds and actions of men. The power that held fast all the prisoners, so that not one of them made his escape—although their chains were off them and the prison doors were thrown open—was no less omnipotent than that which had so shaken the solid earth. And as the fruit of this, through God's accompanying grace, we have the jailer and his family brought to God, and so made heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ of God's unshakeable earth and heavens. In the wreck by the earthquake of his earthly all, as the jailer supposed, he found that God was guiding even such things to His own glory, and was leading him and his family to Christ as a Saviour.

Who, then, need wish to stay God's hand even when whirlwind, storm, and earthquake are the instruments by which HE works? The plagues on Egypt of old, sweeping and solemn as they were, left Pharaoh only more and more without excuse for his unbelief and hardness of heart; and they were *some* of the means God used to separate His own Israel from Egypt, and prepare them for being borne on eagles' wings to Himself. So our Lord links together, "men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth," with His word to His own saints, "Look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh." (Luke xxi. 28.)

Ere long earthquakes may yet more severely shake the soil and the careless hearts of guilty Christendom, and even of these British Isles. But whether in this or in any



other way in which God sends His warnings, may they be used as the Philippi earthquake was to the jailer's family, and as the earthquake at the cross was to the Roman centurion; and may our hope of soon reigning with Christ be quickened as these tokens of the approaching end are made manifest! Amen.

H. D.

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"WHO LOVED ME."

GAL. ii. 20.

O JESUS, Lord, who once for me  
 Didst bear the cross on Calvary,  
 Thy pierced feet, Thy thorn-crowned head,  
 Those hours of darkness deep and dread,  
 All bind my heart to love Thee!  
 Lord, o'er my heart Thy presence spread,  
 And teach that heart to love Thee.

Since Thou for me didst bleed and die,  
 Since 'twas for me that fearful cry,  
 Which rent the darkened air apart,  
 Was uttered from Thine anguished heart  
 When God had Thee forsaken,  
 Be never mine the faithless part  
 To leave Thee now forsaken.

But since Thou knowest best of all  
 How sorely, Lord, I slip and fall,  
 Oh, make Thyself so dear to me,  
 That for the joy of pleasing Thee  
 I may be Thine more wholly!  
 Oh, may my chief joy ever be  
 To live for Thee, Lord, wholly!

Thou who for me didst freely go  
 To all the deepest depths of woe,  
 And keepest now in heaven for me  
 The highest heights to share with Thee  
 Of all Thy heavenly glory—  
 Lord Jesus, may my whole life be  
 A life lived to Thy glory.

A. L. B.

## THE ORDINANCE OF THE "RED HEIFER."

### THE NATURE OF THE DEFILEMENT.

NUMBERS xix. 11-16.

IN dwelling upon the preceding portion of this subject—the preparation of the ashes—we saw that the great question in connection with this ordinance was not salvation, but re-admission to the presence of God and His people after exclusion for certain defilements, the nature of which we now proceed to consider.

To touch the dead body of a man entailed uncleanness for seven days. Whether he died a natural or a violent death, whether in the tent or in the field, the effect was the same. All therefore who assisted in the burial of Aaron, or of those who died by the serpents, as mentioned in chapters xx. and xxi., became thereby unclean. The devout men who carried Stephen to his burial also contracted this seven days' defilement.

The same result followed the touching of the bone of a man or a grave. The men of Judah, who at the command of Josiah opened the sepulchres at Bethel, and took out the bones and burned them, became thus defiled. (2 Kings xxiii. 16.) Those likewise who in the future day will be employed in gathering the bones of the multitudes slain with Gog in the land of Israel (Ezek. xxxix. 14) will come under the same law.

In addition to this it was enacted, that "when a man dies in a tent, all who come into the tent, and all that is in the tent, are unclean seven days. And every open vessel, which has no covering bound upon it, is unclean." Not only are all the inmates of the dwelling defiled, but also all the friends who come to sympathise with the

family in the loss they have sustained, as well as the hired mourners and minstrels. (Matt. ix. 23.) Moreover, the house itself, and all that it contains, partakes of the defilement for seven days, except those vessels which have a covering bound upon them. Defilement was also entailed upon anything touched by the unclean person, lasting only till the evening; and whoever touched any such unclean thing became defiled until the evening. This last clause seems to be the ground of the decision given by the priests in Haggai ii. 13, where they adjudge that, if any one unclean by a dead body should with his skirt touch bread, or pottage, or wine, or oil, it would thereby become unclean.

Very remarkable indeed are the whole of these commands. It looks as if God would have the family of the deceased to understand that there was some unexplained delinquency into which they had fallen, on account of which they are sent away from His presence for a season—a whole epoch of seven days; not that they have actually incurred guilt in the ordinary sense; for, as we shall see presently, some of the acts bringing upon them this defilement are in themselves meritorious. The intention may have been to bring to remembrance our first parents' sin and its direful consequences. As Adam paid with his life the penalty of his transgression, being excluded from the garden of God from the time when sentence was passed upon him, so his posterity remain to the present hour excluded.

The putting out of the children of Israel from their homes, on the ground of unfitness for the presence of God, with the privations and isolation attendant on such exclusion, was well calculated to bring before them the reality of their awful position as descendants of Adam; that they were still underlying the same penalty, though nationally God had been pleased to bring them near to

Himself, and to endow them also with vast privileges. They had likewise the opportunity of reflecting that, owing to their own sin, as well as that of Adam, this position of estrangement was their normal condition, though, through the complacency of their God, they were allowed to dwell in the precincts of His habitation. The temporary removal outside showed the permanent state of things wherein they were involved. Then, when the heart was fully bowed down by sorrow, the recollection of the kindness of their God in selecting them to be His servants, "His inheritance," would glance like a beam of light into their souls, brightening up the dark prospect, and leading them to trust further in Him who had already shown Himself so interested in their behalf, so condescending towards them.

All within the tent as well as the tent itself, the earth, the habitation of man, is thus defiled by the contact of man, and needs purification. (See Lev. xviii. 25.) The furniture within the tent, being of man's manufacture, would be defiled by his touch; the things in vessels with covers tied on were the exception. Probably these were chiefly grain, oil, &c., natural productions essential to life. Being thus concealed from view, it may perhaps be intimated that further mercy is stored up for them, though concealed at present. The passage in Haggai already noticed seems partly to sustain this thought. The priests stated that one defiled by the dead communicated defilement by even a touch of his garment; and the prophet rejoins by the word of the Lord—"So is this people, and so is this nation before me, saith the Lord; and so is every work of their hands; and that which they offer there is unclean." Yet the work they were then occupied with was the re-building of the temple by the command of the Lord through His prophets.

And this leads to the very important enquiry, What does this defilement intimate? To what was the Lord directing the attention of His people through this figure? That the cause of it can be no other than sin, we naturally and correctly infer. From Romans v. we learn that man's sin brought death into the world; and, from Romans viii., that this subjection to vanity was not a willing one, but a subjection in hope. If this required further evidence, we have only to look at the provision God made in Israel for the sinner to escape death, the punishment he deserved. Every infraction of a divine command involves capital punishment—"The soul that sinneth, it shall die;" and "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." That a creature has disobeyed his Creator, decides that he is unfit to live. The moral machinery of the universe has sustained a jar, and the defective part must be removed. That the offending part is not removed at once, displays the forbearance, the longsuffering, of the Creator.

But how can we, with adequate emotion, contemplate the magnanimity of Him who made such provisions for His people as are contained in Leviticus iv. and v. By these statutes, he that had incurred forfeiture of life was furnished beforehand with the means of deliverance. He had only to bring the prescribed victim before God, offer it in the way appointed, and his sin was at once forgiven and the punishment remitted. For presumptuous sins, daring defiance of the orders of the Most High, there was no forgiveness; but these merciful arrangements comprehended all other offences. Human legislation knows nothing of such mercy; it is found only in the heart of God.

These enactments having made such ample provision for the immediate escape of the sinner, it is evident that the directions concerning the defilement removable by the ashes of the red heifer must relate to some other class of

sins than those comprehended in Leviticus iv. and  $\frac{1}{2}$ v., or the presumptuous sins spoken of in Numbers xv., xxx. It may not be at once evident what these can be, but other Scriptures, to which we will next turn, may aid our enquiry.

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R. N.

### JOHN WICLIFF.

ONE of the very prominent characteristics of the present time is *hero worship*, and one especial feature of this worship is the celebration of the dead. That the world should love its own is no wonder; and that men should extol their fellows, when by so doing they please and exalt themselves, seems only natural. But it is not only the great ones of the world whose names are recalled, and whose characters are held up to the admiration of this generation. We have around us a strange mixture of religion and worldliness, and thus it comes to pass that men who in their own day were hated and persecuted, are now applauded and revered. It is not the first time in the history of the world that a generation has been found to build the sepulchres of those whom their ancestors did their best to get rid of. (Luke xi. 47.) The Lord when on earth was not deceived by appearances. He well knew that the very men who said, "If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets," would soon clamour for His own blood; and it behoves His people to seek wisdom from above, that they may not misunderstand the professions of these days.

Last year Luther was to the front; this year it is Wicliff. The other day men were celebrating the four hundredth anniversary of Luther's birth; now it is the five hundredth anniversary of Wicliff's death. But just as numbers who

held up Luther as the great champion of *liberty* would scorn to follow him in his grand statement before the Diet of Worms that his conscience was bound by the word of God, so will many be found to extol Wicliff in his opposition to Popery who have little true regard for that priceless volume which he was the first to give in its entirety to the English people in their own tongue. When the Church comes down to meet the world, the world will go with it a long way; but if the Church were only fully carrying out the *principle* on which Luther and Wicliff acted, it would find itself left pretty much alone to thank God for those noble witnesses to His truth whom in days of dense darkness He was pleased to raise up. For while no children of God who know their heavenly calling will join the world in erecting monuments that will soon crumble to pieces in the ruin of the old creation, all who value the inspired records, which unfold that calling, and the grace that makes us partakers of it, will hold in high estimation the men who gave to their native land the translation of these sacred scriptures, and will unfeignedly thank God for them. It is simply with the view of leading any uninformed fellow-saints to consider God's great goodness in this matter, and to value our high privileges, that what is well known to many is briefly summed up in the following notes.

John Wicliff was born in Yorkshire, about the year 1324, it is supposed. At the age of sixteen he was sent to Oxford, then the chief seat of English learning, where there were nearly thirty thousand students. But, as an evidence of the neglect of the Scriptures in the place where men were trained to be the spiritual guides of the nation, it is said that when Richard Fitzralph, the "primate" of Ireland, who was a diligent student of God's word, sent some students from Armagh to Oxford, they sent him word that they could neither find the Bible nor

any other good book in divinity meet for their study. Wicliff was a youth of powerful mind, and being bent on work, he soon rose above his fellows. In due time he received the degree of a doctor of theology, which, according to the law of the time, entitled him to give lectures; and while all around him were neglecting the Bible, he drew his teaching from it, and held it up as the one standard by which all things must be settled.

In those days what was called public worship consisted in the performance of some ceremony that simply appealed to the senses, and if an occasional sermon was preached it was commonly based upon some foolish story and conveyed no instruction. Very different was the preaching of Wicliff. With a rare command of language, he spoke earnestly about eternal things, and set forth the saving truths of the word of God with much simplicity, thus becoming known as the "Gospel Doctor." The great theme of his teaching was salvation by grace, and when any maintained that their own works contributed in part to salvation, he is said to have replied with a short prayer, "Heal us gratis, O Lord!" He exhorted people "to trust wholly to Christ, to rely altogether upon His sufferings, and not to seek to be justified in any other way than by His justice" (*i.e.* righteousness). He says, "We cannot think a good thought unless Jesus send it; we cannot perform a good work unless it be properly His good work. His mercy goes before us, so that we receive grace; and it follows us so as to help us and keep us in grace. Heal us, good Lord, we have no merit! Give us grace to know that all thy gifts be of thy goodness only!"

Some of his rules for an expositor of Scripture were, that he should be constantly engaged in comparing one part of Scripture with another; that he should be a man of prayer, and of upright disposition; and that he should



depend upon the instruction of the primary Teacher—meaning, of course, the Holy Spirit.

As in later days the abominations connected with the sale of indulgences aroused the spirit of Luther, so the abuses of the priests and friars of Rome first stirred Wicliff, and drew forth his opposition. There were certain orders of friars that professed to live in holy poverty and to follow the example of the Lord. They went begging throughout the land, and persuaded the people that by giving to them they were performing a work of merit. Instead, however, of living in poverty, they lived in luxury and sensuality. These men, and others of like character, possessed a good deal of power at Oxford, and sought by all means to increase it. Wicliff opposed them, and both preached and wrote against them, saying that it was more pleasing to God to give to the aged and infirm than to strong men who were well able to work. In this he had many on his side, though of course he roused the lasting enmity of his foes.

Through this opposition to the friars and monks he seems to have become known in higher circles, and especially in the Parliament of England, and so he became somewhat prominent in the arena of political strife. The Pope of Rome was fully recognized as the head of the Church, and all England was in bondage to him; but in the year 1365 he revived his claim to a heavy tribute as the head of the temporal power also. The king laid the demand before Parliament, and that body disallowed it. One of Wicliff's enemies called upon him to vindicate the Papal claim, but he saw that that claim was invalid, and courageously said so; thus defending the course the Parliament had taken. This apparently led the king to make him one of his chaplains, and to give him the rectory of Lutterworth, in Leicestershire. Amongst those who became his friends at this time was the Duke of Lancaster, commonly called

John of Gaunt. Soon after this he was sent with others to negotiate certain matters with the Pope, and though the English were kept at a distance, and were not allowed to see the style in which the Pope and his court lived, yet Wicliff saw enough to convince him of the hollowness of their pretensions to sanctity, and was emboldened to speak the truth more plainly than before.

His enemies, however, were not inactive, and he was soon summoned by the Convocation of Canterbury to appear in St. Paul's Cathedral to answer for his conduct; but the Duke of Lancaster accompanied him with an armed force, and the only result was a tumult. Again he was cited to Lambeth; but though the Duke was not there, he had many around him, and a message from the mother of the king, commanding that no decision should be come to, caused the court to break up after simply forbidding him to preach; while he with calm dignity asserted, "*The truth shall prevail.*" After this he seems to have been less prominent in political affairs, and more diligent in the great work of spreading the truth, in spite of strong opposition and the withdrawal of some of his supporters; for, like many others, he had to prove that some who would stand by him in resisting the Pope in political matters, had little heart to follow him when it was a question of simply obeying the truth of God.

As he learnt the truth he taught it. He declared that pilgrimages and monastic vows had no authority from Scripture; he also opposed the doctrine of transubstantiation. His lectures on this subject brought matters to a crisis. In 1381 the chancellor condemned his teaching, and closed his class, thus virtually banishing him from the University, which caused him to retire to Lutterworth to complete his noblest work.

He was not left alone, for many young men gathered

round him, whom he instructed in the truths of Scripture and sent forth throughout the country to preach the simple gospel, and circulate tracts which he had written. Meanwhile he pressed on with the translation of the Bible, being much assisted by John Purdie, who afterwards carefully revised it. But multiplying copies of the Bible in those days meant real labour, for printing was unknown, and every copy had to be written by hand. Nevertheless, copies were made to such an extent that, though very many must have perished by use, and the Romish authorities searched them out and destroyed all they could find, it is said that 170 still exist. People could not possess the word of God in their own tongue without imperilling their lives; they had to read it in secret and by stealth; they gathered together in little bands in some obscure cottage, or in some remote glen or mountain fastness, to read the precious Book. Copies often cost twenty or thirty pounds, and those who could not obtain one would give such a thing as a load of hay for the opportunity of reading it.

In 1384 Wicliff was seized with paralysis, and on the last day of that year he departed to be with the Lord, whom, according to the light he possessed, he had faithfully served. Those who received his teaching, and sought to carry out the word of God, were called *Lollards* by their enemies, and for many years were the objects of relentless persecution. Through the overruling providence of God, their leader had been suffered to end his days in comparative peace; but forty years after his burial his enemies dug up his bones, burnt them to ashes, and cast them into the river Swift.

Such is the enmity of man to God and His truth, and such is the way His servants have been treated by that system of Roman Catholicism which is rapidly reasserting itself in this country. At the recent opening of a magni-

ficient building at South Kensington, reared at a cost of £80,000, the chief representative of that system in England asked who, 300 years ago, 50 years ago, even 30 years ago, could have believed in the possibility of what they saw that day? He then traced the "change over the face of the whole land" to the exhibition of "the charity of the [Roman] Catholic Church."

And so people are deluded. But it is well to be reminded sometimes what is the true expression of the "charity" of that church when there is nothing to check it. It was the charity of that church that reduced the bones of Wicliff to ashes, and a century and a half later committed William Tyndale to the flames for the crime of giving to the people the word of God in their own language. The charity of the Church of Rome has shown itself in all the horrors and tortures of the Inquisition, in burning the saints of God by thousands, and, *even in our own day*, in imprisoning and afflicting His children to its utmost ability in Italy and Spain, and wherever it has not been hindered by the civil power. The muzzle on the dog does not alter its nature. Let us beware of this mother of harlots (Rev. xvii. 5), and of all her offspring, and let us remember that our only preservative is to "walk in the law of the Lord," and to "keep His testimonies."

W. H. B.

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## LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

### XI.

#### *Unity and variety in the church of God.*

"Your account of the varied service needed in preparing for the intended social meeting at — turns my thoughts to the ordering of the house of God, 'the church of the living God,' which house we are, and over which Christ is as Son. I should

say that God's principle of *unity* is manifested in *variety*. So it is in nature, so it is in grace. What a variety of geraniums there are, yet there is only one plant which we name 'geranium.'

"God has His object both in the world and in the church, and He is ever pursuing His object—the exaltation of His Son; that all, sooner or later, may 'honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.' Look at the world in its political aspect. Earth's mighty potentates in all their plans are only working out God's counsel. Howbeit they mean not so, neither do they in their heart think so. Even the 'International' is, under God's hand, working unto His end.

"Can any one understand that complicated machinery of the cherubim described in Ezekiel? I trow not. But one thing is clear—there was one guiding spirit directing that complicated machinery. 'Whithersoever the Spirit was to go, they went; thither was their spirit to go.' If they, as it were, bore away the glory of the Lord from the earth in chap. x., we see them bringing it back in chap. xliii.

"The apostle teaches us, 'Add to your faith virtue (manliness), and to virtue *knowledge*.' This is the proper place of knowledge; it does not then puff up, but edifies. '*We know* that all things are working together for good to them that love God, the called *according to His purpose*.' How wonderful that God should think of our little insignificant selves! There may be thousands of little incidents in our little lives, like so many links in a chain; but God ever holds the first link in His hand. You know the old story about the loss of a nail in a horse's shoe, so the least trifle in the chain of events has its importance to us; but we can say, in the language of Miss Waring's hymn—

'Father, I know that all my life  
Is portioned out for me.'

"But now to turn to the thought of 'many members, one body,' as in Rom. xii. and 1 Cor. xii. These chapters may well be studied together. In Rom. xii. I find 'giving' is a spiritual gift, according to the measure of God. It may not be my gift, but I can 'show mercy'—another gift; and a little drop of sym-

pathy and compassion is a cordial in this cold, heartless world. At your intended meeting many little services and gifts will be required for the general well-being, and none of them is to be lightly esteemed.

"If we come to 1 Cor. xii., I would dwell on verses 22-27. That feeble member is needed for the perfection of Christ's body, and I must take heed not to despise it. We often learn the force of little things in sickness. The little gnats here make a great humming, and some people are seriously plagued by their bite. We must be on our guard against 'a little leaven,' 'a little folly.' The gifts in Ephes. iv. are, I believe, the result of the special love of Christ for His body, 'the Church,' and have attached to them a promise of continuance till the whole body is completed, and that chapter affords a remarkable instance of unity and variety. After showing all we have in common, the apostle shows us, as he does in 1 Cor. xii., the *differences*. 1 Peter iv. 10, 11 may well be studied in this connection, especially keeping in view the end, 'that *God* in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ.' In 1 Cor. xii. we see the concurrence of the three Persons in the Godhead in the communication of spiritual gifts.

"Now, ready as all the workers are in giving their time, service, or help in any way for your proposed meal, there must be someone to lead, to begin, and to close; or else it would become a scramble. 'Let all things be done decently and in order, may be extended from the house of God to our own households. Our God is the God of peace and of measure and of order. What a secret it is to put the Lord Jesus Christ in His right place, and then all goes right; subjection to Him first, then subjection one to another in the fear of *Christ*, is the rule. Responsibility to *Christ as Lord* is the real antidote against the assertion of self-will. We shall be very glad to hear on our return that the first effort to carry out a social meeting at — has had *His* blessing, yea, has been to the glory of God. 'She has done what she could' shows us how our blessed Lord and Master honours little services.

J. L. H."

## NOTES AND REPLIES.

*Can prayer for the salvation of unconverted relatives be unconditional?*

If in any case, probably in this, we might say that prayer might be unconditional; but it is far safer to cast ourselves in every matter upon infinite Love, which only delights to hear and answer prayer. The rejection of the gospel, it must be remembered, is a most solemn thing, and judicial hardening may follow. (Acts xiii. 38-41.) The state of the heart is, however, beyond our knowledge, and our part is to pray on and to await the unfoldings of eternity. There are times of deep communion with God, when God reveals His purpose to the praying soul in regard to another, and then faith can unconditionally plead. But care is needed here; for some have thought they had an intimation of the mind of God, which gave their prayers an unconditional character; the answer never came, and shipwreck was made of faith in God. Our good God withholds nothing that He can grant, and we have to bow to infinite wisdom and say, in our Gethsemane hours, "Not my will, but Thine be done!" And resurrection may reveal what we never dreamed of in time.

*What is the meaning of the latter part of 1 Peter iv. : "For he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin"?*

We would explain it by comparing it with the teaching of Paul in Romans vi. 6: "Knowing this, that our old man *was*" (not *is*) "crucified with Him." As Christ's suffering for us in the flesh refers to His death on the cross, so the expression, "he that suffered in the flesh" (once for all, aorist tense) points to the believer's union with Christ in death, the result of which is that "he has ceased from sin," or, as we read in Romans vi. 7, "he that hath died is justified from sin." For the believer sin's dominion has passed, its sting is gone, and his relationship to it as in the old Adam has ceased. To those who are in this position of infinite grace the precept is, "Forasmuch then as Christ suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves with the same mind." Let it be practically realized in daily life, and by the power of the Holy Ghost let the walk be "in newness of life." Peter's precept corresponds with that of Paul in Romans vi. 11: "Reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus." The word "in" involves union with Christ in death and resurrection.

## THE ORDER AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

### L. DIVINE CHARACTERISTICS.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth His handiwork. . . . The law of the Lord is perfect."—Ps. xix. 1-14.

THE more intimately we acquaint ourselves with our glorious God and His works, alike of nature and grace, the more evidently do we discern among the characteristics which distinguish them the love of *order*—order, however, which has nothing in it of a stiff and rigid uniformity. Such are the freshness and variety which mark all His works, that to a superficial investigation they present the appearance of confusion and want of system. But a little closer study never fails to discern in them principles of arrangement of a simple yet most appropriate and efficient character; so that the mind, while exercised and charmed with inexhaustible variety of detail, is rested and delighted by the recognition of such method and system as give it assurance of an all-wise and beneficent Creator.

Glance, for example, at the countless varieties of vegetable life which are scattered around us in such lavish profusion. What infinite diversity do they manifest, scarcely two leaves being found to correspond precisely! Yet a patient investigation of this seemingly inextricable confusion has developed the science of botany, which reveals to us order and system, not only in general principles, but even in details the most minute. Such is the case also in reference to the numberless forms of animal life which we behold; so definite and marked being the principles of animal physiology that, upon the



discovery of a small portion of the skeleton of an extinct animal, Cuvier was able to delineate the entire organism.

The same traits of character which manifest themselves to us so constantly in the study of the world on which we live are still distinguishable when we direct our attention to the universe around us. An able writer has depicted very graphically the wondering and awe-stricken delight which must have possessed the minds of Adam and Eve when first, through the gloaming and darkness of night, there burst upon their gaze the glories of the starry heavens. But beautiful and interesting as the spectacle must always have been, with what different eyes is it now beheld! For ages little else but confusion can have been recognized in the complicated motions of the heavenly bodies; and though by degrees proofs of method and arrangement have accumulated, it is within a comparatively recent period that the principles on which the universe is constructed have been grasped and followed up, and the recognition of which has opened out to the studious mind a revelation of grandeur and majesty in the works of God under the sense of which it staggers.

We are accustomed to say—and to say with assurance and with truth—that the Holy Scriptures contain the masterpiece of the divine mind; and we are accustomed to look for and find such an accordance between the handiwork of God in nature and this work of His grace that we speak of nature as the divine commentary on the revealed Word, and gather with confidence from all that surrounds us analogies by which to illustrate and enforce the truths of Scripture; but if this is the case we ought surely to find that the love of order which characterizes all the other works of God is impressed on *this* work in at least an equal degree.

It is true that a very decided human element pervades

the Scriptures; but not less is this the case in regard to the person of Him who is the great subject of Scripture, and who shares with it one common name—"The Word of God." So patent before the eyes of men was the humanity of the Lord Jesus that it was not easy for them to realize and confess the divine personality that was conjoined with it. But to our minds the Deity of Christ has so asserted and glorified itself that we find our difficulty rather in according due prominence and importance to His genuine humanity. Are we not justified in expecting similar characteristics in the written Word? Whatever be the evidences of human origin which it displays, so intimate and all-pervading has been the agency of the divine Spirit, both in its composition and preservation, that we find our Lord and His apostles resting important and vital instruction upon the turn of a phrase, and even upon the inflexion of a word, in the Old Testament Scriptures. And every loving and prayerful student of the Bible finds how its wonders and beauties disclose themselves with ever-increasing fulness to his growing spiritual discernment; so that often, from a passage of Scripture perfectly familiar to him, perhaps even from the bosom of one single word in such a passage, there flashes out upon him suddenly a hidden reserve of wealth and glory that fairly entrances him; *and this again and again*. Would it surprise us to find that in Scripture, in common with the other works of God, along with this inexhaustible wealth and fulness there are to be discovered the order and method—not at once apparent, but revealing themselves to a patient study—which we nowhere else fail to perceive in His works? Would it not indeed be surprising if this were not the case? We need not now concern ourselves with the forms into which the Scriptures were cast, while as yet the volume of reve-

lation was incomplete. For at least fifteen or sixteen centuries the canon of Scripture has existed as we have it now. In its present form the providence of God has brought about its general, we might say, its world-wide diffusion. Whatever indications of human arrangement we may recognize in the order which has thus been stamped upon the inspired Books, we may confidently expect that the Spirit of God has had an interest in the matter, and that some divine principle will be found to underlie the human construction. At least it will be worth our while to search here no less diligently than men search for principles of arrangement amid the confusion, sometimes apparently hopeless, of physical facts and observations. Were we to fail in the object of our search we could not fail to find what would richly and abundantly reward it—"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful; but his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and *whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.*" R. H. B.

(*To be continued.*)

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## CONSCIENCE.

THE subject of conscience is a deeply important one in its bearing on the daily life and walk of God's children in these days of indulged sin and lawlessness. The natural conscience, implanted by God in man as His creature, is itself of no little value. By it the duty of man to his fellow-man is taught, and society is held together, and God uses its stings and reproaches as His means of first

awakening the sinner, and ultimately bringing him as a guilty and self-condemned one to Himself; but in the case of God's own children conscience has higher work to do, and has increased powers with which to do it. The etymology and meaning of the very word "conscience" suggests something of the difference of level and of sphere in which it may act; for its action is dependent on the measure of knowledge and kind of knowledge possessed for its action. The meaning of *conscientia* (the Latin word), and the parallel Greek word also, is the knowing of two things *alongside* of each other; *e.g.*, yourself, or it may be your conduct *alongside* of some other person or thing. It presupposes two objects before the mind, one of which is yourself in some aspect or other, and the other is either God Himself or Christ, or something that issues and proceeds from God.

For instance, our first parents in Eden knew God's command to them not to touch the fruit of the tree of knowledge, and for as many days or hours as they did not do so they had a good and approving conscience; for their behaviour in this respect agreed with what they knew of God's will. When they did take of it and eat, their action no longer agreed with God's command, and they had an accusing conscience, and they "knew that they were naked." The plumb-line of their conscience no longer hung true to the unbending plumb-rule of God's command, and as a consequence they were inwardly miserable; for, as Solomon says, "The spirit of man" (*i.e.* the light of conscience lit up within him) "is Jehovah's lamp, searching all the inward parts of the belly" (Prov. xx. 27); and it searches God's creature, man, by the test of that other external "lamp" God has given—"The commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life." (Prov. vi. 23.)

But in proportion as God's revelation of Himself to man through the gospel increases, this whole subject of conscience takes a vastly higher place in the believer, and acts with a mightier power. In God's child there is (1) the restful and happy side of conscience when it has once and for ever found its rest in Christ; and (2) the watchful, toiling side of conscience, which does not take its final rest or cease its strife against sin whilst a spot of it remains on us in nature or in practice.

Passages in illustration of these two sides of the believer's conscience may now be cited. In Heb. ix. 9 it is said of the old covenant sacrifices that they "could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the *conscience*;" and in contrast with this it is blessedly said, in verse 14, "How much more shall the blood of Christ . . . *purge* your CONSCIENCE from dead works to serve the living God?" That is, so completely does the believer in Christ find himself *satisfied* in his *conscience* with Christ's one offering that he does not need to turn to any earthly ritual, whether Jewish or heathen, to relieve him of any of sin's condemnation. Hence in Heb. x. 2 the apostle speaks of the worshipper who thus approaches God as one who has "no more *conscience* of sins;" and again, in verse 22, as "sprinkled from an *evil conscience*;" that is, as sin no longer makes him attempt the "fig leaves" covering of "dead works," so neither does it any longer come between him and God as a ground of condemnation. The conscience of the believer neither looks to works of his own to help him, nor towards God with any dread as he approaches Him. Of Christ and His atoning work faith delights to sing—

"Here *conscience ends its strife*,  
And faith delights to prove  
The sweetness of the bread of life,  
The fulness of Thy love."

In 1 Tim. iii. 9 and 2 Tim. i. 3, Paul speaks apparently in the same sense of a "*pure conscience*;" viz., a conscience cleansed God-ward by faith in Christ. In 1 Tim. iii. 9 this is put as necessary for all deacons in God's Church; and in 2 Tim. i. 3 as Paul's own link of saving mercy which joined him with all godly "forefathers," who had served in God's work before him. In 1 Peter iii. 21 it seems to be this same rest of the soul in Christ's finished work that is spoken of as "the answer" (or request) "of a *GOOD conscience* toward God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ;" i.e. a conscience made "good" and bold toward God by faith in Christ. Thus it was that the Eunuch made the request of a good conscience when immediately upon believing in Jesus he asked, "What doth hinder me to be baptized?" and with this "good conscience" in him Philip baptized him.

Thus far we have had passages on the restful and happy side of the saved sinner's conscience. In this aspect of our subject the delicate plumb-line of the soul hangs down and rests itself alongside of the perfect uprightness of Christ's finished and God-accepted work, and knows itself "unleavened" in Him and spotless. The indwelling Holy Ghost, ever testifying of Jesus to the believer, is as the plumb-weight that keeps the soul in steadfast peace through believing. Nearness to God and spotless acceptance in Christ thus become the song of the soul, and the God-given rest of the conscience.

Passages of Scripture to show the watchful and toiling side of the believer's conscience, and all its dread of sin and its strife against it, are more numerous; for the Scripture is largely written for our life and walk here below. A few passages must suffice.

In Acts xxiii. 1 Paul could say, "I have lived *in all good conscience* before God unto this day," an utterance

which the worldly, time-serving high priest Ananias could not understand; but Acts xxvi. 9 explains it: "I verily thought with myself *I ought* to do many things contrary to Jesus of Nazareth." The plumb-line of Paul's conscience as a Jew was only tested by the plumb-rule of Judaism, and all he did against Christ Jesus he did "ignorantly in unbelief." But no sooner did Paul know a risen Lord Jesus than all the desire and endeavour of his conscience was to walk here below as himself a risen one *in Christ*. In Acts xxiv. 16 we see this. After referring to the resurrection of the dead as part of the creed of his nation (alas, with them *only* a creed!) he adds that in that very matter of the resurrection he exercised (gymnasticized) himself "to have always *a conscience void of offence* toward God and toward men;" that is, he strained every nerve and power of his soul to live here below worthily of that risen One in whom he knew himself accepted above. This is the very essence of what may be called a *heavenly* conscience, as distinguished from the natural conscience belonging to us by our Adam birth. In the believer, as *risen in Christ*, the plumb-line of his Spirit-taught conscience seeks to conform itself in matters of life here below to the unvarying plumb-rule of what he is in Christ above. Is he *loved* by God in Christ without limit, at utmost cost, and unchangeably? His heavenly conscience hanging true to this revelation of God in Christ makes him know himself under obligation to love others as he is himself loved of God. Is he unceasingly *pardoned* by God for Christ's sake, however ill his behaviour has been to his God and Father? His heavenly conscience instructs him that he too should similarly pardon all who trespass against him, and especially such trespassers as are also of the same heavenly family. Does he know himself accepted above in One who is always, even in heaven, doing God's

will and not His own will? On earth below it is a matter of heavenly conscience with him to be ever saying, "Not my will, but Thine be done," and that too at the cost, if need be, of a Gethsemane depth of sorrow. Does he see himself above as one, and only one, of the *many* members of the precious risen Christ? He has instantly and constantly a conscience here below to seek to live in harmony with this, and to love all other saints as being equally near and dear to God with himself. Once more, Is he graced in Him who learned and fulfilled ALL the Scriptures of God? A new and heavenly conscience arises in him to love ALL those Scriptures himself (the precepts as much as the promises), and to fulfil them.

In these and many other ways does this watchful and toiling side of conscience work in God's own child. Being accepted and set free from all condemnation in Christ above, and having the Holy Ghost in him as the power for obedience, and the Scriptures as a perfect guide to that obedience, he condemns himself whenever he does not abide in Christ and walk as He walked. He blames himself for everything in which the plumb-line of his conscience is not true to the plumb-rule of his high calling in Christ Jesus. Hence the many New Testament passages which tell of conscience in God's saints. Time and space fail to give them here, but let them be studied and *felt* and prayed over. Paul and Peter are alike strong upon it, and John and James also, though in their epistles the *word* "conscience" is not used. Paul speaks of his own conscience being in his favour as he writes in Rom. ix. 1 and 2 Cor. i. 12, and desires in 2 Cor. iv. 2 and v. 1 that his ways in Christ might be commended to the consciences of all his fellow-saints.

But this precious element of heavenly conscience in God's children must never be regarded as a thing perfect



or complete, or as absolutely to be relied on. Like all other graces of the Holy Ghost, in us it is a progressive thing, and is liable also to decline. So far as it has power at all, its estimates and its verdicts are of God; but its power in us is variable. In 1 Cor. iv. 4 Paul says, "I know nothing" (or I have no conscience) "against myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but He that judgeth me is the Lord." The truth is, the barometer of conscience in us as saints sinks and rises according to the spiritual atmosphere in which we are living; but in its lowest and feeblest exercise the heavenly conscience in a believer is a far higher thing than the mere natural conscience of the fairest unregenerate character. Take, for instance, David's compunctions of conscience at cutting off a bit of Saul's robe. What natural man would not have said David was perfectly justified in thus showing Saul how leniently he had dealt with him? But "David's heart smote him." (1 Sam. xxiv. 5.) So again in the matter of earthly possessions. The natural man most naturally thinks that his weekly earnings are his own, and that he may do with them as he pleases; but the conscience of a saint reproves him if he calls any of it his own, or uses any of it according to his own will.

How important, then, that mind and conscience of the heavenly type should dwell in us and rule us as God's children! The way in which to behave towards fellow-saints whose conscience is "weak," is treated of at some length by Paul in his first epistle to the Corinthians, and this may be considered on another occasion. Meantime may an unfettered and well-instructed heavenly conscience be as the loadstone and the needle within us for our voyage of life, always showing us when and where we swerve from the pole-star of God's character in Christ, and from the chart of His word.

H. D.

## THE DIVINE TEST.

"Tell Me . . . which of them will love him most?"—LUKE vii. 42.

WRAPPED up as pearl within its shell,  
 This question hides a secret rare,  
 Whose sweetness only He can tell  
 Who doth the Father's heart declare.  
 Oh, wondrous thought all thoughts above—  
 God yearning for His creatures' love!

No lips but His could tell the tale,  
 But His who never spake like man;  
 Those sweetest human lips unveil  
 The mystery, and bid us scan  
 Vast heights and depths of love unknown,  
 Lifting vile worms to share His throne.

He asks not which will bring the most  
 Of service, or of works of zeal:  
 In these the flesh *may* make its boast,  
 Much work a loveless heart conceal;  
 The *pulse* of service He would prove—  
 "Tell Me which soul the most doth *love*?"

Oh, yearning sigh of love divine  
 That longs to feel the sinner's heart  
 Throb in close unison with Thine,  
 Nor thought, nor wish, nor life apart!  
 No bridal link so closely one  
 As sinners with God's glorious Son.

And shall the heart thus fondly wooed,  
 Thou wondrous Bridegroom of the soul,  
 By Thy great love yet unsubdued  
 Yield thee a *part*, but not the whole?  
 Time, talents, zeal, with wealth inwove,  
 All at Thy feet—yet keep back *love*?

Nay, "all the substance of thy house,"  
 Without *thyself*, "condemned would be;"  
 Love answering fire of love would rouse  
 (Lit at the heart that broke for thee  
 'Neath Calvary's floods of sin and shame,  
 Where love still burns) "a *vehement* flame."

Blest emulation of the soul!  
 Let each press on to win "the prize,"  
 Drawn on towards the glorious goal  
 By the sweet magnet of His eyes.  
 One test of victory, won or lost—  
 Not which doth serve, but *love* Him most.

E. J. A. P.

## THE ORDINANCE OF THE "RED HEIFER."

THE NATURE OF THE DEFILEMENT—*continued.*

THE ashes of the red heifer not being available for sins of ignorance against the commandments of the Lord, or presumptuous sins, we will now refer to some scriptures that appear to indicate the defilements which they were specially intended to remove.

Numbers xxxi. relates, that by the command of the Lord, twelve thousand men of Israel, under Phinehas the priest, went to war against the Midianites. They were successful, having slain the five kings and all the men, and return in triumph with their captives, laden with spoil, and bringing vast herds of cattle taken from the enemy.

Doubtless feelings of exultation would animate every breast, all being conscious of having exposed their lives to peril, of having done their duty, and rejoicing in their success and in the wealth and renown they had acquired. In all probability they were anticipating the cordial welcome which such victors are wont to receive. Far from experiencing this, they are met by Moses and the elders with this startling injunction, "Abide outside the camp seven days: whosoever hath killed any person, and whosoever hath touched any slain, purify yourselves and your captives on the third day, and on the seventh day," &c.

Had the conquering army returning from Waterloo been met by such a command, with what amazement would they have received it! "What!" they would have said, "have we not gone forth in obedience to the orders of our king? Have we not done our duty as faithful soldiers? Have we not destroyed the king's enemies? And now, after the dangers and fatigues of the campaign, when within sight of our homes, to be thus debarred from going

to them, and to be told that we have made ourselves unclean by killing the enemies we were sent to kill ! If any one had been unfaithful to his duty, he might have gone home at once and been spared the disgrace heaped upon us ! " In this way might their indignation have found vent. But what could be the motive for subjecting the faithful ones to this treatment ?

Another instance occurs in 2 Kings iv. 18-37. The son of the Shunammite was taken ill, sat on his mother's knees, and died. She thereby became unclean, and the dead body rendered the prophet's bed unclean. Also her touch defiled the prophet. The law enjoined that she and the family must depart from the house as unclean. Had grief and submission of soul admitted, might she not have said, " What was I to do ? Could a mother leave her child in its dying moments, and hasten out of the house ? Would it have been pleasing to God had I done so ? or had I put him outside to die alone ? No ; I clasped him to my heart, and only parted with his little body that I might hasten to the man of God, in the hope that he might be able to mitigate my anguish. I submit to be accounted unclean, though I comprehend not the motive for the decree."

From another instance, in Matt. xxiii. 29-33, we seem to obtain some light. The scribes and Pharisees were in the habit of building the tombs of the prophets, and garnishing the sepulchres of the righteous. In so doing they rendered themselves unclean, and must undergo the seven days' purification. But what was their object ? Their words are, " If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets." In them such conduct was hypocritical ; but the ostensible declaration was this, " We think that our fathers did wrong in slaying the prophets, and we build their sepulchres in proof that we are of a

better mind than they. Our fathers ill-treated them, but we do them honour. We therefore are more righteous than our fathers." Self-complacency takes occasion to exalt itself upon the ruined reputation of their ancestors, boasting itself at their expense. This cannot be allowed; it defiles.

From the words of our Lord in Mark vii., we learn to distinguish real from ceremonial defilement. The things that come out of man's heart are those that really defile. The outward was typical of the inward. It pleased God in the old dispensation to indicate the inward by the outward, exhibiting the hidden things of the heart by those which are obvious. Among the more gross and sensual vices, enumerated in verses 21, 22, are others which do not usually bear so bad a name. Pride, for instance, though censurable, is not commonly looked upon as defiling. But God accounts and declares it to be as defiling as other sins. Whether therefore it be detected in the Pharisee, whether it display itself in the exulting warrior, or lurk among the endearing affections in the tender bosom of the mother, it is one and the same principle. God cannot allow it in His presence. It renders the soul unfit for communion with Him. Neither can it be allowed in His family, being more contagious than any bodily disease, or than even the plague itself.

Especially it is found in noble and heroic souls, those willing to spend and be spent for others. Though existing everywhere, it is not so prominent in the sensual. Wherever it leads man to value himself on what he is, on what he feels, or on what he has done, or intends to do, it is exulting in himself, than which nothing can be more offensive to God. Whether this self-estimation be attained by deeds of valour on the battlefield, in the equally if not more heroic facing of death from contagion in the chamber

of the dying; whether by holy living, by attainment in knowledge, or by any of the thousand modes by which the flesh seeks to exalt itself before God, the result is fatal. It prevents the acceptance of that righteousness which God has provided for the sinner in Christ Jesus, and perpetuates him in the state of death. And further, even where the soul has submitted itself to the righteousness of God in Christ, and has consequently received pardon and endless life, even there, in proportion as the heart rejoices in its own fancied righteousness, it undervalues the righteousness of God in Christ, thus far putting dishonour upon the Holy One of God, in whom alone the sinner stands accepted. In so doing, the saint is out of communion with his God. He is defiled by the appreciation of his own personal holiness. In the rich and ample provision of "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption," which our God has made for us in Christ, He has not only supplied all our need, but has positively forbidden all boasting in anything else. All legal rites, all ritualistic observances, fastings, penances, and working oneself up into a holy frame, are all of this unclean nature, and antagonistic to an entire reliance upon what God has done for us in Christ.

It will probably ere this have presented itself to the mind of the reader, that under the figure of this defilement, and the causes inducing it, it was intended to bring before the minds of the people, not their bad, but their *good* deeds; not their unrighteousnesses, but their righteousnesses. It is these last which occasion the most protracted defilement—the seven days' exclusion from the camp. The God of all grace, well knowing that, if the creature in any measure rejoice in self, it must mar its own happiness, has in this manner expressed His extreme disapproval of such a tendency. The creature is, and ought

to feel himself, wholly dependent on his Creator. It is absolutely by Him that we live, and move, and exist. All persuasion or pretence to the contrary is untrue, and must not be allowed. It is self-deception; injurious to man, dishonouring to God. It is the hand of the Almighty alone which can sustain the body, mind, heart, or soul of His creature. Were He to withdraw that hand, the whole would perish in a moment. The power which placed the stars in their various positions, and upholds the mighty orbs in their courses round the sun, that same power, keeps man's organism in healthy action, and prevents him moment by moment from returning to the dust.

Nevertheless, the heart of man, led on by Satan, is ever striving to forget this dependence, to disallow it, strengthening himself thereto by combinations with his fellows. Having found out that "union is strength," he uses the principle not only against man, but against God also. Philosophers, upholding each other, tell us that physical laws, whether created or self-originating, are sufficient to carry on the machinery of the universe, without any assistance from God. Legislators, enacting laws by combined human sagacity, ignore the presence and even the existence of the God who made them. Kings, though claiming to reign by divine right, repudiate all dependence and subjection. Warriors multiply their armies, and perfect their discipline, regardless of Him before whom the inhabitants of the world are as so many grasshoppers. Commercial and engineering enterprise and skill boast that by combination they have power to do everything. And the ecclesiastic everywhere is governed, not by the command of his God, but by the precept of men.

It was not thus with the Perfect One. He who of His own voluntary will vacated the position of equality with His Father became obedient to Him in every thing, even

to the yielding up His life on the cross. His joy was ever to acknowledge His dependence upon Him. The words He spake, such as no other man ever uttered, were not His own, but His Father's, who sent Him. The miracles He wrought were done, not by Himself, but by the Father, who was dwelling in Him. He rejected all honour from men, content to await His Father's time for honouring Him. But the inner workings of the heart of Christ, as depicted in the Psalms, show more distinctly the reality of His dependence. Psalm cxix. is filled with deep and holy expressions to this effect; while Psalms xxiii. and xlii., among others, tell out the intensity of that love to His Father which animated and governed all His subjection. In Him there is not a trace either of self-dependence or of self-exultation.

R. N.

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JOSHUA.

## HIS LAST SERVICE TO ISRAEL; HIS DEATH.

IN connection with the next recorded event in Israel's history—the return of the two tribes and a half to their possessions, their building a great altar by Jordan, and the going forth of their brethren against them for so doing—Joshua's name does not appear. Phinehas, the son of Eleazar the priest, and ten princes in Israel, were the men chosen to deal with this matter, it being a question of worship, and not of conflict with the Canaanites.

Whether Joshua was involved in the hasty, rash purpose of the people, or checked it, suggesting private enquiry before public action, we know not. This we know for ourselves, that nature is ever ready for rash judgment and action, and we also know that such judgment and action is folly and sin; we know too that true love's part is to enquire, believing the best, not thinking evil (1 Cor. xiii. 5), and not imputing evil motives.



Between this event and the next mention of Joshua's name a long period elapsed, the particulars of which are not given. What he did during those seventeen years we may imagine, but are not informed. We are told that, on receiving the city he requested for his possession, "he dwelt among his brethren," so that after years of toil and warfare he enjoyed rest and quietness with them. He had done Jehovah's will and faithfully served his brethren, and doubtless had a place in their consciences and in their love. He had honoured Jehovah, and Jehovah had honoured him. That he was still faithful to Jehovah, and watchful over his brethren, the children of Israel, for their good, is implied in the words, "And the children of Israel served Jehovah all the days of Joshua and of the elders who outlived Joshua." His years, his lengthened service, his hoary head, his weight of character and power of example, doubtless gave effect to his words of counsel and reproof, and encouraged others to be faithful to Jehovah, as he had been. We may, therefore, conclude that he was still of good courage *to do* and *teach* Jehovah's law.

Chapter xxiii. gives us Joshua's charge or exhortation to the people before his death. Comparing it with the next chapter, it would appear that this charge was not given as a command from Jehovah, but was rather the natural outflow of his heart towards his brethren, the free expression of his desires and exercises for them before Jehovah. Having called together all Israel, their elders, their heads, their judges, and their officers, he hands down to them the command which he had received (Joshua i. 7), and which had been the guide of his life and the secret of his success and blessing, "Be ye therefore strong and very courageous to keep and to do all that is written in the book of the law of Moses, that ye turn not aside therefrom to the right hand or to the left." The burden and point

of his appeal was their *obedience* as a nation, their faithfulness to Jehovah, and separation from surrounding evils; and his exhortation thereto was based on their past experience of Jehovah's faithful love, His promise of future blessing, and threatenings of judgment for *disobedience*.

In chapter xxiv. we have mention of a second assembly of the people—elders, heads, judges, and officers, all presenting themselves *before God*. Now Joshua speaks to them with a message from Jehovah, not only of Him, but from Him. He opens his address with, "Thus saith Jehovah, God of Israel," taking afresh the place of a hearer, that he may become Jehovah's channel of communication to the people. Here we are reminded again of a greater than Joshua, who said, "My doctrine is not mine, but His who sent me," and "as I hear I judge;" also of One of whom it was said, "Whatsoever He shall hear that shall He speak"—examples to us, to open the ear to listen before we loose the tongue to speak.

The communication which Joshua was privileged to make is fraught with instruction, encouragement, and admonition. The first words should instruct us, teaching us that God regards His deeds as worthy of being recounted, and that He would have us remember them. Every link in the vast chain of divinely-arranged circumstances and events, whether connected with a nation or an individual, declares Jehovah's name and speaks His praise; therefore it is written, "Ye shall remember *all the way* which Jehovah thy God led thee these forty years."

Speaking for Jehovah, Joshua leads the thoughts of the people back to their origin as a nation, not only to Abraham and Sarah, as to the rock from whence they were hewn, and the hole of the pit from which they were digged (Isaiah li. 1, 2), but still further back, even to Terah, Abraham's father. That it is profitable for *us* to

look back to the state in which the grace of God found us, is taught by Paul's words to the Ephesian believers, "Remember, that ye being in time past Gentiles in the flesh . . . that at that time ye *were* without Christ, aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world," unrenewed men, "dead in trespasses and sins." The Ephesians were to remember this in order to magnify the grace of God, the God of grace, that they might think little of themselves, and worship. Joshua reminded Israel that Terah and his family dwelt on the other side of the flood and served other gods; that from thence Jehovah took Abraham and led him throughout Canaan, multiplied him, giving to him Isaac, and to Isaac Jacob; that He gave to Esau, Jacob's brother, mount Seir to possess it, but that Jacob went down into Egypt. Thus, tracing their history, Jehovah made His deeds of love and power to pass in review until He came to the fact of their then present possession of the land, reminding them that it was HIS ARM, and not *their sword*, that had obtained it for them.

On the ground of this continuous stream of kindness, this wondrous grace, partly known to them by their fathers' report, and partly experienced by themselves, Joshua on Jehovah's behalf again bases an exhortation to *obedience*; saying, "Now therefore fear Jehovah, and serve Him in sincerity and in truth;" and he appeals to them to put away the strange gods which their fathers served on the other side of the flood and in Egypt, and to serve Jehovah *only*. Moreover, he calls on them deliberately to choose whom they would serve, avowing his own determination—"As for me and my house we will serve Jehovah."

To this Israel responded, declaring their purpose to

serve Jehovah, and stating their reasons for doing so, even His mighty deeds of goodness of grace. Joshua heard; but from his knowledge of God, of man in general, and of them in particular, knowing also that, notwithstanding their avowals, there were strange gods *among* them (see verse 23), he was led to reply, "Ye *cannot* serve Jehovah: for He is an holy God; He is a jealous God; He will not forgive your transgressions nor your sins. If ye forsake Jehovah, and serve strange gods, then He will turn and do you hurt . . . after that He hath done you good." They could not serve both. To this the people answered with seeming spirit, "Nay; but we *will* serve Jehovah."

Thereupon Joshua called them to witness against themselves, and they did so. He then bade them prove the sincerity of their words by putting away the strange gods which were among them, and incline their hearts unto Jehovah, God of Israel. Again they declare, "Jehovah our God will we serve, and His voice will we obey." So Joshua made a covenant with them that day, and set them a statute and ordinance in Shechem. He also wrote these words in the book of the law of God, took a great stone, and set it up under an oak that was by the sanctuary of Jehovah, a witness of Jehovah's words to them and of theirs to Him, lest they should deny their God.

Such was the close of Joshua's well-nigh lifelong service of Jehovah towards Israel his brethren, and he sent the people away every man to his inheritance. His course was finished, his race was run, and he died at the age of one hundred and ten years, and was buried by his people in his own portion, which he received as a reward of his faith and faithfulness as well as a gift from Jehovah.

According to natural age, his Adam life, Joshua was an old man; but as to spiritual life, Christ life, eternal life, he was only a child. Thus is it with us, and

thus it will be with all who sleep in Jesus. Time is but as the infancy of eternal life. The oldest believer who departs to be with Christ is but a child. In thought, understanding, and speech we are all infantile; but in resurrection we shall arrive at full age, arrive unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, when that which is in its measure childish will give place to that which is manly. (1 Cor. xiii. 11.)

What Joshua's feelings were as his departure drew nigh we are not told; we can only infer them from his words and deeds, and from Jehovah's ways with him. We have not that which we have in David's case—the books of Samuel, Kings, and Chronicles recording his history and experience, and the Psalms opening to us his heart, his confidence and misgivings, his sorrows and joys, his confessions and songs. But sufficient is recorded of Joshua and of Jehovah's dealings with him to render the reading of the book which bears his name very profitable to us. May we, beloved reader, avoid his mistakes, and see to it by God's grace that with our increased light and multiplied privileges we do not come behind him in *obedience*.

H. H.

## LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

### XII.

*"All things are of God."*

"I would suggest for your meditation the truth in 2 Cor. v. 18, '*All things are of God.*' 'All things'—old and new creation, law and gospel. He is the cause of any one of us being in Christ—'*Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus.*' Oh, it is a wonderful matter for meditation! Then again we have that doxology at the end of Rom. xi.—'*Of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things.*' '*Of*'—He is the originating cause; '*through*'—He is also the instrumental cause; '*to*'—God Him-

self is the end ; *i.e.* all is to His own glory. The sovereignty of divine grace is most helpful to take us out of ourselves. The doxology appended to the 'Lord's prayer,' though not in the oldest MSS., is magnificent. See also the doxology in 1 Peter v. 11.

"It is hard to realize that in *little* as well as in *great* things we are allowed to see God's hand. He lifts up ; He casts down. The simplest truths are after all the deepest, and yet apart from the power and demonstration of the Spirit they seem rather *opinions* than realities. Reality, reality—how I crave reality ! Christ is the great reality, even 'the true God and eternal life.' We are often more busy about things concerning Him than about *Himself*. It once seemed strange to me that to know the Father and Jesus Christ whom He sent was eternal life ; but now it appears necessary that it should be so. Let us see that it is *of God* if we are forced into Mary's place—to sit at the feet of Jesus.

J. L. H.

"August 2nd, 1871."

### XIII.

#### *On proving the will of the Lord.*

"'Be not ye therefore partakers with them. For ye were sometime darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord : walk as children of light ; (for the fruit of the light is in all goodness and righteousness and truth ;) *proving* what is acceptable unto the Lord.' The obedience of faith is an *intelligent* obedience. It requires heart and conscience to be exercised before God to fulfil that word—'*proving*.' (See Rom. xii. 2 ; Phil. i. 10.) Legal obedience is that of a servant, who knoweth not what his master doeth. It is, 'Go, and he goeth ; Do this, and he doeth it.' But we are addressed in a different strain. 'See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but *understanding what the will of the Lord is*. And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess ; but be ye filled with the Spirit ; speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.'

"The world has formed a system of *conventional righteousness* ; and when we become sectarian (and how natural to us it

is) we tacitly, if not avowedly, do likewise. We walk by an understood rule, and thus avoid the trouble of exercising our conscience or of *proving* what the will of the Lord is.

"August 20th.

J. L. H."

### NOTES AND REPLIES.

*Are the "gifts of healings" of 1 Cor. xii. 28 in the Church in the present day?*

THE healings spoken of are evidently miraculous, like those recorded in Acts, and such gifts are assuredly not in the Church now. That God often gives faith to be healed, when it is His sovereign will to heal, and the soul is in communion with Him, or that God may give the gift of faith to another on behalf of a sick person, we would not deny, and to such cases James v. 14, 15 is applicable. This subject is treated of at some length in recent papers entitled "Sickness in the Church."

*How is a child of God to feed upon Christ, and how is he to be a light in the world?*

OUR Lord's words in John vii. 63, connected with the Jews' enquiry, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" furnish an answer to the first question: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." With this compare Jer. xv. 16: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; for I am called by thy name." We feed on Christ by faith when the words that concern Him are so received into our souls as to become part of our very being, and therefore necessarily come out in our lives. What we feed on is assimilated by us, and Christ's words thus become "spirit and life" to us, or, as the prophet expresses it, "the joy and the rejoicing of the heart." We can then understand Peter's exhortation, "As newborn babes, long for," or "greatly desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." Feeding on our Paschal Lamb, and remembering our deliverance from Egypt, the heavenly manna in the wilderness becomes a feast of fat things; Scripture is translated into our lives, and we are then as living epistles, known and read of all men, lights unto the world. The two thoughts of life and light are beautifully blended, and both result from eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. As in Him "the Life was the Light of men," so will it be in us also; and if it is not there is something sadly wrong.

## THE ORDER AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

### II. SUBJECTS AND KEYNOTES.

"I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies."—PSALM cxix. 125.

"My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

PROVERBS ii. 1-6.

To those who have read their Bibles only in a fragmentary and discursive manner—and there are probably many such, even among professing Christians—it may be surprising to be assured that each book is a distinct whole, with a marked and recognizable scope and purpose. It is generally not difficult to distinguish the special subject of a book, and even to find a corresponding word, or short phrase, so far characteristic of the book in question as to furnish a sort of keynote to it. We will begin with the New Testament, which responds most readily to this kind of study.

The four gospels have been generally recognized as presenting four distinct aspects of the life of Christ, by comparison of which we are able to account for the various degrees of similarity and diversity which mark their treatment of one common subject. In the gospel of *Matthew* Christ is set forth as the King. The genealogy there given, while it starts from Abraham, to whom the promise of universal dominion was first made, turns



is) we tacitly, if not avowedly, do likewise. We walk by an understood rule, and thus avoid the trouble of exercising our conscience or of *proving* what the will of the Lord is.

"August 20th.

J. L. H."

### NOTES AND REPLIES.

*Are the "gifts of healings" of 1 Cor. xii. 28 in the Church in the present day?*

THE healings spoken of are evidently miraculous, like those recorded in Acts, and such gifts are assuredly not in the Church now. That God often gives faith to be healed, when it is His sovereign will to heal, and the soul is in communion with Him, or that God may give the gift of faith to another on behalf of a sick person, we would not deny, and to such cases James v. 14, 15 is applicable. This subject is treated of at some length in recent papers entitled "Sickness in the Church."

*How is a child of God to feed upon Christ, and how is he to be a light in the world?*

OUR Lord's words in John vii. 63, connected with the Jews' enquiry, "How can this man give us His flesh to eat?" furnish an answer to the first question: "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." With this compare Jer. xv. 16: "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart: for I am called by thy name." We feed on Christ by faith when the words that concern Him are so received into our souls as to become part of our very being, and therefore necessarily come out in our lives. What we feed on is assimilated by us, and Christ's words thus become "spirit and life" to us, or, as the prophet expresses it, "the joy and the rejoicing of the heart." We can then understand Peter's exhortation, "As newborn babes, long for," or "greatly desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious." Feeding on our Paschal Lamb, and remembering our deliverance from Egypt, the heavenly manna in the wilderness becomes a feast of fat things; Scripture is translated into our lives, and we are then as living epistles, known and read of all men, lights unto the world. The two thoughts of life and light are beautifully blended, and both result from eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man. As in Him "the Life was the Light of men," so will it be in us also; and if it is not there is something sadly wrong.

## THE ORDER AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

### II. SUBJECTS AND KEYNOTES.

"I am thy servant; give me understanding, that I may know thy testimonies."—PSALM cxix. 125.

"My son, if thou wilt receive my words, and hide my commandments with thee; so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding."

PROVERBS ii. 1-6.

To those who have read their Bibles only in a fragmentary and discursive manner—and there are probably many such, even among professing Christians—it may be surprising to be assured that each book is a distinct whole, with a marked and recognizable scope and purpose. It is generally not difficult to distinguish the special subject of a book, and even to find a corresponding word, or short phrase, so far characteristic of the book in question as to furnish a sort of keynote to it. We will begin with the New Testament, which responds most readily to this kind of study.

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mainly upon "David, the king;" and the word "kingdom" occurs so frequently throughout the book as to present itself readily to us for a keynote. The aspect of the life of Christ which shapes the gospel of *Mark* is that of the servant, both of God and man; and none who are familiar with this gospel will fail to recognize, as a keynote to it, the word "immediately," sometimes rendered "straight-way" or "forthwith," so constantly recurring in it, and so appropriate to the conception of a servant. The humanity of the Lord Jesus chiefly characterizes the gospel of *Luke*, which gives the fullest account of His human origin; and which, tracing back His genealogy to Adam, suggests to us plainly what we take to be its keynote—"the Son of man." The gospel of *John*, rich though it is in its delineation of the human character and sympathies of the Saviour, as we should expect from the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who leaned on His bosom, is essentially the gospel of Christ's divinity; and its keynote, "I am," carries us back, especially from chapter viii. 58, to Exodus iii. 14. Other subordinate notes are distinctly recognizable in the words "life," "light," and "love," which characterize the gospel, equally with the first epistle of John. The beautiful harmonies upon these four notes, which run through the gospel, will readily suggest themselves to the mind.

Passing on to the *Acts* of the Apostles, we have the history of the foundation of the Christian Church, and its keynote is unquestionably "the Holy Ghost." The subject of the epistle to the *Romans* is the great message of the Church, and it is expressed in its double keynote—"righteousness" "by faith." The *first epistle to the Corinthians* treats distinctly of the membership of the Christian Church, with its privileges and responsibilities, and we find for it also a double keynote—"called" to be

"saints." In the *second epistle to the Corinthians* it is the ministry of the Church that is dwelt upon, and the word "ministry," with slight modifications, pervades the epistle as its keynote.

Proceeding to the next epistle, that to the *Galatians*, we find not so much a special aspect of the Christian Church as of the Christian believer. The particular phase of the subject which rules this epistle is the liberty of the Christian believer, and the word "free" may be taken as its keynote, especially if we link it with such connected words as liberty, deliver, redeem, &c. The keynote of the glorious temple epistle, the epistle to the *Ephesians*, is unquestionably "in Christ," and it marks out to us the subject of the epistle, which is the status or standing of the Christian believer. In the epistle to the *Philippians* it is the progress and development of the believer which is the leading thought, and its keynote is "more." The epistle to the *Colossians* very closely resembles that to the *Ephesians*, but with a marked difference. Its keynote we recognize in the words "risen," "hid," and we cannot more suitably express the phase of thought which shapes it than as, "The Christian Believer: His Life."

The two following epistles, those to the *Thessalonian* Church, present a fresh character. No particular aspect, either of the Church or of the believer, marks them; but they are distinctly characterized by the prominence they give to the subject of the second coming of Christ. Nor are we at a loss to discover the special view of this common subject which distinguishes one of these epistles from the other. There are two principal phases of the subject—its aspect toward the Church, and its aspect toward the world; and this distinction evidently prevails here. The first epistle, with its keynote "coming," treats of the Lord's advent as the glorious hope of the Church;

the second epistle, with its keynote "He shall come," deals with it rather in its relation to the world.

Ere we pass on to the next group of epistles, which manifest a different character, it may be well to pause, and review what we have thus far recognized. Such a review may reveal to us a principle of arrangement which will materially assist our further progress. There may probably be difference of opinion, or at least reserve of judgment, in regard to some of the details of what has been traced out, the special phase of thought assigned to each book; but, at any rate, the broader lines of division seem clearly to assert themselves. We have four gospels, with four aspects of the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ; four books setting forth various features of the Christian Church; four epistles which treat of the Christian believer; and two, the distinguishing topic of which is the second coming of Christ. Here is a view of them:

BOOK.	KEYNOTE.	SUBJECT.
Matthew . .	"Kingdom."	Christ. { The King. The Servant. The Son of man. The Son of God.
Mark . .	"Immediately."	
Luke . .	"Son of man."	
John . .	"I Am."	
Acts . .	"The Holy Ghost."	The Christian Church. { Its Foundation. Its Message. Its Membership. Its Ministry.
Romans . .	"Righteousness" "by faith."	
1 Corinthians .	"Called" to be "saints."	
2 Corinthians .	"Ministry."	
Galatians . .	"Free."	The Christian Believer. { His Liberty. His Standing. His Progress. His Life.
Ephesians . .	"In Christ."	
Philippians .	"More."	
Colossians . .	"Risen"—"Hid."	
1 Thessalonians	"Coming."	The Second Coming of Christ. { For the Church. To the World.
2 Thessalonians	"He shall come."	

Can we discern any clue to the principle on which this arrangement is carried out?

## III. THE CHERUBIM.

"Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty [marg., hidden] things, which thou knowest not."—JER. xxxiii. 3.

"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."—PS. cxix. 18.

It will be familiar to many that the four gospels have been traditionally associated from very early times with the four Cherubic forms. There has been some divergence of opinion as to the particular form which should be assigned to each gospel; but if there is any truth in the connection there need be little hesitation as to its details. The order in which the four forms or aspects are placed in the different passages of Scripture in which the Cherubim are mentioned is substantially the same, though apparently diverse. That order is seen in Rev. iv. 7, and it very strikingly accords with the successive phases of the person and work of Christ, which we have found reason to assign to the four gospels. *Matthew's* gospel, the gospel of the kingdom, is appropriately associated with the lion, the emblem of royalty; *Mark's* gospel, of Christ the Servant, agrees well with the ox, the type of service; *Luke's* gospel, of Christ the Son of man, has for its corresponding emblem the man; while to *John's* gospel, of Christ the Son of God, there remains the appropriate type of heavenliness—the eagle.

Most readers of the Bible must have had their attention arrested by these remarkable objects—the Cherubim. Though made by no means prominent in Scripture, they recur again and again, from Genesis to Revelation, sometimes distinctly, sometimes covertly, but always in such connections as mark their high importance and significance. The very first reference to them, slight and indefinite as it appears, is of most absorbing interest. When our guilty first parents were expelled and excluded from

the scene of their fall, we are told that the Lord God "placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life." (Gen. iii. 24.) The subsequent use of the Cherubim in connection with the Levitical sanctuary would suffice to indicate to us that we have in this verse a description of the shrine or sanctuary of Antediluvian worship, which, if it spoke of blessings forfeited by the transgression of the past, spoke yet more expressly of help for the present and hope for the future; and while forbidding access to the privileges and communion of an unfallen state, was none the less a declaration of God's grace for the comfort of fallen and sinful man, and a manifestation of His presence for worship.\*

It would divert our attention too much from the subject in hand were we to enter into a detailed examination of the various passages of Scripture in which these mysterious objects are referred to. From a comparison of them we gather that the Cherubim are symbolic forms rather than actual existent beings; inasmuch as the appearance ascribed to them is of a varying character. In each instance, however, they are combinations, more or less complete and numerous, of the four animal forms already mentioned—the lion, the type of royal authority; the ox, the type of service and endurance; man, repre-

\* Those who have marked the recent development of antiquarian research, especially in regard to the Accads, the fathers of Babylonian and Assyrian, and perhaps to a large extent of Egyptian civilization, will be aware of the confirmation given to this view. An unmistakable connection is being traced between the principal objects of worship of those races—not to dwell on the derivation from them of the mythology and worship of other nations—and these Cherubic forms, attendant upon the impersonal glory of the Most High God, as it manifested itself throughout the Antediluvian dispensation "at the east of the garden of Eden."

senting human intelligence and affections; and the eagle, the type of heavenly origin and aspiration.

In endeavouring to ascertain the meaning and purpose of these remarkable symbols, which have been so strangely associated from the first with the various manifestations of God to man, we take our clue from the book of Revelation, and more particularly from chap. v. 8-10. This passage shows that the Cherubim can be emblems neither of divine attributes nor of angelic perfections, but must have in some way or other direct reference to the human race. A comparison of them with the four and twenty elders, with whom they are associated in that passage, suggests a further conclusion in regard to them. The elders, whose thrones and crowns indicate royalty, while their number seems to point to the four and twenty courses into which the sons of Aaron were divided, their white robes also indicating priesthood, must surely refer to the Church—"purchased unto God," as their song declares, "of every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation, and made unto our God a kingdom and priests," "a royal priesthood," as the apostle Peter expresses it. The intimate association of the four living creatures with the elders in this act of worship—their voices mingling in the song of praise for human redemption, as contrasted with the song of the angels (Rev. v. 11, 12), and the song of the irrational creation (v. 13)—suggests to us that they also probably represent the Church of the redeemed; and if so, the question as to the meaning of the Cherubic symbol in Scripture is narrowed to the inquiry, in what respect the conception of the Church set forth under the figure of the Cherubim differs from that embodied in the four and twenty elders.

The difference would seem to be this: The Cherubim set forth the Church as an object of God's *eternal purpose*



*and foreknowledge*; while the elders set it forth as *an actual, concrete fact*, brought to pass in the course of time, and answering to that eternal purpose. The distinction may not appear to be a very broad one, but it is exceedingly important; and it finds confirmation in the fact that whereas, in Rev. vi., when the volume of God's counsels is about to be unsealed, the four Cherubic beings are those who call attention to its developments; on the other hand, it is one of the elders who in chap. vii. points out and explains to John the great multitude of the redeemed.

We may venture to say that the Cherubic symbol embodies and sets forth *the elect of God*. That there is in Scripture a doctrine of election cannot be denied, though the misrepresentation of it has caused many to overlook or shrink from it. A full recognition of our individual responsibility and freedom of choice is perfectly consistent with the divine foreknowledge concerning us. On this principle true and faithful believers in Christ Jesus are set forth in Scripture as a known and complete body, "chosen in Him before the foundation of the world," "foreordained unto adoption as sons," and "to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren." (Eph. i. 4, 5; Rom. viii. 29. R.V.) Yet more explicitly, they are declared to have been "quicken'd" (or brought to life) "together with Christ, and raised up with Him, and made to sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus" (Eph. ii. 5, 6, R.V.); and the various steps by which this foreseen and predestined result is actually realized are thus defined—"Whom He foreordained, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified." (Rom. viii. 30. R.V.)

It is a suggestive and affecting thought, that our gracious God has been pleased, from the very commencement of

man's history as a fallen and sinful being, to associate with the manifestation of His own glory a symbol of redeemed humanity. It seems to indicate to us, more than words could tell, the loving satisfaction which He has taken, all the while the great struggle between good and evil in our world has been developing, in the anticipation of its issue; how, in the end, through the interposition and atonement of the Son of His love, the fearful curse of sin should be transmuted into a source of utmost blessing, and man, rescued from the fall, should be exalted to a degree of perfection and glory otherwise inconceivable.

It is by no means inconsistent with the interpretation of the Cherubic symbol here set forth that a reference may also be found in it to our Lord Jesus Christ, since He is both the Head, and also the representative and embodiment of redeemed humanity—the Elect of God. Indeed several explanations might be given, all more or less easily reconcilable with that we have been considering; but this, as most fully according with all the uses of the symbol, appears to me the normal one. And corresponding with it is the etymology of the word itself, which, among several that have been suggested, appears the simplest and most probable. It is that which traces it to the combination of the Hebrew particle of similarity *ke*, as, or alike; and the root *rab*, which expresses greatness either in quality or quantity. The word Cherub may be rendered either “like the majesty” or “like the multitude.”

Such, then, appears to be the purpose and signification of this remarkable symbol, which has evidently so important a place in Scripture. If now we should find that its importance in Scripture is greater than has yet been recognized—that there is here the clue to the structure of

the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testaments, which we have desired; that it is indeed a divine thread running through the seemingly fortuitous or at best mere human arrangement of the books which compose the sacred volume—shall we not recognize the gracious propriety of such a disposition? And will there not be disclosed to us a seal upon the plenary inspiration of the Bible which, so far from being attributable to human design, has hitherto escaped detection? R. H. B.

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## THE ORDINANCE OF THE "RED HEIFER."

### THE MODE OF CLEANSING THE DEFILED.

NUMBERS XIX. 17-22.

WE have now to attend to the procedure, ordered by infinite wisdom, for the removal of the defilement to which our attention has been directed. We have seen that no sacrifice, such as was offered in other cases, was on these occasions either commanded or admitted. Nothing could set aside or exonerate from the seven days' uncleanness, and consequent exclusion from the camp for that period. We have also seen that moral guilt, in the ordinary sense, had nothing to do with this species of defilement. On the contrary, it was often necessarily incurred by obeying God's specific commands. In other instances it could not be obviated without a gross violation of social and domestic duties, as in the case of one of a family being seized with a mortal disease. A case of sudden death would also defile a whole household, though the individual might be a stranger to whom the family might be showing hospitality. Grievous as are all the works of the flesh, the one here identified is, to the Divine Majesty, the most obnoxious of all.

The ritual prescribed consists in taking some of the ashes of the heifer in a vessel, and adding running water. A clean person is to sprinkle this on the defiled house, vessels, and persons. This is to be done on the third day, and on the seventh day; after which each person is to wash his clothes and bathe. In the evening he will be clean. Unless the sprinkling be done on the third day, that on the seventh will not be sufficient. If an unclean person fail to purify himself in this way, he will be cut off from among the congregation, having defiled the Lord's sanctuary.

It would appear to have been the intention of the statute that a bereaved family should be in seclusion for the seven days, removed from the neighbourhood of their friends, who would be debarred from intercourse by the penalty of contracting uncleanness. Shut out from the earthly dwelling-place of their God, that they might learn "without the camp" more of their true condition as descendants of Adam, they were not for the time to associate with God's people. Though this barrier might be broken through by those who wished to show sympathy with the mourners, this would seem to be at variance with the intended design.

But when contemplating the heavy burden of this exclusion from the camp, the apparently trivial ceremony by which persons thus defiled were to be restored can scarcely fail to excite notice. Water mixed with ashes alone had this efficacy. Warriors elated with victory would be grievously offended indeed if they were to be kept at a distance for seven days; nor would the pain be at all relieved when informed they must be twice sprinkled with such water.

Both these arrangements, however disturbing, as they undoubtedly were, to the heart of the sorrowful, were yet

singularly calculated to diminish the grief for the departed. The sad event that brought them outside the camp would soon be lost sight of in the desire to be once more among their friends and companions.

And then as to the restoration. It was not to be effected by any painful or expensive process; but by the mere splashing of a little water—neither attended with trouble, anxiety, or alarm. The easiness and simplicity of the operation would not interfere with the hope.

The two days for the sprinkling, the third and seventh, would necessarily attract notice, as involving some peculiar principle. They may designate periods of the greatest, the highest possible importance. We remember that it was on the third day our Lord rose from the dead. Consequent upon His resurrection was the glorious announcement of mercy to the guilty; made known and corroborated at Pentecost by the manifest presence of the Holy Ghost. It may be that the God of Israel was thus leading His people to look on to the day when, through faith in the crucified and risen Son of God, they should receive remission of sins and acceptance, altogether apart from the law and its observances.

And the selection of the seventh day for the completion of the procedure may refer to what the Sabbath-day was commemorative of—the rest of God after the six days' work of creation; and also to the more full rest of God, consequent upon the work of redemption having been completed by His beloved Son; the first foreshadowing the last. There is a further fulfilment of the type of the seventh day, or sabbatic rest, as regards the house of Israel, for whom the millennial rest is specially prepared.

It is impossible to affirm that these eras were intended to be pointed out by the two days here specified, but it seems not unlikely, since they are the most momentous

epochs of this world's history; both being based upon the fact of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ: the first designating and evincing His power over death; the second, the period when His followers will be for ever delivered from the power of death, reigning in life with Him thenceforth for ever. They will then be thoroughly cleansed from all the secret, as well as the open workings of the flesh.

But it is to be carefully pondered that, unless the unclean be sprinkled on the third day, the sprinkling on the seventh day will not cleanse him. Unless now, in the day of salvation, the heart accepts Jesus, the blessing of the seventh day is not for it. Dire will be the judgments, deep the sorrows, which Israel has yet to pass through. Few only in comparison will survive those judgments; and they will have to lament with bitter distress their long-continued rejection of Him, and to accept the earthly, instead of the heavenly blessing, which they might otherwise have possessed.

The purport of the ashes has been already dwelt upon. The running, or living, water probably designates the Holy Spirit; as in Isaiah xlv. 3; Ezekiel xxxvi. 25-29.

In applying the "water of separation," a clean person takes some hyssop, dips it into the water mixed with the ashes, and when the unclean has been duly sprinkled, he is afterwards admissible to the presence of Jehovah. But what renders him admissible? There is upon him a speck of ash. It is part of the remains of the red heifer. This speck is his title of admission; his certificate of having been cleansed. It is a memorial of the Lord Jesus—the most remote and infinitesimal reminiscence of Him. It brings at once before God His beloved Son's sojourn on earth; His sufferings, and His finished work. He requires no more. With this speck upon him, the

foulest is regarded as clean. Though black and hideous before, he is now whiter than snow, and comely. He is accepted in the Beloved One. All the virtues that ever adorned humanity, if concentrated in the individual seeking admission into the presence of God, could not obtain it for Him. This little speck of ash is, in God's estimation, of infinitely greater value.

But the seven days of this uncleanness have probably a peculiar meaning. The period of seven days, or one week, is sometimes employed in Scripture to symbolize the course of a dispensation or of man's natural life. It may here have relation to both these ideas. In the latter it would intimate that this uncleanness pertains to man as long as he lives; for not till the close of the seventh day, even after having been twice sprinkled, and after the bathing, and washing of clothes, is he accounted clean. The defilement pertains to him till the close of his days. The inbred self-confidence still remains, notwithstanding all that has been done to wean him from it, and induce him to give the whole glory to Him to whom alone it belongs. On the next day—the eighth—the bright day of promise, he appears before God without this inherent stain.

Under the figure of bathing and washing his garments he is taught to be watchful against other causes of defilement besides this; or, as the apostle John writes, "He who has this hope on Him" (of being made like the Lord Jesus and of appearing with Him) "purifieth himself even as He is pure."

It remains to be noticed how carefully the Spirit of God guards all the avenues against "this same confident boasting." The clean person who performs the kind and necessary office of sprinkling the water which cleanses might well say, "Surely I have committed no offence. On the

contrary, have I not done a most useful as well as gratuitous service to my neighbour, without which he must have remained away from God, and God would also have been deprived of his worship and service? Do I not merit praise on this account?" Alas! my friend, thou hast herein defiled thyself. Thou must wash thy clothes, and remain unclean till the evening. The Searcher of all hearts knows that in the act even of ministering the holy things of God to make another clean thou canst not escape some measure of self-gratulation, of assumption of superiority over thy neighbour, to the forgetting in some degree that thou art no better than he; that both are subject to the same infirmities. Even in ministering Christ to another the soul is not exempt from the liability to this defilement.

Having thus examined the details of this most wonderful type, if we have been privileged to read God's thoughts aright, the conviction is forced upon us how very vile we must be in His sight. As regards our bad deeds, we are aware of this his judgment, but are little prepared for so emphatic a condemnation of the apparently inevitable consequences of our good deeds. There is room to surmise that our very best deeds may, in this point of view, become our very worst. Had not the God of all grace provided the all-efficient remedy, we must for ever have been shut out from the light, the joy, the glory of His presence.

It may be well also to remark that when an Israelite was thus shut out from the camp, it were vain for him to seek re-admission by penitence, penance, resolutions of amendment, increased humility, devotedness, or service. Service he could not render, being unclean. The same cause would preclude worship. He could not approach to offer either. None of these things would avail in the smallest degree towards his re-admission. God must see that he has



submitted to, and availed himself of, His provision of mercy. Let this be a warning, a rebuke, and an encouragement to us all.

The ordinance of the red heifer seems to exemplify God's decision that "no flesh should glory before Him." (1 Cor. i. 29.) For has He not said, "Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of His majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day"? (Isa. ii. 10, 11.) The entire honour belongs to Him alone; for of Him, and through Him, and to Him is the whole, to whom be the glory for ever. Amen.

R. N.

## SORROW TURNED INTO JOY.

READ NEHEMIAH viii.

THE Israelites who had returned from captivity were evidently not acquainted with the law of their God. The first eight verses of this chapter prove how eagerly and reverently they listened, and as commandment after commandment fell upon their ears they increasingly felt how deeply they had sinned; sorrow and sighing filled their hearts, and at last the whole congregation burst forth into bitter groans and tears. (vv. 9-11.) What a solemn sight! Would that our hearts were as tender and as quickly moved to grief when we find we have been sinning against the Lord.

Then came the wonderful, the gracious command—"Mourn not, nor weep. . . . Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet . . . neither be ye sorry; for the joy of the Lord is your strength." The people listened and obeyed, "*because they had understood the words that*

were declared unto them." Thus their sorrow was turned into joy, and they "went their way to eat, and to drink . . . and to make great mirth."

Now let us make an application to ourselves. It is right when any fresh view of God's holiness, or clearer knowledge of His will, is revealed to us, to weep over past failure; but the devil would seek to lead us to *settle* down into weeping and mourning, as Israel did at Bochim. (Judges ii.) They spent all their strength and time in weeping, and never went on to obey, and did not put away their false gods.

It is self-righteousness that makes us fret and keep on grieving. We are vexed and disappointed with *ourselves*; we have not really learnt that in *us*—that is, in our flesh—dwelleth no good thing, and therefore are cast down and disappointed at each fresh discovery of evil.

Our blessed God knows us thoroughly. He well knows the deep fountain of iniquity that is within us, and also our utter inability to keep His commandments in our own strength, and therefore in His rich grace He has made provision for us in every way. He has given us His well-beloved Son, not only as our Saviour, but as

"Our never-failing treasury, filled  
With boundless stores of grace."

The first weeping is right; but fretting and bemoaning will never give power over sin. The devil would persuade us that there is some power for good in us, and that if we keep on grieving over our failures we shall be able to conquer them; but he is a liar, and only seeks to deceive. Our Lord's command here is, "Mourn not, nor weep . . . but go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet." He spreads the table for us, a "feast of fat things, and wine on the lees well refined" (Isa. xxv. 6), and bids us eat and drink abundantly.

It requires a much greater effort of soul to rise and eat than to settle down and groan; and the more intensely we desire to please the Lord the more prone we shall be to refuse to be comforted. Satan comes as an angel of light, and feeds our self-righteousness under the name of humility, and covers a discontented and, it may be, sulky spirit with the name of godly sorrow. A feast was provided for Israel directly they humbled themselves—one day's fast and *eight* days' feast (*v.* 18); and so it is now. Our blessed God bids us feast upon Christ Himself—His sufferings, His love, His grace, His fulness, His promises, His glory, all that He has and is; and as our souls thus feed on Him, we gather strength to pursue our journey, and fight the good fight of faith.

A wounded soldier would never regain his strength if he lay bleeding, cold, and hungry on the battle-field. He must have his wounds bound up, and be sheltered and fed, before he would be again able to fight. So it is with us. Wounded in the battle with sin, the devil tries to keep us bleeding, cold, and famished. He tells us we must grieve and conquer our sins *before* we sit down and eat; but our Father assures us of forgiveness as soon as we confess, bids us draw near, and then in the warmth of His presence and in the enjoyment of His smile, He would have us feast upon the goodness of His house. True, we may and should return with weeping and supplication (*Jer.* xxxi. 9-14); but in His presence, feasting at His table, we forget our sorrow and remember our misery no more. (*Prov.* xxxi. 6, 7; *Ps.* lxi. 5, 7.)

Again, we find that in this word to Israel *four* things are forbidden—"Mourn not, nor weep; be not sorry, neither be ye grieved." We are prone to indulge in the two latter after the two former have passed away; but the Lord forbids *all four*. He would not have us keep a

grieved feeling. He commands us to forget our misery; to rise above it, to drink the wine of His love; and, leaning upon Christ for strength, to go forth, full of hope, and expectation of victory. His desire is that we should be enriched even through our past failures. We have so to learn our weakness, that we may be constrained to cleave to Christ and fear to take a step alone; and so to learn our folly, that we may distrust our own judgment and be subject to His word in everything. Thus out of our very failures we may get richer blessings, closer fellowship with Christ, and become more capable of helping others.

The crowning truth follows: "*The joy of the Lord is your strength.*" Not *our* joy in Him, but *His* joy in us. The truth, the blessed stimulating truth, is, that we can give *Him* joy. We may have the consciousness that we can be a pleasure, a delight to Him. Mark also that this is said to those who had just been weeping bitterly, because they had discovered so many things in which they had been disobeying Him.

Now let us turn to Jer. xxxi. 18-21. Ephraim is there bemoaning himself because of past failures, and crying to the Lord for help and strength. As soon as the Lord hears his true confession, and his earnest cry for help, He exclaims, "Ephraim is my dear son, a pleasant child!" Is not this wonderful? Should it not lift up and gladden the sorrowing heart? As soon as there is real repentance, we again become pleasant children to our Lord, and can gladden His heart. We need not wait until we have conquered our sins, but after true self-judgment may rise at once with the consciousness of a full, free pardon, and know that as we cleave to Him, *He* is rejoicing over us. Then comes the tender, loving caution—"Set thee up way-marks, make thee high heaps." Remember the past mistakes and failures. Be on your guard against them. Let

them be beacons of dangers, finger-posts to warn you, lest you be again ensnared.

The returned captives were taught, "This day is holy unto the Lord." And in very deep thankfulness and joy He would have us dedicate ourselves afresh to Him, as holy, separated unto Him in all our thoughts and ways and words. Not occupied with ourselves and our own gain, but occupied and satisfied with Him, grateful to Him, delighting in Him, and longing to give Him joy.

Lastly, let us remember that our God does not despise the day of small things. He has long patience for the precious fruits of the Spirit. He takes pleasure in the buddings of fruit, watches its growth, and looks onward to the time when it will be fully ripe. So now, even now, each one of us may be a joy and a praise to Him, and know *for ourselves* the sweetness of that precious truth, "The joy of the Lord is your strength."

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### BATTLE SONG.

CHRIST, the name above all others,  
 Only Him we own;  
 This our battle-cry, my brothers—  
 Christ, and Christ alone.

Christ the name on every banner,  
 His alone the praise;  
 His the glory and the honour,  
 While the Cross we raise.

Many a warrior's arm has stiffened,  
 Many a head lies low;  
 Yet our standard waves triumphant,  
 Sign to friend and foe.

Seize the banners, living soldiers,  
 As your comrades fall;  
 They to rest, and we to conquest—  
 Christ for each and all.

E. S. W.

## LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

## XIV.

*"Spirit and soul and body."*

"So far as I gather from the teaching of the New Testament, man is presented to us in a tripartite condition; viz., 'spirit,' 'soul,' and 'body.' The text, 1 Thess. v. 23, seems to me conclusive against any further division. The word 'whole' is ambiguous, and in our version apparently attached only to 'spirit.' The word is found in one other place in Scripture; namely, James i. 4, where it is rendered 'entire.' There is a *substantive* of the same etymology used once in the New Testament; viz., Acts iii. 16, and rendered 'perfect soundness.' I am disposed to paraphrase 1 Thess. v. 23 thus: 'And may your *entirety*—spirit and soul and body—be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.' At any rate, if such a rendering be not allowed, the word rendered 'whole' must be predicated of 'spirit and soul and body,' and not only of 'spirit.'\*

"According to this teaching, man is composed of *three* parts—two immaterial, and one material. Of the two immaterial, the spirit is the highest; but I do not wish to enter on any psychological discussion.

"The popular way in which man is divided is twofold; that is, 'body and soul,' according to our Lord's words in Matt. x. 28: 'But rather fear Him who is able to destroy both *body* and *soul* in hell.' Again, we find in 1 Cor. vii. the expression 'that she may be holy both in *body* and in *spirit*;' and in 2 Cor. vii. 1, 'Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the *flesh* and *spirit*, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' Then again we have the remarkable attribute of the word of God, that it is 'sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of *soul* and *spirit*,' &c. Now I suppose that there are ninety-nine

\* The Revised Version reads, "And may your spirit and soul and body be preserved entire, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ."

soul-exercised Christians out of a hundred who have never studied psychology, and yet are perfectly conscious of having to do with a *heart-searching* God. Such persons find themselves under the searching of Omniscience as in Psalm cxxxix.

"When I read such passages as, 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the *heart*, I try the *reins*, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings;' or, 'All the churches shall know that I am He which searcheth the *reins* and the *heart*,' I am not careful to draw an accurate distinction between 'heart' and 'reins,' but seek to apply the broad truth personally to myself, as the apostle does in 1 Cor. iv. 1-6. Men judge of us by what *they* see of us; but the judgment of God is according to *His* certain knowledge of us. He will 'judge the *secrets* of men.' Our life before men is not our real life; that only is real which we live before God, and then it can be said of us, 'Whose praise is not of men, but of God.'

"February 19th, 1872.

J. L. H."

### NOTES AND REPLIES.

*What is revealed of the condition of Old Testament saints after death?*  
 THAT the apprehensions of Old Testament saints were very dark as to the intermediate state, David, Job, and Hezekiah all bear witness, for life and immortality were to be brought into the light by the advent of the Son of God. But no one can read Isa. lvii. 1 without perceiving that God revealed more than was known in the dispensation. We would render it thus: "Merciful men" (*i.e.* godly men) "are gathered in" (the word used frequently of being gathered to their fathers), "none considering that the righteous is gathered in from the evil. He enters into peace: they rest on their couches, each one walking in his uprightness." Our Lord's words about Lazarus, in Luke xvi., also show us what were the thoughts of Old Testament saints on this subject. To be carried by angels into Abraham's bosom, sufficiently tells us of rest, peace, and joy in the covenant mercies of God to Abraham, while awaiting that ultimate fulfilment in resurrection which could alone satisfy, as expressed in Ps. xvii. 15. An application is sometimes made of the quotation in Eph. iv. 8, 9 as to Christ's leading captivity captive, but a reference to the Psalm (lxviii. 18) shows that it is rather prophetic of those who were Satan's captives, and were redeemed by blood out of the spiritual Egypt, and

led captive by the great Redeemer, and made partakers of His heavenly gifts; so that they are constrained to say, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily loadeth us with gifts, even the God of our salvation." (v. 19.) God had a purpose in keeping the intermediate state dark to His ancient people in order that their eyes might look onward to the ultimate consummation, when they would enter into the city whose builder was God. Even now, in the far clearer light of the New Testament, God wonderfully keeps the intermediate state in the background, that it may not occupy our souls so as to dim the hope of the Lord's coming and our gathering together to Him then in resurrection. But in the Church of God generally the bliss of the sleeping saint has, through false teaching, well-nigh shut out the hope of the coming, and the glory of the resurrection.

*Can Ezekiel xxxvi. 25, 26, be used to prove that a believer may be free from sin in this world?*

The "clean water" in this passage we would connect with the "water of purifying" in Num. viii. 7, and the "water of separation" in Num. xix. 9. The "water of purifying" is, literally rendered, "the water of sin," and refers to the sin-offering, as that which is for the purification from sin. This identifies it with "the water of separation," which in Num. xix. 9 is called a "purification for sin," or, more literally, "a sin-offering." From a comparison of these scriptures it appears that the passage in Ezekiel has only to do with the atoning work of Christ, and does not touch the question of personal freedom from sin. But 1 John i. 8 answers the question as to the believer's personal freedom from sin: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves." In John's epistle the pronouns "we" and "our" always refer to the family of faith, as opposed to the world outside (compare chap. ii. 2), the apostle including himself among the former. Again, he uses the present tense—"we *have*," and not "we *had*," in which case it might have referred to our unregenerate state. It is ignorance of what sin is that ever leads souls astray on this point. Sin is a condition, as well as a voluntary act. Hence Paul says, "Who shall deliver me from this *body of death*?" and answers, "I thank God through our Lord Jesus Christ. So then with the mind I serve the law of God, and with the flesh the law of sin." That is, the two antagonistic principles of flesh and spirit, of sin and holiness, are ever present. Hence also the apostle says, "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection" (1 Cor. ix. 27); and adds that, though surrounded by sin and temptation, "God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able." (Chap. x. 13.) We are under no necessity to yield to sin; but sin exists in



the inward desire, which, when yielded to, becomes sin brought forth. (James i. 15.) Sin is not only the wrong act that is committed, but the natural inheritance of all who are born of Adam and therefore born in sin; and this condition will never be actually set aside till the resurrection, of which regeneration is the pledge and the certainty. (See Rom. viii. 11.)

*Is it right to say that there is no assembly-testimony in these days?*

May we not say that there is as much warrant for assembly-worship and testimony to-day as there was for temple-worship and testimony in the days after the restoration under Ezra and Nehemiah? In any given dispensation, however much man may fail, God does not relax His commands nor alter His plans. Thus when, in the days of Malachi, the testimony for God in Israel was of the feeblest character, the command still was, "Remember ye the law of Moses my servant . . . with the statutes and judgments." (Chap. iv. 4.) God had not changed (chap. iii. 6), nor had He changed His requirements or His promises. The assumption of some, that the candlestick is now removed from the earth, is not warranted by Scripture. In Eli's day the lamp in the Lord's house was going out, the eyes of God's priest were waxing dim, and the word of the Lord was scarce, with no open vision, because of apostasy; but the candlestick remained. (1 Sam. iii. 1-3.) The characteristics of the seven churches in Asia (Rev. ii. iii.) continue to the end of this dispensation; and the threat to the church of Ephesus, for having left her first love, is not that the candlestick will be taken away from the earth, but rather that it will be removed from the place it occupied to some other. Apostasy never changes God's purposes; but it does remove the glory of the dispensation, and hence the feebleness of church-testimony in this day. Forgetfulness of this leads some to act as if Ichabod were not stamped on all around, even as the Jews in our Lord's time in their pride uttered the falsehood, "We are Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man." Nehemiah in Jerusalem said, "We are servants," yet nevertheless he sought a Jerusalem-testimony for God. So must we act now, and God will approve of no lower standard than that given to us in the book of Acts and in the epistles. But our testimony must be maintained with that lowliness of word and deed which our low estate calls for at our hands. If we are blind to our own share in the Church's low condition, sectarian self-sufficiency will characterize us, and we shall be found boasting in truths the power of which we do not know, and bitter words and high-handedness of the flesh will bear painful witness to the fact that we are rather followers of Diotrephes than of Demetrius.

## THE RESPONSE OF LOVE.

## AN ADDRESS AT THE LORD'S TABLE.

ONE of our dangers as children of God, and even of those who have known Christ longest, is our forgetting our first joy at the feast in the Father's house. How increasingly precious should that blood be by which we are brought nigh to God, which gave us joy at first! Let us never forget that from which redeeming love has rescued us, and rescues us now. At the Lord's table let us ever remember the great lesson of Luke xv. We need to ponder it more, and enter more deeply into the simplicity of God's truth. We are oftentimes like the Athenians, trying to find out some new thing in God's word with which to please ourselves. May God give us grace to get deeper down into things that we know already, and have them more deeply engraved upon our hearts by the Spirit of the living God. We find in Luke xv. that the prodigal did nothing but sit and feast at the father's table. There is no doubt but he also wept, but we are not told so. Would God we wept oftener, specially as we sit around His table!

The father kissed the prodigal son, clothed him, put the ring on his hand, the shoes on his feet, and spread the table—the father did all, the prodigal did nothing. But in Luke vii. 36 we have the converse of this. There we see a feast spread in the rich man's house, and a poor woman, a sinner, coming in while the Lord sat at meat. "She brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping, and began to wash His feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the

ointment." In verses 44-47 we have our Lord's high commendation of what she did. Tears, we repeat, would often be a very welcome part of worship if only our poor hearts got down low enough.

Luke xv. tells us especially of God's joy in finding the lost one, and may we have our hearts more exercised about this. We are anxious to get *our* share of blessing, but are we equally anxious that Christ should have His share—that He might get joy to His heart from the feast? Let us ask ourselves what Christ gets from us whilst we feast with Him? Are we ministering to Him? or is He only ministering to us? We never read that the prodigal kissed his father; but here we read, "This woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet." She had learned what forgiveness of sin was, and what was the grace of Him who gave it. There may have been a time in our experience when the feet of our Lord received a kiss from us. Is it so now? This woman could not stop; her heart was full, bursting, and she wept and she kissed, and she kissed and she wept. Oh, friends, what sweetness there was to the heart of the Son of God in that poor sinner's kiss! How welcome to the heart of Him who wandered up and down, and found none, or very few, to enter into who He was and what He said! What joy to the Lord to find in that one a heart that could weep and lips that could kiss! Our lips can sing; but do our lips kiss? It was costly ointment that came out of her broken alabaster box, and with which she anointed His feet. Would God that our hearts were like that broken alabaster box, out of which fragrance might come that would be very precious to Him!

In the Song of Solomon we read: "While the King sitteth at His table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." Have we any spikenard, the smell of which

shall go forth to the joy of the heart of Him whom we worship? Our worship is oftentimes poor; may God tell us what worship really is! When Abraham went up Mount Moriah with Isaac, the knife and the fire were in his hand, and he went to worship, as he told the young men. When broken-hearted David fled from Absalom with feet bare and head covered, he wept as a true repentant child of God, and worshipped. (2 Sam. xv. 30-32.) We know not the estimate God put on David's bitter worship, as he went up that hill with his heart broken and his eyes weeping in anguished memory of the past, and yet a forgiven man. May the Lord help us in our worship, by His grace, that we may know more of the worship of Abraham in its self-sacrifice, and of David's in its penitence. May our feet be bare, as in spirit we ascend Calvary's hill, worshipping as we go up. (H. G.)

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## THE ORDER AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

### IV. THE CHERUBIC SYMBOL A KEY TO THE NEW TESTAMENT.

"And I saw when the Lamb opened one of the seven seals, and I heard one of the four living creatures saying as with a voice of thunder, Come."—REV. vi. 1. R. V.

IF, accepting the association of the four gospels with the four Cherubic forms, as previously suggested, we proceed to test their application to the *next* group of four—the books treating of the Church—we find that the connection is, to say the best of it, somewhat vague and indistinct. And not less so in the case of the third group of four; while the last group marked out consists only of two books. But though the application of our proposed key may not be clearly recognizable in regard to the separate

books, it is otherwise in regard to the *groups* into which they fall. If we assign to the group of four gospels, with their common subject, Christ, the lion, as the type of royalty, we find the next symbol, the ox, the type of service, equally appropriate to the Church, the common subject of the second group. Just as appropriate is the third symbol—the man—to the group which treats of the believer; nor less so the eagle, as the type of heavenliness, to the two books which set forth the second coming of Christ.

Passing on now to the *four pastoral epistles* which follow, we find that they answer again, both separately and as a group, to our key; the prominent characteristic of each symbol being, however, rather less marked.

In the *first epistle to Timothy*, then, the pastor is set forth as a ruler; and the frequently-recurring keynote is the word "charge;" with this accords well the lion—symbol of authority. The *second epistle to Timothy* treats of him rather as a servant and worker; and its keynote, "endure," accords with the ox, as the symbol of endurance. The epistle to *Titus*, with its keynote "sound doctrine," presents him to us in the character of an instructor; and with it we can associate the third symbol—man—as the type of intelligence and human sympathies. Guided by the analogy, where our light is not so clear, we may regard the epistle to *Philemon*, with its keynote "brother," and its rich effusion of Christian love and sympathy, as placed on record to portray the pastor as a spiritual man; and so associate with it the eagle, the symbol of spirituality. The group, it will be recognized, has for its common subject the pastor; and to this again the lion, as the symbol of authority, answers.

The general subject of the next group is the Christian profession. The *epistle to the Hebrews* contrasts the

Christian profession with the Mosaic economy, and its keynote is "better." The *epistle of James* sets forth the Christian profession in its relation to practical morality; its keynote is "works." The *first epistle of Peter* has for its keynote "suffering," and deals with the Christian profession in its relation to a persecuting world. The *second epistle of Peter* gives the keynote "knowledge," and its subject is the Christian profession in relation to false teachers. Just as the pastoral group answered to the first of the groups previously marked out, with its subject, Christ; so does this second group, of the Christian profession, answer to the corresponding group, above, of the Church; and we may associate with it the same symbol, the ox, with the modified idea of endurance.

The *first epistle of John* has, equally with the gospel of John, the subordinate notes there marked out, "life," "light," and "love." In place of the "I Am" of the gospel, however, we find rather "we are," or "we have;" and these I suggest for its keynote. Its subject I would define to be, "The Christian Faith—live it." The subject of the *second epistle of John* seems to be, "The Christian Faith—guard it;" its keynote, "this doctrine." For the *third epistle of John* I find as the subject, "The Christian Faith—further it;" and as the keynote, "the truth." The keynote of the *epistle of Jude* is "kept," and its subject, "The Christian Faith—hold fast to it." Here then, in place of the Christian believer, the general subject of the third group above, we have the analogous subject of the Christian faith; and with this we may associate the third Cherubic emblem, man, as the type of intelligence and human sympathies.

One book remains, that of *Revelation*. Its subject is again the second coming of Christ, combining in one, or not distinguishing between the two phases of that subject

which ruled the two epistles to the Thessalonians. Its keynote is "Amen;" and with its subject, "Behold, I come quickly," the fourth Cherubic emblem, the eagle, as the type of spirituality—a heavenly nature, and heavenward aspirations—well agrees.

We find then, as before said, a series of subjects in the second half of the New Testament analogous both in character and arrangement to those in the first half, and answering to the same key; but not without a marked difference. The topic which they have in common is the Church; for the New Testament is the book of the Church, as the Old Testament is the book of the Kingdom. The difference between them I consider to be this: the first section deals with the Church *as in the sight of God*; the second section treats of the Church *as before the eyes of the world*. The real Head of the Church, the Lord Jesus Christ, is not apparent to the world, which sees only pastors and teachers as representing Him. Indeed, the true Church itself, consisting of all and only those who are joined to the Head, is visible to God alone; in place of it there stands out to the eyes of the world the professing Church, or, as we have called it, the Christian profession. So too the believer, as to his real spiritual life, his inward experience and relationship to God, is unknown to his fellow-man. What the world takes note of is the Christian faith—that which the man avows in word and conduct. And so also, while in the divine purpose and in the expectation of His saints the coming of the Lord has a twofold aspect, to the apprehension of the world it can only be one terrible event.

We are now prepared to trace out the scheme of the entire New Testament according to the principles here elicited. It is as follows:

## THE NEW TESTAMENT—THE BOOK OF THE CHURCH.

BOOK.	KEYNOTE.	SUBJECT.				CHERUBIC SYMBOL.
Matthew . . .	"Kingdom."	Christ.	The King. The Servant. The Son of Adam. The Son of God.	Lion. Ox. Man. Eagle.	Lion } (Royalty).	
Mark . . .	"Immediately,"					
Luke . . .	"Son of Man."					
John . . .	"I Am."					
Acts . . .	"Holy Ghost."	The Christian Church.	Its Foundation. Its Message. Its Membership. Its Ministry.		Ox (Service).	
Romans . . .	"Righteousness"—"by faith."					
1 Corinthians . . .	"Called" to be "saints."					
2 Corinthians . . .	"Ministry."					
Galatians . . .	"Free."	The Christian Believer.	His Liberty. His Standing. His Progress. His Life.		Man (Manhood).	
Ephesians . . .	"In Christ."					
Philippians . . .	"More."					
Colossians . . .	"Risen"—"Hail."					
1 Thessalonians . . .	"Coming."	The Second Coming.	For the Church. To the World.		Eagle (Heavenliness).	
2 Thessalonians . . .	"He shall come."					
1 Timothy . . .	"Change."					
2 Timothy . . .	"Endure."					
Titus . . .	"Sound doctrine."	The Christian Pastor.	As a Ruler. As a Servant. As an Instructor. As a Spiritual Man.	Authority. Endurance. Intelligence. Spirituality.	(Lion) Authority.	
Philemon . . .	"Brother."					
Hebrews . . .	"Better."					
James . . .	"Works."					
1 Peter . . .	"Suffering."	The Christian Profession.	And the Mosaic Economy. And Practical Morality. And a Persecuting World. And False Brethren.		(Ox) Endurance.	
2 Peter . . .	"Knowledge."					
1 John . . .	"We are"—"we have."					
2 John . . .	"This doctrine."					
3 John . . .	"The truth."	The Second Coming.	Behold, I come quickly."		(Eagle) Spirituality.	
Jude . . .	"Kept."					
Revelation . . .	"Amen."					



It will scarcely be disputed that there is here a very striking appearance of systematic arrangement; and that such as can only have originated with the same order-loving mind that has stamped its impress on the organic world around us. Should it be ascertained that the same principle which we have traced in the arrangement of the New Testament underlies that of the Old also—and this we think will be shown—the evidence will be very strong that the Cherubic symbol is indeed, as we have suggested, a key to the structure of the Scriptures, a divine thread running through and binding together the inspired books which compose the sacred word.

#### V. THE OLD TESTAMENT SCRIPTURES.

"Thy testimonies are wonderful: therefore doth my soul keep them. . . .  
I rejoice at thy word, as one that findeth great spoil."

PSALM cxix. 129, 162.

IN endeavouring to follow up through the treasure-chambers of the Old Testament the clue we have obtained in the study of the New Testament, we shall very quickly be impressed with the increased difficulty of the task, resulting from the depth and fulness of the Old Testament Scriptures. Accustomed to the gospel as it has been unfolded to us in the writings of the evangelists and apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, we sometimes overlook the authority on which they rested, and from which, in substance, they drew their teachings. A little study and consideration will enable us to recognise that the New Testament is professedly an unfolding of the Old, and very far from an entire unfolding. Our Lord and His apostles constantly refer to and quote and illustrate the law and the prophets, basing their teachings upon those ancient Scriptures; but they do not profess or attempt to exhaust them. Any one who will spend a little time in turning up the passages of the Old Testament

which are quoted and commented upon in the New, will be impressed with the strange and unexpected uses and applications of Old Testament Scripture which the Lord Jesus and His apostles make ; in many instances appearing entirely to pass over the ostensible meaning and purpose of the passage, which an ordinary reader would gather from its context, they employ it for a purpose which perhaps strikes one as forced and unnatural, but which a deeper study always vindicates. So far from being a complete unveiling of the treasures of the Old Testament, the New Testament does but bring out some of its riches into the light which streams from the cross, and send the enquiring believer in, under the enlightenment and guidance of the Holy Spirit, to find more. And the spiritually-minded student of God's word only grows in reverent and loving appreciation of the Old Testament Scriptures as he developes in spiritual life and intelligence. Probably the order of things in this respect is much the same in all cases. As children, we delight in the Old Testament because of the charm of its narratives. In our early Christian life we linger with grateful, clinging love around the gospel story, where we see God reconciling us to Himself in the cross of Christ. The development of our spiritual intelligence, as we make acquaintance with the conflict and service of advancing Christian life, finds its strength and stimulus increasingly in the epistles. But just as maturer manhood often reverts to, and reproduces in exalted form, many features of child-life and character, so the maturity of the spiritual man is a glorified childhood ; and in few respects more than in its love for and delight in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Language is wanting to express, or even suitably to indicate, their richness, fulness, and variety of meaning ; which seem, indeed, to set at defiance anything in the

nature of analysis. But the simple process hitherto followed will, I trust, explain something of the system and method according to which these treasures are stored up, without attempting to exhibit or catalogue them.

Among the manifold applications of which the language of Old Testament Scripture is capable, there seem to be three leading ones—first, the *historical*, tracing from the first Adam, through the seed of Abraham and the fortunes of the royal line of David, the preparation for and derivation of the last Adam, the man Christ Jesus; secondly, the *evangelical*, setting forth, in type and prediction, the way of salvation from sin through the blood of Christ, and the glorious privileges of the sinner redeemed and saved by that blood; thirdly, the *dispensational*, relating to the steady development of a divine plan in regard to this world and the human race—a plan never faltering or breaking down, though seeming to men at times to do so; not changing or beginning afresh with successive dispensations of God's grace, but pursuing its sublime course through them all, and weaving them into one. How far these various applications pertain to particular passages who shall determine? But that they do interlace and combine cannot be denied. The historical character of the Old Testament Scriptures is practically unquestionable. The evangelical application is authenticated by the New Testament, which largely draws it out. And with regard to the dispensational application, the direct evidence of many portions of Holy Writ, otherwise plainly unfulfilled, and the scarcely less conclusive testimony of other portions which, though capable of historical or evangelical explanation, are couched in language that manifestly strains and exceeds such explanation, compel us to recognise this further reference to a fulfilment which shall vindicate the faithfulness and consistency of God, and taking up all the

various threads of His purposes and dealings with man combine them in one glorious whole.

That the historic sequence has had much to do in shaping the form of the Old Testament Scriptures is evident; and it must have full weight in the study of that arrangement. But it manifestly fails to account for it; and in our endeavour to ascertain the principle on which the books of Scripture have been placed in the order in which they stand, we must not shut our eyes to other applications; and especially to those just mentioned, the evangelical and the dispensational.

#### VI. THE KING REVEALED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM.

ISA. xliv. 6, 7; Ps. cxlix. 2.

It will be easily recognized that the Old Testament Scriptures break up into at least three *distinct sections*, which may be conveniently expressed as the historical, the poetical, and the prophetic books. There will, however, be little hesitancy in recognizing a further division of the historical portion into two parts: the latter, from 1 Samuel to Esther, describing the development and fortunes of that Israelitish kingdom, whose origin has been traced in the preceding books, from Genesis to Ruth. We have thus before us four main divisions of the Old Testament.

Taking up as the first of these the eight books from Genesis to Ruth, we find in each a special and distinguishing subject or phase of thought, based mainly upon God's dealings with the literal Israel; but plainly evidencing a further reference to the experience of the spiritual Israel, believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is perhaps less apparent in *Genesis* than in the following books; but there also we shall not fail to recognize a distinct lesson. Tracing the course of man, with particular reference to the family

of Abraham, from Eden to Egypt, it shows us the nature of the first Adam proved over and over again, under varying circumstances and advantages, but failing always. So utter is the failure at one crisis, that the earth is swept by a deluge; and only one family of eight persons is spared for the sake of Noah, its head. The re-peopled earth is soon again a scene of disorder and wickedness; and though one faithful and God-honouring man is singled out as the depositary of divine revelation, and the instrument of divine blessing for mankind at large, even the family of Abraham is but little different in character from the rest of men; and when the story closes they are left in cruel bondage in Egypt, and almost as completely sunk as the Egyptians themselves in ignorance and idolatry. But while this sad lesson of the ruin and depravity of the nature of the first Adam is being drawn out, indications are not wanting of the divine remedy. Successive promises and covenant engagements set forth the Seed of the woman, the last Adam, as the restorer of that which was lost and ruined in the first; and over and over again, in each leading character of the narrative, we find striking and impressive types of the Lord Jesus. We may set down then as the subject of Genesis—From Eden to Egypt; trial and failure of the first man; types of the Second Man. Its keynote is the word “covenant,” with which also may be associated such expressions as “the God of Abraham,” “the God of Isaac,” “the God of Jacob.” The book of Genesis has been called “the seed-plot of the Bible,” illustrating the first great lesson the human soul has to learn in the way of salvation, the utter failure of man as he is by nature, be his circumstances or his efforts what they may.

In *Exodus* begins the story of redemption by blood. No reader who has any experimental knowledge of salvation can fail to recognize the beautiful lessons here presented

of a sinner's deliverance from the miserable bondage of sin through the blood of the Lamb, and of the blessed realization into which he is thus brought of divine love and care—rescued from pursuing foes by divine interposition, guided by infinite wisdom, nourished with the bread of heaven, refreshed with water from the rock, instructed by God Himself in regard to His will and worship. The keynote of Exodus is, "Brought out."

*Leviticus* carries on the representation, showing us the redeemed people in communion with their divine Redeemer, and receiving from His lips instruction, of the interest and value of which many Christians have little conception. An earnest, prayerful examination reveals to us in *Leviticus* such lessons of Jesus as might well occupy and repay the study of a lifetime. Christ in the offerings—His atoning work presented in different aspects, which meet all our varying needs and experiences; Christ in the priesthood—He set forth as our Great High Priest, we as priests in resemblance to and union with Him; Christ in the feasts—illustrating the various stages of a believer's development in the knowledge of Christ, and in the life and power of His Spirit. These are some of the principal lessons of this wonderful book. Its keynote is, "And Jehovah spake, saying."

In *Numbers* we find depicted the unbelief and unfaithfulness of the redeemed people—redeemed, yet wandering in the wilderness, and that because they were afraid to follow their divine leader into the land of promise. How truly this picture answers to the experience of many Christians, who, for lack of simple trust and obedience, miss the power and victory of the Christian life! The suggestive keynote of this sad story is, "The anger of Jehovah."

The book of *Deuteronomy* introduces a distinct phase. The redeemed people have again been conducted to the

borders of the land of promise; and now, instead of shrinking back for fear of the sons of Anak, they prepare to enter in and take possession. This they do by engaging afresh, with increased enlightenment and earnestness, in covenant with Jehovah. His claims and requirements are carefully examined and weighed, with the blessed effects of obedience on the one hand, and the evils that must result from disobedience on the other; and they deliberately and avowedly renew their covenant, and consecrate themselves unreservedly to the Lord. The redeemed in consecration is the subject of this book, which is a most expressive and impressive lesson of that full and intelligent surrender which must precede, and which cannot fail to produce in the believer a victorious experience. The keynote is, "This day." The book probably deals throughout with the events of a single day, occupied in this work of consideration and consecration, and ending with the solemn circumstances of the death of Moses. A subordinate keynote may be traced in the frequently-recurring expression, "Keep the commandments of Jehovah." Those who have experimental knowledge of the crisis of the spiritual life here imaged forth will readily perceive how well these two keynotes accord with it. It is indeed the bringing to present issue "*this day*" drawings and convictions and resolves long trifled with.

The blessed results of such consecration are indicated in the book of *Joshua*, which shows us the redeemed taking possession of the land. Its keynote is, "All." All that God commands they engage to do; all that He has promised He performs. All their enemies flee and fall before them; all the cities of the land, however strong and impregnable, are given into their hand when they assail them; every spot of ground on which their feet tread becomes their own; all the land of promise is subdued before them,

and parted among them, until in the latter part of the book we read, "Ye know in all your hearts, and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof." (Chap. xxiii. 14.)

Alas for human nature, even after it has proved the grace of God! This victorious experience is soon interrupted, and in the book of *Judges* we find the redeemed failing in the land. Its keynote is, "Delivered." From one end of the book to the other we find God's people alternately delivered into the power of their enemies by the well-deserved anger of Jehovah, and again delivered from that power by His gracious relenting and mercy. But it is a terrible condition of things which is portrayed at the close of the book, when "there was no king in Israel; but every man did that which was right in his own eyes."

What follows? Ah, how shall we express it! The book of *Ruth* is a beautiful little parable—its real historic character notwithstanding—which in this brief survey it would be vain to attempt to comment upon for those who have not learned its lesson, and needless for those who have. We shall have occasion to glance back at it again; but for the present it must suffice to point out its subject, "The Redeemed, the Bride," and its keynote, "I will," merging at the close into "I have."

One important feature of this series of books has been passed by, but must now be pointed out. They contain successive and varying revelations of the divine Redeemer Himself, which appear to constitute the distinguishing characteristic of the series—the King revealed in the establishment of the kingdom. In Genesis He calls Himself "El-Shaddai;" *i.e.* God Almighty, for All-sufficient.



In Exodus He says, "I am Jehovah : and I appeared unto Abraham, and unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of El-Shaddai, but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them." (Chap. vi. 2, 3.) In Leviticus He says to His redeemed and worshipping people, "I am Jehovah, your God." No fresh revelation marks the sad record of the book of Numbers. On one occasion only throughout the whole book He says again, "I am Jehovah, your God." In Deuteronomy, the book of consecration, the relation is made somewhat closer and more personal—"Jehovah, *thy* God." In Joshua, the book of faith's victories, we have, at the commencement of the book, a transient glimpse of the man with the drawn sword, the real captain of the host of Jehovah (chap. v. 14); but the kingly revelation is mainly embodied in the name "Joshua," the Old Testament form of Jesus. In striking succession to this, in the book of Judges, sad record of failure as it is, we find strange prominence given to "the Spirit of Jehovah." The book of Ruth contains no such revelation, unless we recognize it in the word "kinsman." But it would be easy to show how well this accords with the sweet parable of the book.

R. H. B.

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### AMEN.

A WORD that was often on the lips of saints of old, and that is constantly used by the Lord's people now, must have peculiar interest; and our interest in that word can only be intensified if we consider that, amid all the languages of earth, it still retains its form, and therefore is pronounced by all the redeemed of every tribe and tongue. It comes to us in the language in which God was pleased to give His earliest written revelation, and from the latest book of the sacred volume we learn that it abides as part

of the language of heaven, when all diversities of speech have given place to that one voice in which the new song shall ever ascend to Him who, by His grace, put it into the heart and mouth of His people. Our familiarity with words often prevents our considering their deep meaning, and creates the danger of their becoming *idle* words on our lips, and therefore it is good sometimes to be reminded of their force.

As we have said, the word *Amen* is a Hebrew word, and signifies *true, faithful, sure*; or, used as an adverb, *verily*, confirming what has been said, or what is about to be said. When used after praise or prayer, it means *so be it*, or *so let it be*. It was the response of all the people of Israel to the blessings and curses pronounced upon Gerizim and Ebal; and by the utterance of this one word they gave their assent to each statement, and took upon themselves a solemn obligation to observe it. (Deut. xxvii. 11-26; Joshua viii. 33, 34.) When the ark was removed by David to Jerusalem, and the Levites sang the psalm he had written for the joyful occasion, "all the people said, Amen, and praised the Lord." And in more feeble days, when Ezra opened the book of the law to read it to the people, and before he read "blessed the Lord, the great God," "all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground." (1 Chron. xvi. 36; Neh. viii. 5, 6.)

The deep meaning of the word may further be learnt from Isaiah lxxv. 16, where we find that in the coming day of Israel's blessedness they will, as the servants of God, glory in Him alone as "the God of truth," or, as it is literally, "the God of the Amen;" that is, the faithful God, who has fulfilled all His threatenings and promises, "who keepeth truth for ever." A German writer, in comment-

ing on this passage, draws the striking contrast between God and man. He remarks that God "in all He says, whether in disclosing the depths of His heart, or in giving forth threatenings and promises, can always add with the fullest right the *verily* ; while, in regard to everything that short-sighted man may speak, there constantly goes along with it a note of interrogation, and the more so, indeed, the more confidently he speaks."

It is the Septuagint rendering of this title that the Lord uses in John xvii. 3, when He speaks of God as the "*true* God ;" while the Hebrew word furnishes the description He gives of Himself in Rev. iii. 14, expressing the unchanging faithfulness in which He waits to meet the deep need of any who have the ear to hear, even amid the wavering, lukewarm condition of Laodicea; and, we may add, the certainty of the fulfilment of His solemn threat to the Church as a whole.

He to whom every attribute of Godhead belongs is "the Amen, the faithful and true Witness." As one beautifully says, "From all eternity He was the Amen of the Father's thought and will ; the response and the realization of the Father's purpose. And as the eternal Amen, the Word equal with the Father, Light of light, He became the Witness, true and faithful. For who but He could testify of things known only to the blessed Three? It was the Spirit of Christ which testified in the prophets; and finally the Lord came into the world to witness of the truth, and to seal the covenant by His death."

In 2 Cor. i. 20 we read, "For how many soever be the promises of God, in Him is the Yea: wherefore also through Him is the Amen, unto the glory of God through us" (R.V.); the meaning of which seems to be, that in Him all God's promises are ratified and fulfilled, He being

the living seal and confirmation of them all.\* And this leads us back to the use, by our Lord Himself, of this weighty word, which is translated "verily" in the gospels. It was often on His lips, but John alone records His double use of it. Prophets of old prefaced their words of truth with, "Thus saith the Lord;" but when the Truth Himself stood amongst men, though He always spoke words from the Father in the Father's name, He nevertheless could, and did, express the full authority of Godhead in that familiar phrase, "Verily, verily, I say unto you." He thus doubly affirms things which men reason about or oppose, and those deep truths which are specially unfolded in the gospel by John. When the Lord speaks of the future glory (John i. 58), of the absolute necessity of the new birth (iii. 3, 5), of the equal necessity of eating His flesh and drinking His blood (vi. 53), and of His own death in order to fruit-bearing (xii. 24), He prefates each statement, as well as many others, with the solemn, "Amen, amen, I say unto you."

Then as to the meaning of the word at the close of a sentence. When Paul adds "Amen" to the statement that God is blessed for ever, he gives the assent of a worshipping heart to the truth of the glory of that Creator whom man had so dishonoured (Rom. i. 25); and when he ascribes honour and glory to the same blessed God, as "the King eternal," whose mercy he had proved, his whole soul seals his utterance by the word "Amen." (1 Tim. i. 17.) From the frequency with which the word occurs in the epistles, and from the express statement of 1 Cor. xiv. 16, it is evident that it was much used by early Christians. In setting forth the folly of using an unknown tongue in

\* Some understand this verse to mean that "in Him is the Yea [which seals their truth]: wherefore also through Him the Amen [which acknowledges their fulfilment] is uttered to the praise of God by our voice."

an assembly of saints Paul argues, "Else, when thou shalt bless with the Spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say *Amen* at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" This verse should be well pondered by all who at any time in public lead the praises and prayers of the children of God. Let us remember that an unheard or an indistinct tongue is as unedifying as an unknown tongue. It should ever be the aim of those who take part in public meetings to be clear and distinct, and moreover so to praise or pray that all may, both with the heart and the understanding, say *Amen*. And, it may be remarked, that at the close of prayer and praise a hearty "Amen" from those who have been silently following the speaker would, if really in the Spirit, be like setting their seal to his utterances.

The occurrences of the word in the book of the Revelation are particularly noteworthy. In chap. v. 13\* we have the picture of a wondrous outburst of praise, first from the elders and living creatures, then from the angels, and then from the whole creation, after which "the four living creatures said, Amen." The chapter thus shows that the redeemed of the Lord are those who lead the worship, and when all voices have given expression to it they again seal it with their "Amen."

In chap. vii. we have another view. There we see ransomed, blood-washed saints "before the throne, and before the Lamb," ascribing all the glory and honour of their "salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb;" while "all the angels" who stand round about the throne set the seal of "Amen" to the worship they hear, before they give their sevenfold ascription of praise, which they confirm in like manner.

The next "Amen" we find is a very solemn one; for it

\* In chap. i. 18 "Amen" is not found in the most ancient authorities.

is nothing less than the assent of the four and twenty elders and four living creatures to the awful doom of Babylon the great. (xix. 4.) To fall into the hands of the living God is indeed a "fearful thing," and no saint of God can truly contemplate the outpouring of His wrath, even though they know deliverance from it, without entering somewhat into the experience of one of old, who said, "My flesh trembleth for fear of thee; and I am afraid of thy judgments." (Psalm cxix. 120.) The tendency of the present day is to take from the awful reality of those judgments by reasoning about them. The moment we allow this we are on dangerous ground. We shall not reason about the word at which we tremble; we shall rather own its authority, and bow to it. Let us seek to do this, while we remind ourselves that there is a day coming when we shall look at everything in perfect fellowship with the Holy One, and in that day we shall say "Amen" to all that He does, and shall follow that "Amen" with "Hallelujah."

But while we wait for that time there is an "Amen" that the Lord looks to hear from our hearts now, even that of chap. xxii. 20. The last word that has reached the ear of the Church from her risen Lord is the expression of His intense desire toward her, "Surely I come quickly," and the response of the beloved disciple should ever be her response, "Amen. Come, Lord Jesus."

Nothing can furnish a much truer test of our state than the question, Have we this "Amen" in our hearts? Do our souls go out in response to the desire of our Lord, that we may be with Him where He is, and to His assurance that this desire of His heart He will quickly fulfil by coming to receive us unto Himself? If there be any single thing that would stifle this "Amen," let us deal with it as an idol that usurps the place which Christ alone should have

in our affections. The secret of true desire on our part is knowledge of *Himself*, and assurance of His *love*. The deeper our acquaintance with Him, the more truly shall we "love His appearing." And as we thus respond to His word in a day of weakness and division, may the last prayer recorded in Holy Scripture, for grace for all saints, likewise receive the seal of our constant and hearty "Amen."

W. H. B.

## LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

### XV.

*On making the gospel without charge.*

1 COR. ix.

"It is important to notice that in this chapter, as well as in 2 Cor. xiii., the security of the believer in Christ is not in question, but the apostleship of Paul, and his conduct as an apostle. Deeply instructive the chapter is, as exhibiting the personal character of the apostle; but it loses its point when we give chief prominence to the question of the falling away of a believer. 'So run that ye may obtain' seems to come in by the way.

"From the outset of his career Paul was viewed with distrust by the disciples at Jerusalem (Acts ix. 26-28); and his not being one of the twelve chosen by the Lord when He was on earth afforded a ready handle to those, especially the Judaizers, who were ready to question his authority or to undermine it. 'Am I not an apostle? am I not free? have I not seen Jesus Christ our Lord?' 'Barnabas took him, and declared how he had seen the Lord in the way.' (Acts ix. 27.)

"Among other arguments used to depreciate his apostleship was his steady refusal to receive what was rightfully due to him; viz., maintenance from those to whom he preached the gospel. (vv. 3-12.) He therefore gives his reason for declining this maintenance: 'Nevertheless we have not used this power, but

suffer all things, *lest we should hinder the gospel of Christ.*' Again, in verse 15, 'But I have used none of these things . . . for it were better for me to die, than that any man should make my glorying void.' He was a *steward* (vv. 16, 17), and *must be faithful*. But his heart was in the work; he was a *willing servant*, and had a present 'reward.' And what was that reward? 'That I may make the gospel of Christ *without charge*, that I abuse not my power in the gospel.' But the word 'abuse' misleads; it is evidently, as we gather from the context, if I may so paraphrase it, 'That I do not insist on my rightful maintenance in the gospel.'\* Personally 'free' from all obligations to others, he had by grace willingly made himself the bond-slave of all. Is he not aiming to follow, as nearly as he could, his blessed Master? (See 2 Cor. viii. 9.)

"The gospel of the grace of God' meets men just where they are. That grace is manifold; it knows how to treat a Jew, or a Gentile, or a weak person; and the apostle by God's grace sought so to bear himself towards these various characters as not needlessly to wound their prejudices. This required habitual self-denial and constant exercise of self-command. (See Acts xxix. 16.) 'And this I do for the gospel's sake, that I might be partaker thereof.' If I judge rightly, the insertion of 'you' mars the sense. He desired to be a living exemplar of the gospel he preached, whether in its grace or glory, its joys or sorrows, its afflictions and self-renunciation. J. L. H."

## NOTES AND REPLIES.

*As the gospel is a message of peace, how are we to understand our Lord's words in Matt. x. 34: "I came not to send peace on earth, but a sword"?*

THE gospel of God is like the coals of fire mentioned in Rom. xii. Coming on the contrite soul it melts and blesses, but coming on the impenitent it hardens and stirs up all the enmity of the natural man. The gospel is a savour of life unto life, or of death unto death; and

\* The R. V. reads, "So as not to use to the full my right in the gospel."



therefore when Christ came into the world it was like the sending of a sword, which aroused the animosity of man, and led to his nailing the great Peacemaker to the cross ; and the world still manifests its enmity against those who "have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Compare these passages with Luke ii. 34, 35.

*Is "the Church of Christ" a scriptural expression ?*

The expression used in Scripture is, "the Church of God," God being regarded as the one who gave the Church to Christ, on which ground Christ says "my Church," and the Church is to be subject to Him. Hence we *may* most assuredly say the Church of Christ ; but, on the other hand, it is better to keep to the form of words used by the Spirit. The frequency with which the words "Church of Christ" are used among us seems to indicate that we are losing sight of the fact which God would keep uppermost in our minds, that the Church is His gift to His well-beloved Son. It is well to note the frequency of the word *given* in the Gospel of John, in which the Lord stands as the receiver and the Father as the giver. "The Churches of Christ," in allusion to local assemblies, occurs once (Rom. xvi. 16) ; but even when the individual assemblies are looked at it is far more common to find the words "the Churches of God." (See 1 Cor. i. 2 ; xi. 16 ; 1 Thess. ii. 14 ; 2 Thess. iii. 1-4.) But while we are careful to adhere to scriptural phraseology, we need to be on our guard against the tendency to make others offenders for using words not in themselves wrong or that involve nothing contrary to Scripture.

*What is the distinction between iniquity, transgression, and sin ?*

The distinction—which has often been pointed out—depends on the aspect in which they are viewed. *Iniquity* regards sin as a moral depravity, with which is connected the sense of guilt ; *transgression* regards sin as that which oversteps the divine law ; and the word rendered *sin* implies the missing of a mark, the coming short of a required standard. The three words frequently stand together, as in Ex. xxxiv. 7 ; Ps. xxxii. 1, 2 ; and taken collectively they give a solemn view of what God regards sin to be, including all that is morally corrupting, all that transgresses the divine will, and all that comes short of God's glory. These varied aspects of sin may well be pondered in days when the tendency is to regard it very lightly, or to make it consist in some open immorality only.

## THE SON OF GOD.

### BRIEF REMARKS ON THE THREEFOLD ASPECT OF THIS TITLE.

MUCH of the uncertainty and vagueness that prevail relative to the person of our Lord arises from not noticing the varied aspects in which He is spoken of as the Son of God. The result is that the full glory of His person is lost sight of, the truth of Scripture is weakened, and those not well instructed are led away by the artful devices of cunning men, who would rob us of the fulness of God's Christ as revealed to us in His word.

1. The Lord is the Son of God *as the "Only-begotten"*—"the Word" who "was with God, and was God." As such He was given from the bosom of God, according to John iii. 16. In this relation He is spoken of, in Heb. i. 3, as "*being* the effulgence of His glory, and the very image of His substance." (R. V.) We must carefully distinguish between what He *WAS* and what He *became*. In verse 4 we read, "*Having become* by so much better than the angels;" and in John i. 14, "The Word *became* flesh and dwelt among us." But the title "Only-begotten" tells us what He essentially *WAS*, as He says to the Jews, "Before Abraham *was* [*i.e.* was born; Gk. *became*] I AM"—the "I AM" to whom nothing is past and nothing future, but all is. He is Himself the eternal "I AM."

2. He is the Son of God *as touching His humanity*. In Luke i. 35 the angel's word to Mary is, "That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." This is a more lowly aspect of divinity, and in connection with this our Lord, referring to the word in

Ps. lxxxii. 6, "I have said, Ye are gods," interrogates the Jews, "Say ye of Him whom the Father hath sanctified and sent into the world, Thou blasphemest, because I said, I am the Son of God?" (John x. 36.) This was, perhaps, the ground of the homage of Nathanael, of the blind man, and probably of Peter's confession in Matt. xvi. The higher truth of His eternal Sonship was only fully brought to light when the Spirit of God came and revealed Christ to the Church. Peter's utterances in the early chapters of the Acts do not rise much above "thy holy Servant" (as the word "child" should be rendered), being the word used by the prophet Isaiah. The familiar words in John iii. 16 are not to be regarded as the utterance of Christ to Nicodemus, but as the teaching of the Holy Ghost through the apostle John, unfolding our Lord's words in verses 10-15, and giving them an eternal fulness which could not have been understood when he spoke to Nicodemus.

3. He is the Son of God *in resurrection*. This we see in Acts xiii. 33, 34, where the quotation from Ps. ii. is given—"Thou art my Son; this day have I begotten thee." It is thus He becomes the "*First-begotten*" (in contrast with what He is as the *Only-begotten*), or the "Firstborn among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) To this Col. i. 15-18 points; and in this relation apparently He becomes "the Firstborn of every creature." It is of the new creation He is the Firstborn, while in reference to the old creation He is the Creator.

Of these three aspects of the title "Son of God," the *blue*, the *scarlet*, and the *purple* in the tabernacle bear witness. May we be wise in these distinctions in truth, lest, being led away by the errors around us, we fall from our steadfastness in Christ; and lest the enemy by the misapplication of God's own word deceive us with "It is written," and lead us astray. When thus assailed, may we be enabled to reply as did our Lord, "It is written *again*." H. G.

## THE ORDER AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

### VII. THE KINGDOM IN ITS DEVELOPMENT.

"When thou art in tribulation, and all these things are come upon thee, even in the latter days, if thou turn to Jehovah thy God, and shalt be obedient unto His voice (for Jehovah thy God is a merciful God); He will not forsake thee, neither destroy thee, nor forget the covenant of thy fathers which He swore unto them."—DEUT. iv. 30, 31.

"And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance."

ROM. xi. 26, 29.

IN the eight books we have surveyed, while the manifestation of the Redeemer King has been the leading thought, we have seen also the origin and establishment of His kingdom. In the nine books which now follow, the kingdom itself is the most prominent feature, and we are shown its development and fortunes. Here again, while the historical basis is firmly adhered to, and has the principal part in giving shape to the record, indications are not wanting that the simple historical purpose is far from being the only one. This may be clearly recognized in the fact that the two books of Chronicles go over a second time the ground which has been traversed in the preceding books, and relate the very same incidents, though from a somewhat different point of view. Manifestly the various books each set forth a particular phase in the development and fortunes of the kingdom, and that assuredly not without reference to the developments of the kingdom of heaven in after ages.

To enter with any degree of detail into the special features of these books would inevitably commit us to

a far lengthier treatment of them than is needful or advisable for our present purpose. We shall therefore touch upon them very lightly, dealing almost entirely with the historical aspect, and leaving the rest to assert and vindicate itself through this.

The two books of Samuel set forth the kingdom specially in relation to the king. Not satisfied with their true King in His invisible but ever present and all-sufficient Deity, they demanded to have one in person before their own eyes and the eyes of surrounding nations. This desire was granted; and in 1 *Samuel* we have the kingdom under the king of man's choice—keynote, "Saul," which means sought; and in 2 *Samuel* the kingdom under the king after God's own heart—keynote, "David," which means beloved.

In the two books of Kings the polity and fortunes of the kingdom are more prominent. In 1 *Kings*, with the keynote, "The word of Jehovah," we are shown the kingdom successful only so long as the people and their divinely-appointed ruler were united in obedience to God. In 2 *Kings* the causes of failure, which are already seen at work in the latter part, and indeed more or less through nearly the whole of the preceding book, accomplish their mischievous effects; and we are shown the kingdom overcome, because disintegrated and divided by sin. The suggestive keynote is the word "against"—they against God, and against each other, and God and their enemies against them.

In the two books of Chronicles there is more special reference to the covenant relation of Israel, and to the temple and its worship as the expression thereof. 1 *Chronicles*, with its appropriate keynote "Son," shows the kingdom faithful to the covenant and prospering. In 2 *Chronicles* we see the kingdom unfaithful and

ruined. The keynote is found in the expression, "The eyes" (or sight) "of Jehovah." Ruined through persistent and incorrigible unfaithfulness to its Redeemer-King, and conformity to the world-kingdoms around, it is yet not renounced by Him whose "gifts and calling are without repentance."

This is clearly intimated in the three following books, which, referring back in inverse order to the three pairs of books just spoken of, show the divine purpose still maintained, and retaining its hold on the chosen race, even amid the degradation and servitude to which they had brought themselves. Will that purpose ever give place except to full and glorious accomplishment? In *Ezra* then, which, refers back to the two books of *Chronicles*, we have the ruined worship re-established; its keynote being "The house." In *Nehemiah* the aspect of the two books of *Kings* is reverted to, and we have the ruined city restored; its keynote is "The wall." The book of *Esther*, in which direct reference to Jehovah is so pointedly suppressed, shows all the more strikingly the ruined people in divine keeping—their unseen and dishonoured King fulfilling His part in defending and preserving them, however unfaithful they were to Him. There is in this a backward look to the two books of *Samuel*. The keynote of *Esther* we find in the word "Mordecai," a Persian name, signifying the little man, -

No fresh divine revelations mark this series of books. In place of them each book presents us with some distinctive agency of the unseen King, suitable to the subject of the book, and more or less peculiar to it. In 1 *Samuel* it is "Samuel, the seer;" in 2 *Samuel*, "Nathan, the prophet." In 1 *Kings* it is "Elijah, the Tishbite;" and in 2 *Kings*, "Elisha, the son of Shaphat." In 1 *Chronicles* "David, the servant of Jehovah, is prominent;" while in

2 Chronicles, amid circumstances of disastrous failure; resulting from unfaithfulness to high privileges, which forcibly recall to our minds the book of Judges, we find again, as in that book, frequent references to "the Spirit of Jehovah." Is not this coincidence painfully suggestive in its bearing upon the present dispensation of the Spirit? "Ezra, the priest," "Nehemiah, the Tirshatha"—a Persian word, probably equivalent to governor or viceroy—and "Esther, the queen," are respectively the distinctive agents of the king in the books which bear their names. A most interesting study might be made of these names and terms of office, which have meanings often very strikingly significant and appropriate; but we must not be drawn aside into this tempting field.

#### VIII. THE KING'S ELECT.

"Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning upon her beloved?"—SONG OF SOLOMON viii. 5.

"Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; so shall the king greatly desire thy beauty; for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him."

PSALM xlv. 10, 11.

THE five poetical books, to which our attention is next called, present characteristics very different from those which have preceded. Hitherto the books have shown a distinct historical character, and a clear historical sequence. Historical character is not altogether wanting in these books, but it is quite subordinate; and the historical order is entirely laid aside. The book of Job, for instance, is probably the earliest written of the books of the Bible, and the incidents on which it is based occurred most likely at a period between the time of Abraham and that of Moses. And in regard to the five books, as a series, it is plain that their position in Scripture has been regulated by something altogether apart from historic sequence.

They are distinctly experimental in character, and breathe the spirit of a much more personal and intimate relation between God and the human soul than those which have preceded them. Each will be found to take up, in striking manner, and in appropriate succession, some phase of experimental godliness; and at the same time to be marked by some expression, a name, or other form of address, suggesting a corresponding feature of an earnest religious character. The series I regard as portraying the King's elect, and furnishing, in progressive order, most important lessons bearing upon a life of experimental godliness.

Into the historical basis of the book of *Job*, which is abundantly sustained, though not made prominent, we will not enter. Its real design in Scripture is that of a spiritual drama, teaching and insisting upon the death of self; and as such it presents a study of the utmost interest and value. A man whom God deigns to call perfect, in whom, in his untried state, human character is seen at its best, is tested as to his absolute confidence in, and allegiance to, God, and fails under the test. On the details of his failure, and on the efforts of his three friends and Elihu to set him right, intensely interesting and instructive though these are, we may not dwell. At the close, God Himself speaks, humbling Job to silence by the declaration of His power, and subduing him to contrition by the vindication of His wisdom; and having thus brought this perfect man to abhor himself for his vileness, and repent in dust and ashes, He removes the salutary discipline, and uplifts him to a doubled prosperity. The characteristic feature of the elect which marks this most important book is found in the name "*Job*" itself, which means hated, or persecuted. Its keynote is "*Answered.*" The subject of the book may be defined as The Elect instructed in the death of self.



Side by side with this stands the book of *Psalms*, that sweet treasury of holy experience, the language of which was so often on the lips of the incarnate Saviour, and many portions of which are so strikingly applicable at the same time to His experience, and to the spiritual life of His people. No wonder that this should be the case, for, side by side with the death of the old man in the book of Job, this book delineates, and clothes in the language of prayer and praise, the varying experience of that "newness of life" which, however it may have been communicated to saints of old, is only realized by us through believing participation in the cross and resurrection of the Lord Jesus. The two keynotes which almost equally pervade it are the significant words "blessed" and "praise." The characteristic feature of the elect which it displays is indicated in the word "David," which means beloved.

The subject of the book of *Proverbs* is divine guidance for daily conduct. It seems to divide into two main portions: the first, a delineation of heavenly wisdom, in which the Christian believer can scarcely fail to recognize his Saviour; and the other, a series of practical and sententious counsels in regard to all the relations of life. Corresponding with, though by no means strictly apporportioned to these two sections, we find the two keynotes, "wisdom," and "wise." The feature of religious character and privilege which distinguishes this book is indicated by the frequent recurrence of the expression, "My son."

We must not be tempted to dwell upon the book of *Ecclesiastes*, in which, by a confession of vain endeavour, and miserable disappointment and failure, the elect are instructed, by one who had proved the emptiness of earthly good. In the word "wise," implied in the writer's description of himself as "the preacher," made use of in various connections throughout the book, and expressly

applied to himself at the close, we find its characteristic feature of the elect. Two keynotes equally pervade it. One will immediately be recognized in the word "vanity." The other is the expression, "under the sun," not perhaps so readily noticed, but which, when attention is called to it, will quickly vindicate itself as a keynote of the book, in striking accord with the other more prominent one. It is while men seek satisfaction "under the sun" that they find "all is vanity."

The *Song of Solomon* draws the deep, full gladness which tunes its lyre and inspires its strains, from above the sun. Here, as with the kindred book of Ruth, language fails me, and I feel scarcely able to do more than commend the book to the devout and adoring study of the believing soul. One thing I will briefly point out. The first division of the Old Testament books, as here marked off, after the consecration of the book of Deuteronomy, leading on to the victorious experience of the book of Joshua, but soon breaking down in the shameful failures of the book of Judges, abruptly introduces as its close a bridal picture in the book of Ruth, whose wondrous suggestions of loving and gracious purpose we have not dared, within our narrow limits, to enter upon.

The scope of the second division restricts it more to the checks which human frailty and unfaithfulness placed in the way of the accomplishment of Jehovah's counsels. Yet even that series winds up with indications in the last three books of the triumphing of Jehovah's wisdom and love over and through all. And even here the last of the series brings in, though more deeply veiled, the same bridal thought. It is through the uplifting of the captive and exiled maiden, Esther (the name is not without appropriate significance), to be a royal bride that the covenant people are rescued, and the fortunes of the kingdom saved when

at the point of utter and final extinction. And now again, at the close of the third section, more plainly and suggestively than ever, the same idea recurs. It is in conjugal union with the King that the elect bride, conscious of unworthiness, astonished at, and scarcely able at once to rise to the distinction conferred upon her, finds that full and lasting satisfaction to which the preceding books of the series have so instructively led up. We cannot fail to associate with these the closing book of all, and the glory which it reveals in connection with the manifestation of "the Bride, the Lamb's wife." But we must forbear. The subject of this wonderful song is the joy of union with the King. Its keynote is "love"—"beloved." The characteristic feature of the elect it portrays is indicated in the frequent occurrence of the expression, "My spouse."

#### IX. THE COMING OF THE KING.

ISA. lxiii. 1-4; PS. xxiv. 7-10.

The subject of the prophets I have no hesitation in expressing as the coming of the King. It is little I dare attempt in the way of analysis or elucidation of these marvellous foreshowings of God's counsel and purpose; but the simple method we have followed, whether it yield much or little in the way of exposition, does not fail even here to unfold method and arrangement.

That no chronological or historical order obtains in the arrangement of the prophetic books is easily perceived; indeed to a superficial study they seem to be thrown together, for the most part, in simple confusion. But this is far from being the case, and a recognition of the subjects, and scope of the successive books, unveils to us, in this as in other parts of Scripture, an intelligible plan.

We have indicated three leading applications of which the Old Testament Scriptures are capable. Nowhere do we

find this pregnancy of meaning and application more certainly than in the writings of the prophets. Their prophecies generally take occasion from, and have immediate and important reference to, events near at hand to their own times. But they often pass on undisguisedly to times and events much further remote; and even when they speak with immediate reference to the time then present, their language is often so guided that the circumstances of that time cannot by any straining be made to satisfy it; and it is plain that the mind of the prophet was, whether consciously or unconsciously, led on by the Holy Spirit to associate these events with others corresponding to them in after times. Many of these prophecies receive a much more adequate fulfilment when applied to gospel events and privileges. Yet there are many which cannot, even by the most reckless system of spiritualizing, be thus accounted for, and many others which, while admitting and justifying such evangelical application, are still manifestly unexhausted. Close study of the prophetic Scriptures has produced on my mind the conviction that, while some portions of them unquestionably await what I have called the dispensational fulfilment, and answer to nothing besides, there are few, if any, which do not look forward to this for their ultimate accomplishment and justification.

Treating the little threnody called the Lamentations of Jeremiah as an appendix to the book of Jeremiah—the prophetic books are sixteen in number—and we shall find that they break into four sections, each consisting of four.

The four major prophets constitute the first section. We find that each of them has his peculiar and distinctive title or description of the King, whose coming they all predict; and this is an important point of resemblance between them and the books comprised in the first division of the Old Testament Scriptures. In Isaiah we find Him

sometimes described as "the King," but more generally as "the holy" (or mighty) "One of Israel." In *Jeremiah* He is occasionally called "the King;" but the prevailing description is "Jehovah of hosts." In *Lamentations* (chap. ii. 5) we read, "The Lord" (Adonai) "was as an enemy;" and throughout the book we find this thought over and over again more or less expressly repeated. In *Ezekiel* the distinguishing name is "Adonai Jehovah," rendered Lord God. In *Daniel* He is described as the "Ancient of days," and yet more frequently as the "God of heaven." A careful investigation of this group of prophets leads me to the conclusion that their special design is, as these descriptions indicate, to set forth the coming King in regard to the principal aspects and relations in which He will be manifested.

In *Isaiah* He is distinctively the King who comes to subdue rebellion, and establish His authority. The keynote of the book is "glory."

In *Jeremiah* He is Jehovah of hosts (or armies), who comes to punish sin and teach righteousness. The keynote of this book is "evil." In *Lamentations* He is the Lord (or Ruler) as an enemy. Zion's consequent affliction and repentance are here portrayed, and the keynote is "Zion," or less frequently "Jerusalem."

*Ezekiel* deals with Israel as God's covenant people, unfaithful to their covenant obligations, whom Jehovah, their Ruler, therefore chastises, and suffers the heathen to chastise, but does not cast off, ultimately destroying their cruel and blasphemous foes, and reclaiming and exalting them. His presentation of the coming King is as Adonai Jehovah, who comes to chastise for unfaithfulness, and renew the covenant. The keynote is found in the term here so often applied to Ezekiel, and in the New Testament assumed by the Lord Jesus, "Son of Adam."

In *Daniel* the coming King is set forth as the God of heaven, who comes to cast down earthly thrones, and set up the kingdom of heaven. The keynote of this book is "kingdom." Not only is there a striking relation between this series of prophetic books and the first division of the Old Testament Scriptures, as already indicated, but it is very interesting to compare them individually in their order with the four gospels.

The four prophets next in order will be found to mark out objects to which the King's coming will have special reference. In *Hosea* we have Israel addressed under the image of an unfaithful wife, whom her husband will afflict in order to reclaim her. The keynote is "return," and the particular description given of the King is expressed in chap. ii. 16, "Ishi;" *i.e.* my husband. Not Israel alone, but the Church also is set forth in Scripture under this conjugal relation; notably in Ephes. v. 25-33. It will scarcely be disputed that the Church of Christ manifests a degree of unfaithfulness to obligation which answers only too well to the language of Hosea. How far his predictions foreshadow the means by which the Church will be purified and rehabilitated, and to what extent they await a final accomplishment in regard to the literal Israel, it is not my purpose to discuss.

So also in regard to the prophet *Joel*. The keynote of his prophecies is "The land;" and the burden of them is the coming of the King—who is described as "Jehovah, your God"—to the land, to plague, and afterwards to restore it. A partial fulfilment the prophecies of Joel have unquestionably received already; historical, in regard to the woes denounced; evangelical, in regard to the blessings foretold. But the inadequacy of such fulfilment to vindicate the language of the prophet, and the wisdom and faithfulness of Him whose mouthpiece the prophet was, is

very plain; nor do I doubt that a very distinct accomplishment of them is yet to be witnessed.

Similar remarks apply to the prophecies of *Amos*, whose keynote is the house of Israel; and who, describing the coming King as "Adonai Jehovah, God of Hosts," sets Him forth as coming to the sinful people, to punish, but again uplift them.

The short prophecy of *Obadiah* has reference to "Esau" (or Edom), which word is its keynote. Jehovah speaks to this cruel brother of His Israel, rebuking his pride and malice, and declaring His purpose to cut him off for ever. It is noteworthy that Edom, or Teman, is by several of the prophets strikingly associated with the great day of the Lord. I would specially mention and advise reference to Isaiah xxxiv. and lxiii.; Ezekiel xxxv. (see verse 14); and Habakkuk iii. (See v. 3.) Many Scriptural indications point to the conclusion that the great anti-Christian crisis, with which the appearance of the Lord is constantly connected in Scripture, will culminate in that part of Arabia, just to the south of Palestine, which was anciently the land of Edom. There is another aspect of this matter which may be just glanced at. Edom, and Teman, which is another name for the same country, are significantly associated in Scripture with the idea of wisdom; as, for instance, in Obadiah 8 and in Jer. xlix. 7. Christianity and scientific culture have borne a relation to each other not unlike that of Israel and Edom. The fearful part that unchristianized, and at length anti-Christian science, with its appliances for violence and bloodshed, will play in the crisis of the world's history of which we have spoken, may possibly be shadowed forth in the career of Edom. If so, science, as *emulous of, antagonistic to, or even proudly independent of, religious faith and worship*, will cease to exist; "and saviours shall come up on mount Zion to

judge the mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be Jehovah's." (Obad. 21.)

The four succeeding prophets I regard as pointing to instruments which the King will make special use of at His coming. Again I would say with emphasis that the reference of these prophecies to events which have already transpired is unquestionable, and should have full recognition. But we ought not to shut our eyes to the very marked indications which they present of a further and yet unrealized application. These indications are strongest of all perhaps in regard to the fourth group of prophets, to which we shall come presently; but they are very strong in this group, particularly in the case of the Book of Habakkuk.

In regard to the Book of *Jonah*, the first of this group, I will simply note that we have here the type of an unfaithful ministry, which "Jehovah Elohim" chastens, but still, in spite of its unworthiness, continues to employ. The keynote is "Arise."

In *Micah* the keynote is "The remnant of Jacob." "Jehovah of Hosts" declares His purpose to use the remnant of His covenant people—brought low and almost destroyed through their sins, but still preserved by His grace and faithfulness—as a scourge to the nations of the earth, but ultimately as a blessing. In regard to their employment as a scourge, read from chap. iv. 11 to chap. v. 15; and chap. vii. 14–20. As to the subsequent blessing of the world in and through them, read especially chap. iv. 1–4; and also compare the last verse of Micah with Gen. xxii. 15–18, and xxviii. 13–15.

*Nahum's* prophecy is the "burden of Nineveh." Speaking in the name of "Jehovah of Hosts," he predicts the overthrow and destruction of that once powerful imperial city. His prophecy has long ago been signally fulfilled in its direct application; but our attention is held to it by



considerations which indicate in it a further dispensational purpose. The extreme reprobation and vengeance which are expressed in the Old Testament towards the neighbouring and closely-related cities, Nineveh and Babylon, beyond all the enemies and oppressors of God's Israel, arrest our attention; but they might be lightly regarded did we not find Babylon figuring so prominently in the New Testament, long after the almost complete destruction of both these cities, as the analogue and embodiment of enmity and violence toward the people of God. There can be no question that in the Book of Revelation Babylon is made the type of that anti-Christian power, the last and most terrible oppressor of the people of God—and also of the literal Israel—which the coming King will make use of for purposes of chastisement and discipline, and then destroy. And if we compare the prophecy of Nahum in regard to the destruction of Nineveh with Rev. xviii., which describes the ultimate destruction of anti-Christian Babylon, and mark the similarity between them, especially in the use of the expression "No more," which we may recognize as the keynote of Nahum (see chap. i. 9, 12, 14, 15; ii. 13; iii. 17, 19), we shall see reason to conclude that, among the instruments which the King will use at His coming, Nineveh is here placed as typifying the anti-Christian power of the last days.

The prophecy of *Habakkuk*, whatever may have been its direct historical purpose, sets forth, I am convinced, the personal antichrist, the man of sin, as he is called in 2 Thessalonians ii. 3. It seems to me that almost any one who will carefully examine the book may recognize this. In the first chapter the Chaldean forces are portrayed as the agents of overwhelming violence and oppression under a leader who is described as "The wicked (one);" for the word "wicked" in chaps. i. 4, 13, iii. 13 is in the singular,

and the book abounds in indications that a particular and remarkable individual is prominently referred to. This is especially evident in chap. ii., where this wicked one is more fully described and denounced—the solemn refrain, “Woe to him!” marking over and over again the emphasis and importance of the denunciation. Our attention is directed by verse 4 of this chapter to Hebrews x. 38, where that verse is quoted, but with a modification that is exceedingly striking. Compare these two verses together, and say if Hab. ii. 4, in the connection in which it stands, and with the idea of apostacy which is associated with it in Heb. x. 38, does not accord most suggestively with 2 Thess. ii. 3, 4. This suggestion receives a degree of confirmation which scarcely falls short of certainty when we read on in 2 Thess. ii. to verse 8, and then compare with it Hab. iii. (note especially verses 4, 5), in which the overthrow and destruction of “the wicked (one)” are so strikingly described. The double keynote of Habakkuk is “The wicked (one),” “Woe to him!”

We need not linger long over the remaining group, in which the issues of the King’s coming are foretold, with immediate reference to events contemporaneous with the prophets, but looking through and passing on from these events to others, of which they were the antitypes.

The subject of *Zephaniah* is “the great tribulation.” Suddenly, as in the very height of it, he marks the appearing of the King. (See chap. iii. 14–20.) The description which he gives of Him is “the King of Israel, Jehovah.” The keynote is, “A day of wrath.”

*Haggai*, who prophesied in connection with the return from the Babylonian captivity, speaks of the rebuilding of the temple, and foretells the appearance in it of “the desire of all nations.” The manifest direct application of the prophecy is to the restoration of the temple by Zerub-

babel, in which he participated. From the closing chapters of Ezekiel, however, we learn that the temple at Jerusalem is again to be rebuilt, in greater glory than ever, in connection with the future restoration of Israel. In view of this we cannot limit the words of the prophet to an application in the past, in which they found at best only a scanty fulfilment, but regard them as pointing forward to that more glorious and permanent re-establishment which shall be among the issues of the future coming of the King. The keynote of Haggai is "Jehovah's house."

*Zechariah's* keynote is "Jerusalem." He too prophesied in connection with the return of the Jews from their captivity in Babylon, and the connection of his predictions with the rebuilding of Jerusalem under Nehemiah cannot be overlooked; but they absolutely refuse to be limited to the events of that time, or of any age which the world has yet seen. The purposes of God here so positively and unequivocally expressed in regard to Jerusalem have either failed, or they remain to be fulfilled; and that in circumstances of such glory to the city itself, and of blessing to the earth through it, as have never yet been realized. His subject is "The city rebuilt," "The King, Jehovah of Hosts," in the midst of it. The position which the prophecies of Malachi hold in this connection seems to be explained, as in the case of Haggai, by comparison with the closing chapters of Ezekiel. There we read plainly of the reinstatement in millennial times of the Levitical worship; no longer, however, as a shadow of good things to come, but as an exposition and glad celebration of facts accomplished and privileges enjoyed.

The keynote of *Malachi* is "The priests." He foretells the renewal of the national covenant with Israel by "the messenger of the covenant." His description of the King is again "Jehovah of Hosts."

R. H. B.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF

## THE FOOLISH WOMAN.

She flattereth with her words. (Prov. ii. 16; v. 3.)

Is a tattler, a busybody. (1 Tim. v. 3.)

A brawler, clamorous, contentious. (Prov. xxi. 9; ix. 13; xxvii. 15.)

Loud and stubborn. (Prov. vii. 11.)

Her feet abide not in her house; she wanders from house to house. (Prov. vii. 11; 1 Tim. v. 13.)

Of impudent face. (Prov. vii. 13.)

Garment of divers colours. (Rev. xxviii. 16; Prov. vii. 10.)

Tinkling ornaments, chains, bracelets, rings, &c. (Isa. iii. 18, 19, 21; Jer. iv. 30.)

Haughty, proud. (Isa. iii. 16; Ezek. xvi. 49.)

Wanton eyes, without discretion. (Is. iii. 16; Pr. xi. 22; 1 Tim. v. 11.)

Idle. (1 Tim. v. 13; Ezek. xvi. 40.)

Careless. (Isa. xxxii. 9, 10.)

Simple, and knoweth nothing. (Prov. ix. 13.)

Imperious. (Ezek. xvi. 30.)

Heart is snares and nets, treacherous. (Eccles. vii. 26; Jer. iii. 7.)

Odious. (Prov. xxx. 23.)

Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell. (Prov. v. 5.)

Plucketh her house down with her hands. (Prov. xiv. 1.)

## THE WISE WOMAN.

She openeth her mouth with wisdom. (Prov. xxxi. 26; Judges iv. 9; 2 Kings xxii. 15-20.)

Is grave, not a slanderer. (1 Tim. iii. 11.)

Her speech is comely. (Cant. iv. 3.)

Meek and quiet. (1 Peter iii. 4.)

Is a keeper at home. (Titus ii. 5.)

Shame-faced. (1 Tim. ii. 9.)

In modest apparel. (1 Tim. ii. 9.)

Not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array. (1 Tim. ii. 9.)

Of chaste behaviour, coupled with fear. (1 Peter iii. 2.)

Virtuous, discreet. (Prov. xii. 4; xxxi. 10; Titus ii. 5.)

Looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. (Prov. xxxi. 27; Acts ix. 39; 1 Tim. v. 10.)

Careful, prudent. (2 Kings iv. 13; Prov. xix. 14; Rom. xvi. 2, 6.)

Wise-hearted, of good understanding. (Exodus xxxv. 25; 1 Sam. xxv. 3; Titus ii. 4, margin.)

Good, obedient, subject. (Titus ii. 5; Eph. v. 24, 33; 1 Tim. ii. 11.)

The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her. (Prov. xxxi. 11.)

Beloved. (Cant. iv. 10.)

Feareth the Lord; her children walk in the truth. (Prov. xxxi. 30; xiv. 27; 2 John 4.)

Buildeth her house. (Prov. xiv. 1.)

E. C.

## HOW TO PRAY.

## BRIEF REMARKS ON MATTHEW VI. 9-13.

It was not the intention of our blessed Lord in giving the form of prayer in Matt. vi. to limit us to it, but to give us true thoughts as to prayer, His words being, "After this manner pray ye."

"Our Father which art in heaven." Observe how we are linked with all the family of God. It is in fellowship with the whole household of faith that we are to draw near to "*our* Father." There is but "one God and Father of all" (Eph. iv. 6), and we are to make supplication "*for all saints.*" (Eph. vi. 18.) So this petition of our Lord teaches us to embrace all the family of God, all that are born of God.

"Who art in heaven." "God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few." (Eccles. v. 2.) What fulness, and yet what brevity, are manifest in these words of our Lord!

"Hallowed be thy name." There is no petition which should be so much on our hearts as this; that is, to seek the hallowing of the name of God in us as individuals, as families, and as assemblies of God. God complained of His people Israel that they had polluted His name by their disobedience. The judgment of God came down upon the sons of Aaron for offering strange fire before the Lord, and He said, "I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified." (Lev. x. 3.) "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints." (Ps. lxxxix. 7.) In the epistle written to the Hebrews, who were then passing through tribulation, the great result to be accomplished was *reverence* of God—"Let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence

and godly fear." (Heb. xii. 28.) The Lord Jesus, who ever revered His Father, would make the first burden of our hearts, in drawing nigh to God, the hallowing of His holy name. God must be first in everything.

"Thy kingdom come"—that kingdom which is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Rom. xiv. 17.) *Now* the kingdom of God is within us, so in that sense it is a present thing, and we may seek to know more of it in our own hearts; but it will be manifested when the Lord comes to reign, and all the kingdoms of the earth shall worship before our God.

"Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." That blessed Son of the Father could say, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me" (John iv. 34), and He proved it to be "that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." (Rom. xii. 2.) Therefore He put this petition into the mouths of His disciples. May He fulfil in us all the good pleasure of His goodness. If this petition is granted unto us, how full will be our blessing, and His glory will also be advanced.

"Give us this day our daily bread." "Man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the Lord doth man live." (Deut. viii. 3.) When we say, "Give *us* this day our daily bread," let us remember the whole family of God as regards this spiritual food.

"Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors." In order to receive parental forgiveness we must first forgive others; and if we do not, we have not, as *children*, fellowship with our Father, and shall fail to realize our own forgiveness.

"Lead us not into temptation." Who that knows his weakness will not bear this petition in mind?

"But deliver us from evil." God has provided a Deliverer in His own Son. J. S.

## LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

## XVI.

*On Paul's participation with the gospel.*

1 COR. ix. 23.

"Could Paul preach Christ's cross for us without our cross for Him? Could he preach the need of denying self, and act as if to please himself? Could he exhort others, that 'we *must* through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God,' and show that it was all easy with himself? No. He would train himself for the incorruptible crown, with the hardihood with which the racer, wrestler, or pugilist strives for the crown that is corruptible. His eye was on 'the crown of glory.' (See 1 Peter v. 4.) The gospel of the grace, and the gospel of the glory, were so vividly before his soul, that he showed the sincerity of his own faith in not allowing *even present lawful things* to interfere with his commendation of that gospel to others. Sad indeed, would it have been for him to preach its grand realities without showing in his own person that they were everything to him. To preach Christ and not to live Christ, to preach the glory of the kingdom and show in our daily life as much keenness about the world as others do, would be a contradiction to the gospel itself, and deservedly would the word 'castaway,' 'reprobate,' apply to us, as *without proof* either of the sincerity of our faith, or of the reality of the things which we profess to believe. How dear the gospel of the grace of God was to the apostle may be seen from Acts xx. 24."

## XVII.

*On the word "castaway."*

1 COR. ix. 27.

"The word *ἀδοκίμος*, here rendered 'castaway,' is found also in 2 Cor. xiii. 5-7, where in each verse it is rendered 'reprobate,' and it has its contrast in *δοκιμή* (v. 3), rendered 'proof,' and

δοκιμοι (v. 7), rendered 'approved;' and this in sharp contrast with αδοκιμοι in the same verse and in the preceding one.

"The apostle's authority as an apostle in this passage, as well as in 1 Cor. ix., is the point in question. 'Since,' says the apostle, 'ye seek a *proof* (δοκιμη) of Christ speaking in me . . . examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith: *prove* (δοκιμασετε) your own selves. Know ye not your own selves that Jesus Christ is in you.' 'Your own selves' is emphatic in both these clauses. If they acknowledged themselves to be Christians, or that Jesus Christ was in them, they *themselves* furnished the best *proof* of Christ speaking in him—'unless, indeed, they were without that proof' (αδοκιμοι) *i.e.* 'reprobates,' 'castaways.' 'But,' the apostle proceeds, 'I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates;' *i.e.* without proof of apostolic authority (αδοκιμοι); and then, as though he had written sharply, he still plays on the word αδοκιμοι: 'Now I pray to God that ye do no evil: not that we should appear *approved* (δοκιμοι), but that ye should do that which is honest, though we be as reprobates' (αδοκιμοι). What grace in the apostle! He would rather let his own apostleship be questioned, if they were brought into a right state, than prove it by the use of 'sharpness,' according to the power which the Lord had given him for edification, and not to destruction.

"I believe the word αδοκιμος to mean 'rejected, as useless, after trial has been made.' 'They are brass and iron; they are all corrupters. The bellows are burned, the lead is consumed of the fire; the founder melteth in vain: for the wicked are not plucked away. *Reprobate* silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.' (Jer. vi. 30.) J. L. H."

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## NOTES AND REPLIES.

*What is the meaning of "communicate" in Gal. vi. 6?*

THE Greek word here used is the same as that in Rom. xii. 13, "*distributing to the necessities of saints;*" and a word from the same root is employed in 1 Tim. vi. 18, where the apostle enjoins upon those who are rich to be "*willing to communicate.*" The meaning appears



to be simply this, that those who receive instruction in divine truth should be careful to communicate of their good things (the things of this life) to him who teaches them, in return for his communication to them of the word of God. The verse should begin with the word "But," which gives it a connection with the previous verses, and evidently with verse 2, "Bear ye one another's burdens." The word "good" also occurs in v. 10, the sphere of "doing good" being there world-wide, while those in the narrower circle of "the household of faith" have especially to be considered. In Rom. xv. 26, where the apostle refers to a "contribution" (literally, a *communication*) made by the Gentile believers for the poor saints in Jerusalem, he says, "If the Gentiles *were made communicants*" (we render it thus to show the unity of the Greek words) "of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things." Very similar words are used by Paul with reference to his own labours among the Corinthians: "If we have sown unto spiritual things, is it a great thing if we shall reap your carnal things?" (1 Cor. ix. 11.) The comparison between "spiritual things" and "carnal things" in both of these passages has apparently its counterpart in the verse in Gal. vi., and the reasoning is also similar.

*Is the prayer in Matt. vi. 9-13 given as a form to be used by us?*

The expression with which it is introduced, "After this manner pray ye," indicates that it is given as a *model* for prayer as to order, character, and subject, rather than as a form. In *order*, it commences with the things of God, and then takes up our necessities, temporal and spiritual. In *character*, it is short, direct, and to the point. (Compare Eccles. v. 2.) Its *subjects* are, first, God's name, kingdom, and will, and these should ever have the chief place in our prayers. It then sums up all our temporal necessities in one petition, "Give us this day our daily bread," and concludes with three petitions having reference to our sins, our temptations, and our deliverance from our personal enemy, the wicked one. But prayer embraces the whole of the soul's communion with God, to whom we draw nigh as our Father. Thus He who taught His disciples this short prayer spent all night in prayer to God, and he who learns the power of short prayers will find the joy of lengthened communion. The reason given by our Lord for fewness of words is that the Father knoweth what things we need before we ask Him. The profane familiarity with which this prayer is often used by those who know not God, has probably led to a lack of due regard for it by those who have learned that worship is to be not in form, but in spirit and in truth.

## THE JOY OF THE ADVENT

### OUR STRENGTH FOR SUFFERING AND FOR SERVICE.

WE are all familiar with the precious words, "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. viii. 10); but all may not understand what the "day" was of which we read, "This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not, nor weep." (v. 9.) From verse 2 we find it was the first day of the seventh month—the day of the feast of "blowing of trumpets" (Lev. xxiii. 24), or the feast of the shout of triumph, or of "the joyful sound." (Ps. lxxxix. 15, where the same word is used in Hebrew.) This and the following feast of the seventh month have both direct reference to the second Advent, as the passover and the Pentecost have to the first Advent.

When we consider the impoverished, dependent, and humiliated condition of Israel, as returned to their land under Gentile rule, it is beautiful to notice how the glory-feasts of trumpets and tabernacles occupy their thoughts. These feasts have a voice to us in these days. The feast of trumpets is to us the token of our gathering together unto our Lord in the air, and the feast of tabernacles speaks to us of the marriage supper of the Lamb. When all is most depressed, and when everything reminds us of ruin and decay, then it is that the joys of the future are so needed to rekindle drooping faith, and to awaken the smouldering embers of a waning hope. It is for this that these Scriptures are left on record, that, like Nehemiah and Ezra, we may not allow the overwhelming disasters and sorrows of the present to shut out from our view the light of "that blessed hope, and the appearing of the

glory of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ." It was this hope that was pressed by the apostle upon the consideration of Timothy and Titus, when he warned them of the rising of those evil days which were so soon to envelope as with a cloud of darkness the whole Church of God.

Our joy is not to be found in the building of a portion of the wall here, or in setting up a defence there; our joy can only be found in the eternal purpose of our God, who will accomplish His plans in His own time and in His own way, however contrary everything may appear to us. Probably it is a part of God's purpose to carry on His work against wind and tide alike—the wind of this world's opposition without, and the tide of spiritual declension in the circle within which He is working. It is solemnly true that, to whatever dispensation we may direct our attention, we see that each one in succession has failed; yet out of the failure has God the more wonderfully shown the success of His counsels, whereby His wisdom and man's folly, His righteousness and man's sinfulness, have been more distinctly made manifest.

Adam's dispensation ended in the flood, Noah's in the confusion at Babel, and Abraham's in the bondage of Egypt. The Mosaic dispensation resulted in the Babylonish captivity, and Israel's restoration ended in the crucifixion and ascension of Christ to heaven, and in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This dispensation of the Church will also have its end in the apostacy of Christendom, the taking up of the Church, and the overthrow of antichrist at Armageddon, out of all which is to come the establishment of God's kingdom in the Church in heaven, and on earth in delivered Israel. To this the second Advent is the essential factor; all waits for that; and till then it is necessary to stir up hope and to

encourage faith, knowing assuredly that God will not fail; and against all the appearances of the present, hope's anchor has to go within the veil, and there rest on the immutability of God's covenant promise.

It is thus amidst the sorrows and disappointments of the present that faith looks forward to the time of the joy of the Lord, when Zeph. iii. 17 will find a heavenly and an earthly fulfilment—"He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing." Truly this is the joy of the Lord, and this is the joy of His people who are waiting for the shout of the Son of God, for the voice of the archangel, and for the trump of God.

Did we enter into this more we should oftener "eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared;" not only rejoicing in our sure and certain hope, but finding in it an earnest even now of that "feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined," of which the prophet Isaiah speaks. We should then echo to the sorrowful and needy our joyful "*Maranatha*" as a panacea for all ills and a sunshine in all clouds.

What tabernacle feasts in anticipation we might thus have, sitting by faith under the booths (Succoth) of our pilgrimage, and rejoicing with "very great gladness!"

There needs to be more of this gladness of hope; for all around is dark—the enemy triumphs, and we are servants where we are destined to be lords. The great truth to be universally applied is this, that no darkness of surrounding circumstances, and no perplexities within or without, should be allowed to dim in the soul the joy in the eternal purposes of God, of which the feasts are to us a pledge and a guarantee. We are often very much at fault here;

for we allow the sense of failure and sin so to mar our joy in God and our hope in Him that, like Israel, we mourn and weep in despair when we hear the words of the law, and see how sadly apostacy has marred everything. We forget that our almighty resource is in God, the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords, who only hath immortality, and who will in His own time fulfil His word, and bring every promise to pass, when "grace shall reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord."

"We thank Thee for the hope,  
So glad, and sure, and clear;  
It holds the drooping spirit up  
Till the long dawn appear:  
Fair hope! with what a sunshine does it cheer  
Our roughest path on earth, our dreariest desert here!"

H. G.

## THE ORDER AND ARRANGEMENT OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

### X. THE CHERUBIC SYMBOL APPLIED TO THE OLD TESTAMENT.

"Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth."

PSALM lxxx. 1.

"There I will meet with thee, and I will commune with thee from above the mercy-seat, from between the two cherubims which are upon the ark of the testimony."—EXODUS. xxv. 22.

WE are now prepared to test afresh the key with which our study of the New Testament has furnished us, by applying it to the Old Testament Scriptures. If there is any such agreement between the order of these books and the forms of the cherubic symbol as was found in the New Testament, it will give most important confirmation to the principles of arrangement here set forth. And such agreement, I think, we may clearly discern.

Our investigation of the Old Testament Scriptures has distinguished in them four main divisions, as follows :

- I. The King revealed in the establishment of the Kingdom.
- II. The Kingdom in its development.
- III. The King's Elect.
- IV. The Coming of the King.

Are these merely notions arbitrarily and forcibly attached to the various series of books in question ? Or do they fairly accord with and express important and distinctive characteristics of them ? Because if they do, and we proceed to place beside them the four general subjects which we have recognized as succeeding one another in the first half of the New Testament books, and again recurring in the same order, though in a somewhat modified form, in the remaining half, the parallel is striking. They are these :

1. Christ revealed in the establishment of the Church.
2. The Church in its development.
3. The Believer instructed in the relations, &c., of his high calling.
4. The Second Coming of Christ.

I do not think the agreement here shown can be considered either forced or accidental ; but that it evidences an authentic, divinely-chosen principle of arrangement, to which the cherubic symbol, the appropriate significance of which has already been pointed out, is the key. Accordingly I would assign to the four main divisions of the Old Testament respectively, the four cherubic forms, in the same order and with the same significance as in the case of the first four sections of the New Testament. The scheme of the Old Testament will then be as follows ;

[LION.]

## I.—The King Revealed in the Establishment of the Kingdom.

BOOK.	REVELATION OF THE KING.	KEYNOTE.	SUBJECT OF BOOK.
Genesis . . .	"El-Shaddai;" i.e. God Almighty . . .	"Covenant."	Eden to Egypt. { Trial and failure of first man. Types of second man.
Exodus . . .	"I am Jehovah" . . .	"Brought out."	by Jehovah.
Leviticus . . .	"I am Jehovah, your God" . . .	"Jehovah spake, saying."	and in communion.
Numbers . . .	"I am Jehovah, your God" . . .	"The anger of Jehovah."	yet wandering in the wilderness.
Deuteronomy . . .	"Jehovah, thy God" . . .	"This day."	{ in consecration.
Joshua . . .	"Joshua;" i.e. Jesus . . .	"All."	{ taking possession of the land.
Judges . . .	"The Spirit of Jehovah" . . .	"Delivered."	{ failing in the land.
Ruth . . .	"Kinsman" . . .	"I will."	The Redeemed the Bride.

[OX.]

## II.—The Kingdom in its Development.

BOOK.	DISTINCTIVE AGENCY OF KING.	KEYNOTE.	SUBJECT OF BOOK.
1 Samuel . . .	"Samuel, the seer" . . .	"Saul;" i.e. sought.	{ under the king of man's choice.
2 Samuel . . .	"Nathan, the prophet" . . .	"David;" i.e. beloved.	{ under the king of God's choice.
1 Kings . . .	"Elijah, the Tishbite" . . .	"The word of Jehovah."	successful while united in obedience.
2 Kings . . .	"Elisha, the son of Shaphat" . . .	"Against."	overcome because divided by sin.
1 Chronicles . . .	"David, the servant of Jehovah" . . .	"Son."	faithful to the covenant, and prosperous.
2 Chronicles . . .	"The Spirit of Jehovah" . . .	"The eyes of Jehovah."	unfaithful, and ruined.
Ezra . . .	"Ezra, the priest" . . .	"The house."	{ worship re-established.
Nehemiah . . .	"Nehemiah, the Tirshatha" . . .	"The wall."	{ city restored.
Esther . . .	"Esther, the Queen" . . .	"Mordecai;" i.e. the little man.	{ people in divine keeping.

[MAN.]

## III.—The King's Elect.

BOOK.	CHARACTERISTIC FEATURE OF ELECT.	KEYNOTE.	SUBJECT OF BOOK.
Job . . .	"Job;" i.e. persecuted . . .	"Answered."	{ the death of self.
Psalms . . .	"David;" i.e. beloved . . .	"Blessed;" "praise."	{ newness of life.
Proverbs . . .	"My son" . . .	"Wisdom;" "wise."	{ divine guidance for daily conduct.
Ecclesiastes . . .	"Wise" . . .	"Vanity;" "under the sun."	{ the emptiness of earthly good.
Song of Solomon . . .	"My spouse" . . .	"Love;" "beloved."	{ the joy of union with the King.

IV.—The Coming of the King.

[BAGLE.

Book.	Description of the King.	Keywords.	Subject of Book.
Isaiah . . .	"The King;" "the Holy One of Israel"	"Glory."	He who comes.
Jeremiah . . .	"The King;" "Jehovah of hosts"	"Evil."	
Lamentations . . .	"The Lord (Adonai), as an enemy"	"Zion."	
Ezekiel . . .	"Adonai Jehovah" (Lord God)	"Son of Adam."	
Daniel . . .	"Ancient of Days;" "God of heaven"	"Kingdom."	
Hosea . . .	"Ishi;" <i>i.e.</i> my husband . . .	"Return."	To whom He comes.
Joel . . .	"Jehovah, your God"	"The land."	
Amos . . .	"Adonai Jehovah, God of hosts"	"The house of Israel."	
Obadiah . . .	"Jehovah"	"Esau."	
Jonah . . .	"Jehovah God"	"Arise."	
Micah . . .	"Jehovah of hosts;" <i>i.e.</i> armies . . .	"The remnant of Jacob."	Instruments of His coming.
Nahum . . .	"Jehovah of hosts"	"No more."	
Habakkuk . . .	"Jehovah of hosts"	{ "The wicked (one)." "Woe to him!" }	
Zephaniah . . .	"The King of Israel, Jehovah"	"A day of wrath."	
Haggai . . .	"Jehovah of hosts"	"Jehovah's house."	
Zechariah . . .	"The King, Jehovah of hosts"	"Jerusalem."	Issues of His coming.
Malachi . . .	"Jehovah of hosts"	"The priests."	
			<p>The King, to subdue rebellion, and establish His authority. Jehovah, God of armies, to punish sin, and teach righteousness. The Lord (for Ruler), as an enemy. Zion's affliction, and repentance. Jehovah, the Ruler, to chastise for unfaithfulness, and renew the covenant. The God of heaven, to cast down earthly thrones, and set up the kingdom of heaven.</p> <p>To an unfaithful wife, to afflict, and reclaim her. To the land, to plague, and restore it. To the sinful people, to punish, but again uplift them. To the cruel brother, to cut him off for ever.</p> <p>An unfaithful ministry, chastened and employed. The remnant of Jacob, a scourge, and then a blessing. Nineveh, type or locality of the anti-Christian power. The wicked one, antichrist.</p> <p>The great tribulation; the King appears. The temple re-built; the Desire of all nations there. The city restored; the King dwelling in the midst. The national covenant renewed by the messenger of the covenant.</p>



I have felt somewhat uncertain to what further extent it would be advisable to pursue the application of the cherubic symbol as a key to the Old Testament. That it does apply much more closely than I have yet indicated I am sure. In regard to the New Testament, it was the connection, long recognized, between the four cherubic forms and the four gospels that first suggested the key which proved so applicable, first to the four general sections in the first half, and then to the remaining four sections, and to the separate books in the first of these. Nor are indications wanting that a few slight changes in expressing the subjects of the books, and perhaps a further modification of the ideas assigned to the cherubic forms, would manifest the suitability of the symbol to those books in regard to which I have not traced it. But in such a matter I have thought it safer to err on the side of defect than excess. A similar caution and reserve will no doubt be best in the treatment of the Old Testament. But I cannot forbear to point out how strong are the indications here of a closer adaptation of the symbol than I have felt justified in pressing.

It will be seen, in regard to the four divisions traced above, that each of them again subdivides into four sections. This has not been brought about by any strained assignment of subjects to suit a plan. Examination will show that the books do naturally group in the way I have marked out. In the first division it is clear that a new departure does actually take place, as indicated, both in Exodus and Deuteronomy; and that the book of Ruth has a very distinct character of its own. Nor would it be difficult to make out the application of the four cherubic forms to these four sections. Again, in the second division, the four sections indicated are plainly in the structure of the Word; and these too might readily be associated with the

four cherubic forms. In regard to the third division, the affinity marked out between the books of Job and Psalms, and the diversity from these and from each other of the three following books of the series, will scarcely fail to be recognized as also some indications of the applicability of the cherubic symbol.

It is in the case of the fourth division, that of the prophetic books, that the suitability of our key is most striking ; so much so indeed that I have felt very strongly inclined to press its closer application here. Let the reader compare the subjects of the four sections in that division, and those of the four main divisions of the Old Testament, as placed here side by side :

- |                              |      |                        |          |
|------------------------------|------|------------------------|----------|
| 1. He who comes . . . .      | with | The King . . . . .     | (Lion).  |
| 2. To whom He comes . . .    | with | The Kingdom . . . . .  | (Ox).    |
| 3. Instruments of His coming | with | The King's Elect . . . | (Man).   |
| 4. Issues of His coming . .  | with | The Coming of the King | (Eagle). |

The analogy between them is striking ; and the symbol is almost as applicable in the one case as in the other. Its application in the case of this division may be carried even further than this. I have before alluded to an apparent analogy between the subjects of the four major prophets and those of the four gospels. I am not prepared to trace it out very clearly ; but can point to indications that suggested it very strongly. For instance, there is a very evident analogy between the subject of Matthew and that of Isaiah. In the case of Luke and Ezekiel, the keynotes are the same. Daniel is more closely allied with the Revelation of John than with his gospel ; and the link between Mark and Jeremiah is not clear. But I think there are indications in each case that with a little more careful investigation and expression of the subjects, the connection of these four prophets with the four gospels would be justified, or at least their mutual association with the four

cherubic symbols. I am most anxious that other minds should be brought to bear upon this study ; and now send it forth, not unwillingly, in its present state of incompleteness. I can scarcely doubt that the Church of Christ will recognize important truth underlying what is here offered. That there are misconceptions and errors in detail I am quite prepared to find ; but in the main I am well assured there is in these chapters the unfolding of a divine thought, and the disclosure of a seal upon the plenary inspiration of the Scriptures hitherto undetected. My most earnest desire is that those into whose hands these chapters may fall will test the subject for themselves. This is not a difficult matter ; for it requires simply the careful reading of the several books as books, each one several times in succession if possible, to see if any distinctive subject can be recognized, and if that subject answers to the view here set forth. Should this be done with earnest prayer for the light and guidance and blessing of the Holy Spirit, I should care very little what estimate was formed of my work ; so assured am I, from personal experience, of the benefit that must certainly be realized by the student himself.

R. H. B.

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## CONSCIENCE.

### II.

THE subject of a God-taught, heavenly conscience in saints, and its value in guarding and sustaining them in soul-communion with God, was lately dwelt upon. (p. 172.) A heavenly conscience is also important for assemblies as well as for individuals. But the value of such a conscience depends upon how far it is enlightened by the word and Spirit of God, and how far it is obeyed. Supposing that conscience in God's children is rightly directed, and

followed up with all the indwelling energy of the Holy Ghost, who can measure the spiritual prosperity that will attend the steps of such saints to their new creation home?

All this has been spoken of in the paper already referred to. The remaining question is, How are we to behave towards fellow-saints whose consciences, as we think, are either less God-taught or less obeyed than our own? This is indeed a delicate part of the subject. The conscience of each saint is so claimed by God as His own chamber in which to give both divine light and Holy Ghost strength, that we shall need the utmost possible care lest, by our knowledge, we be found lording it over others' conscience rather than seeking that it should be fashioned by God's unerring hand through His Spirit and His word.

Naturally we all love to have power, and the desire of exercising lordship in God's Church is often a peculiar temptation, as the apostle Peter warns us. (1 Peter v. 2, 3.) Thinking ourselves more spiritual than others, we exercise this "dominion" by overpressing and driving the conscience of those who are feebler and less instructed than ourselves. So did not Paul. As Saul of Tarsus he had used chains and stones to enforce the rule of his misguided conscience on the humble followers of the Nazarene, but as *Paul* he could write thus to the erring Corinthians: "Not for that we have *dominion* over your faith; for by faith ye stand."

The apostle dwells much on this subject of caring for the conscience of fellow-saints, and the principles which he inculcates would guide us, in dealing with their secular or ecclesiastical habits, not to make them take one step further or faster than their own mind and conscience, as taught of God, would lead them.

Throughout 1 Cor. viii.-x. the one object of the apostle

is to enforce a watchful and *self-denying* regard for the less enlightened consciences of fellow-believers. The subject in chapter viii. is a secular one; viz., the partaking of certain food at daily meals when another's conscience is involved. Should I eat of things concerning which *I* have a good and clear conscience, when a weak brother will be tempted to follow my example, and eat with a *bad* conscience? If I do so I lead him to imitate *me*, and to forfeit his communion with God. Though in point of knowledge I may be right, I have not led him nearer to God, but farther from Him. I have made him go faster (in a right thing) than in his own conscience he was prepared to go. I may be glorying in having thus overcome my brother's mistaken notions, but what says the Spirit of God to my conduct? I have been guilty of a breach of the sixth commandment, and have wounded, not my brother's body, but far worse, his *conscience*, so that, as far as my act is concerned, I have, through my knowledge, been slaying my weak brother, for whom Christ gave His life! Viewed in the true light such conduct is "sin against Christ." (See verses 11, 12.) How vastly different from our thoughts! With what earnestness does the apostle exclaim, "Wherefore, if meat make my brother to stumble, I will eat no flesh for evermore, that I make not my brother to stumble!" (R. V.)

In Rom. xiv.-xv. 6, the same subject has a wider range, and includes *all* the varied, and divergent, and even diametrically opposite ways in which servants of the Lord Jesus may nevertheless be acceptably serving Him. The *climax* of varied service is that some *LIVE* to Him, whilst others *DIE* to Him. This breadth of the subject in Rom. xiv. includes, therefore, things ecclesiastical as well as secular. The question of conscience here, in the matter of eating, is not about meat offered to idols, but about the wider

difficulty of eating animal food at all. Again, one keeps a day "to the Lord;" another "to the Lord" refuses to keep it. Here, as well as in 1 Cor. viii.-x., the apostle entreats us to use the utmost gentleness and patience with those whose understanding of the will of the Lord is not the same as our own. But he by no means *commends* this want of accord between Christ's servants. On the contrary, in Rom. xv. 1-6 he shows our proper AIM to be such an "edification" (or building up) of our "neighbour" saints as will in the end bring about our *all* "with one mind and one mouth" glorifying God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. But "the God of *patience* and *consolation*" is to be waited on to bring this to pass, and the whole length of chap. xiv. shows with what respect and gentleness we are meantime to treat ALL fellow-saints.

This honouring of fellow-saints is exhorted to, not only because they still are dear to God, however feeble and hindered their steps may be in service to the common Lord here below, but also because they will soon be fellow-servants with us before the throne of God and of the Lamb, in like intelligence and fidelity of service with ourselves. As no one will then be *dying* to the Lord, whilst another is *living* to Him, so neither will any then in any lesser matter be condemning the style or mode of another's service. When God brings in the day of perfecting His servants, none of our unseemly differences will any more be seen. Oh, then, says Paul, during this "little while" in which they do exist, let us deal patiently and gently with one another in these divergences of knowledge and practice!

Of course it is true that these precious exhortations to patience and gentleness with fellow-saints, who at present are made "weak" by their ignorance or their long-imbibed prejudices, may be taken hold of and misused by some

who call themselves "weak," but whom we soon find to be really both stout and stubborn.

For the sake of some modern practice or doctrine they have themselves adopted, they insist that others adopt it also, or refuse fellowship with them as saints; or else if taking with them the grand outward symbols of fellowship, viz., baptism and the Lord's supper, they still are, on all available occasions, endeavouring to bring their fellow-saints into subjection to themselves. Such are not "weak" saints, but very strong ones—strong, alas! in self-opinion, self-esteem, and self-will, and come under the apostle's rebuke, in Rom. xvi. 18: "They that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly;" i.e. their own desire and inclination.

These, however, are easily distinguished from the really humble, conscience-bound and uninstructed ones to whom Rom. xiv. truly applies. The latter fill up the sick list and the hospital of God's Church; and sadly large and full, in these days, the hospital is. Too many of the sick ones in it vainly think there is either little or nothing at all the matter with them; and these are just the cases to waken the utmost of pity and of patience in those who would care for them, and would bring them to some degree of spiritual health and strength.

Anyhow, the place and scope for using Rom. xiv.—xv. 6 in God's Church is in our day a very large one indeed; and those who fain would be physicians and nurses in it, well-pleasing to God, must have in them that which Paul gives as the first sign of an apostle; viz., "ALL patience."

God's sovereignty also must be remembered. Of course God is as truly sovereign in the measure of divine light and understanding that He gives to saints as He is in making any to be His saints at all. If we learn any portion of God's mind and will to any real profit, it is

God Himself we have to thank for it, and not any mere industry or zeal or ability of ours. And to God Himself we must also look on behalf of others; gently instructing them meanwhile with diligence and wisdom, as opportunities offer; but looking up to God all the time to bless our efforts for them, just as we do also in preaching God's gospel to the unsaved. When teaching God's children this habit of *depending on God* to give them power to receive, will help to keep us from impatience with them: should they not take in what we are setting before them. However long they keep us waiting, we shall still be looking up to God to enlighten them. It is true they are responsible for the clearness of His word, and also for any clearness and loving patience with which we set it before them; and, above all, they are responsible for having within them the Holy Ghost, who leads into all truth, and we must seek to put before them how solemn a thing it is to disobey the plain word of God. Yet God's sovereignty remains true; and it is no business of ours to attempt to reconcile man's responsibility and God's sovereignty. They do somehow co-exist; and whilst the remembrance of the former stirs us to all diligence, both for the saved and the unsaved, the latter humbles us in our own esteem, and keeps us humble, gentle, and patient in our ways with others.

The day of full, eternal rest hastens on when, not only in a millennial Israel on earth below, but still more amongst ourselves as God's redeemed above, His word will be true—"They shall teach no more every man His neighbour . . . saying, Know the Lord, for they shall all know ME from the least of them to the greatest of them, saith the Lord."

In the cheering light of that day may we now love ALL saints, and labour for them ALL, even till the Lord Himself shall come.

H. D.



## THE BREAKING DOWN OF JACOB.

GENESIS xxxii. 22-31.

LET us ponder a little on this momentous period of Jacob's history. In the former part of the chapter we find that when Jacob heard that Esau was coming to meet him with four hundred men he was greatly afraid and distressed. To appease his brother, whom he had wronged twenty years before, he prepares a large present or gift-offering, which he sends on before him. But in the night he takes his two wives, the two women-servants, and his eleven children, and makes them pass over the brook Jabbok, and he alone remains behind. It is very interesting to observe throughout the Scriptures the meaning of names which God by His Spirit has given to persons and places, and the word *Jabbok* helps us to understand something of Jacob's experience at this time, for it means "poured out" or "emptied." At Jabbok he is emptied, as it were, of all he possesses.

"And Jacob was left alone; and there wrestled a man with him until the breaking of the day," or "the ascending of the dawn." It is often said that Jacob wrestled with the angel; but it is not so. "There wrestled a man *with Jacob*." Not only was Jacob poured out or emptied, but he was left alone with God, and then came the wrestling.

We need also to bear in mind that, if we would know God, we must have personal dealing with Him *alone*. It may be a night season to us, and very dark, as it often is just before the dawn; but the light will come, and the conflict will end in blessing.

But in addition to the emptying and the being alone

with God, there must be a *breaking down*. It was so with Job. God takes away all he possesses, and allows Satan to afflict his body; but Job argues with his three friends, and holds fast his integrity. At length God deals with him alone, and now Job is broken down and confesses his vileness. Peter also was brought to the same point. Satan was busy with him, and even when the Lord forewarned him of his danger he was vehement in his self-confident resolutions. The testing-time came, and he utterly denied his Lord. But the Lord's *look* reminds Peter of His word. He is broken down, and goes out and weeps bitterly.

Now let us observe the breaking down of Jacob. The wrestling is long continued, but Jacob will not yield. "And when He saw that He prevailed not against him, He touched the hollow of Jacob's thigh, and the hollow of Jacob's thigh was out of joint, as He wrestled with him." God knows how to deal with us effectually. The struggle is at length over. Jacob is broken down, and yields.

"And He said, Let me go, for the day breaketh." But Jacob clings, and replies, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." It requires strength to wrestle, but the weakest can *cling*. Jacob is lame, broken down, helpless, but he will not let go; he clings to the mighty One until he gets the blessing.

"And He said unto him, What is thy name?" God tenderly asked this question, but there was a deep meaning in it. He knows all things, and knows all about us; yet before He can bless us He must have a full confession from our own lips of what we are. Jacob's telling out his name was his acknowledgment of what he was by nature and practice. "And he said, *Jacob*." It was a humbling confession to make; for what does Jacob mean? "Crooked," "Supplanter." It was as if he said, "I took

hold of my brother's heel ; I cheated him of his birthright ; my name is Jacob." Now God can bless.

"And He said, Thy name shall be called no more *Jacob*, but **ISRAEL**;" no more "A supplanter," but "A prince of God;" "for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Oh, what a happy change for Jacob !

"And Jacob asked Him, and said, Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And He said, Wherefore is it that thou dost ask after my name ? And He blessed him there." Jacob's name is soon told, but He tells not Jacob His wonderful name. At the breaking of the day, however, He gives to Jacob a blessing, after the conflict of that dark night season. "And Jacob called the name of the place *Penuel*:" that is, "The face of God;" "for I have seen God face to face, and my life has been preserved."

Let us then remember the stages in Jacob's experience—the being emptied and alone, the conflict, the breaking down, the clinging, the changing of the name, and then the blessing. For us, too, there must be a thorough surrender, and a thorough breaking down of our temper, our pride, our self-confidence, or other evil way, a true confession of our name, and then God will bless us.

"And as he passed over *Penuel* the sun rose, and he halted upon his thigh." And that shrunken sinew ever reminded Jacob of what he was. So also the "thorn in the flesh" was given as an abiding help to Paul. We know not what it was, but it hindered his self-exaltation, and he was able to say, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."

"Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day; because He touched the hollow of

Jacob's thigh in the sinew that shrank." We may take, as the New Testament reading of this, the apostle's words in Phil. iii. 3, "For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." May this be the true experience of our souls !

(T. N.)

## LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.

## XVIII.

*On receiving some Hyacinths.*

"THE hyacinths you so kindly sent have turned my thoughts from the flowers to the precious stone, the eleventh of the foundation-stones of the new Jerusalem—'Jacinth;' the Greek literally spells *hyacinth*. (Rev. xxi. 20.) Then again the word in another form occurs in Rev. ix. 17, where it seems to refer to colour, which is said to be deep purple.

"Well may the citizen of Zion (Psalm lxxxvii.) look down from his eminence, and compare his '*foundation*' with that of the great nations of old. He may look at Rahab (Egypt) and Babylon, great and glorious in their day. 'This man,' the mighty Pharaoh, 'was born there,' or that mighty king was 'born there;' but 'of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her: and the highest Himself shall establish her.' And shall not we in the further revelation made to us of our 'commonwealth' being 'in heaven' (Phil. iii. 20, 21) say, 'All my springs are in Thee'—in Him who is 'the living stone,' 'the sure foundation,' while we wait for the top-stone to be brought forth with shoutings of 'Grace, grace unto it.' What a solemn word—'a *sure* foundation!' He is also 'a stone of stumbling,' and a *crushing*-stone. (Matt. xxi. 42-44.) What a study!

"I have before me to-morrow 2 Thess. ii. as the subject of a lecture. I hope I may not darken counsel by words without

knowledge; fear and trembling well become me. When, if God permits, I have gone through this epistle I give up the lectures and retire from *public* ministry, save as I may get out on Lord's-day morning for the privilege of the Lord's Supper.

J. L. H.

"*Weston-super-Mare, March 1st, 1876.*"

## NOTES AND REPLIES.

*What is the meaning of John xx. 23?*

THIS verse probably refers exclusively to the ministry of the gospel of forgiveness, which was given to the apostles and the Church to preach to a lost and ruined world. There is no thought of *man's* forgiving sin; the Lord's command to the disciples was to preach "repentance and remission of sins *in His Name*." This Name is entrusted to the Church as was the Name of Jehovah to Israel; and while in Luke's gospel the Son of man sends His messengers with a *Name*, in John's gospel the Son of God sends them with a *power*, as those on whom He had breathed, saying, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." Just in proportion as that inbreathing is realized will the word of the gospel message become a word of divine power. The force of the "*ye remit*" and "*ye retain*" is also contained in James v. 20 "*He which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins;*" and in all such expressions, so common in Scripture, that which is done by God through the creature as an instrument, is attributed to him. In Matt. xvi. 19 the keys of the kingdom are given to Peter, as the one appointed by God to open the door of the kingdom to the Gentile believers. This was made plain to him in the vision of the sheet let down from heaven, to which he alludes in Acts xv. 7; and he tells the Jerusalem believers that they knew that God had made choice of him that by *his* mouth the Gentiles should hear the gospel. In Matt. xviii. 18 the power of binding and loosing is placed in the hands of the Church, and here in connection with discipline; from which we gather that God ratifies in heaven what is done by His people on earth in accordance with His word and will. Hence in 1 Cor. v. Paul connects with discipline "the *Name* of the Lord Jesus," and "the *power* of the Lord Jesus," both of which are essential to the real validity of discipline, and without which excommunication is only the will of the flesh, and binds neither in heaven nor earth.