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THE
CHRISTIAN OUTLOOK:

A COMPENDIUM OF PAPERS ON
VARIOUS ASPECTS OF

Christian Life and Doctrine.

BY

J. H. BURRIDGE,

*Author of "God's Prophetic Plan," "Liberty, Joy, and Power,"
"The Coming of Christ," &c.*



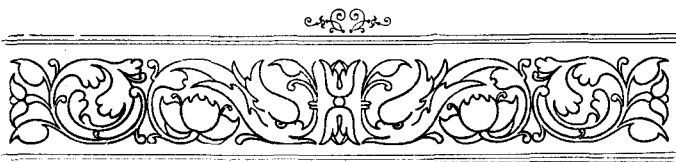
GLASGOW:
PICKERING & INGLIS, PRINTERS AND PUBLISHERS.

LONDON:
S. BAGSTER & SONS LTD., 15 PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.

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THE CHRISTIAN OUTLOOK.

[We shall be thankful to our subscribers if they will kindly send their subscriptions in early ; we have been put to inconvenience by delay. Many subscriptions are due for 1898, and even 1897. We can quite understand how easy it is to forget and even neglect such a small amount. But even when subscriptions are all duly paid up the Magazine is circulated at a loss of about £3 per quarter.]

INTRODUCTION.

IT is our desire that this Quarterly should be of use to the Lord's people by helping in the maintenance of sound doctrine and Godly practice. There is a danger on the one hand, in our concern about doctrine, to become mere theorists, and to be continually dwelling upon the dogma of Christianity without knowing the practical power of the same in our daily lives—with a want of that real devotedness in the cause of Christ, that real largeness of heart toward His people, that real love for souls generally,

and that practical sympathy with whatever is of Christ, wherever it may be, which are at the same time the product and evidence of sound doctrine.

But on the other hand there is the danger, in our concern about our everyday life, while careless of doctrine, of becoming merely self-occupied sentimentalists. We should never separate Christian doctrine from Christ Himself, for it sets Him forth in all that He is to God, and all that He is, has done, is doing, and will yet do for us. It also teaches us to look at everything in relation to Christ and in view of the glory of God, and shows the existing relations of the Church and the world with God, as well as unfolding the future of both. Hence Christian doctrine, like the blessed Spirit who unfolds it, firstly, occupies my heart with Christ in all that He is to me, and all that He has done for me; secondly, it enables me to look at men and things in their relation to Him; and, thirdly, it regulates my life and conduct in conformity to Christ Jesus, whom it declares to be my own Saviour, Shepherd, Friend, and Priest.

How very important, then, is sound doctrine when we do not divorce it from Christ Himself; but when separated from Himself in our souls it becomes mere dry dogma, without any real power in and over the life; it is having the letter without the spirit of it. "The Kingdom of God is not in word but in power."

These are days in which we must commend the truth in our lives; the word of the lip is of little use unless backed up by a godly, righteous, and devoted life.

In order for the maintenance of sound doctrine everything must be put to the test of Holy Scripture; neither the voice of the Church nor any merely human voice can decide this matter for us. The great fundamentals of Christianity are clearly enough set forth in the Word of God; and we must not allow our faith to be shaken by any perversity of the human heart, whether it come to us in the form of Ritualism or Rationalism. Any question against the foundation truths of

our glorious Christianity must be treated as emanating from that enemy who in the beginning raised the first question against the truth of God when he said to Adam and Eve, "Yea, hath God said." Therefore we cannot entertain any question affecting the fundamental truths of the Gospel—affecting the foundation.

As to the superstructure of truth that is built upon that foundation, representing the whole and grand fabric of the plans and purposes of God, varied in aspect and character as they may be, any of the Lord's people, the most sincere perhaps among us, may err in our understanding, and may be faulty in our views. Hence we may well bear with and listen to each other with grace and patience. At the same time, and for the same reason, we should carefully, prayerfully, and candidly submit each other's views, as well as our own, to the test of the Word of God, and search the Scriptures *daily* to see if these things are so. This should be done in regard to everything we hear or read, but more especially in regard to views that are against other views that have been held and taught by the most sound, intelligent, and devoted servants of God for many years. Albeit, we should always be ready to bring our own views to the same test as often as they are questioned, and seek to rid our minds of all bias in doing so, that we may receive the simple and natural teaching of the Word of God on any given subject. If we have the truth it will suffer nothing from such test, but will rather be confirmed in our souls.

One object of this Magazine, under its new title, will be thus to submit the different views of servants of God to the test of Scripture. And we feel sure that no true minister of the truth will find fault with such a wholesome occupation, but will rather commend it, as did the Apostle Paul when the Bereans took his teaching to what Scripture they then had, to "see if these things were so." We of course expect, and desire, that our own views will be put to the same test.

We shall in this be glad of the help of any of our readers

in sending articles for review, or short reviews of the same, in asking questions and making known difficulties, and more especially in prayer.

THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES.

AS we cross the threshold of another year we do well to examine ourselves before God, to make sure that we are quite ready to meet Him should He come at any moment; not only ready as to our standing, but also as to the state of our souls and as to the affairs of our lives. It behoves each one to ask himself, "Can I say, without the slightest reserve in my heart and with unfeigned lips, in reply to my Lord's words, 'Behold, I come quickly' (emphasised as these words are by the signs of the times), 'Even so come, Lord Jesus'? Are all my affairs in such order as becometh one who expects to be caught away at any moment? Have I so used my time, my gifts, and my means that I should have nothing to regret if Christ were to come to-day? Is my estimate of this life as compared with that which is to come such as to make me ready and willing to exchange this for that in a moment of time?"

No doubt under such circumstances, in view of such an event, most of us would find something in ourselves and our lives to condemn, while still we look and long for Christ our beloved Redeemer; but the profitable result of the examination is that we *do* condemn and put away whatever is inconsistent with our attitude of waiting for and expecting our Lord.

All children of God who are intelligent in the Scriptures and observant of the times must enter the new year under solemn, salutary, and yet blessed apprehension. Everything tells us that the coming of our Lord draweth very near. Who among the students of God's Word cannot see things shaping for the final struggle of nations as predicted in the Word of God?—a struggle in which God is about to call all

the nations of the earth to account, and which is to iermtnate in the establishment of peace and unity under the Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings and Lord of lords, everything being made subject to Him.

Nor is it the least among the facts that cause the present international complications and perplexity that Syria and the Jewish problem are prominent, for Palestine and its neighbourhood shows fair to be the one great central question of the nations. This is a most significant fact for students of prophecy, who can but watch the march of events with the most profound interest. For we know of a surety that certain events are to take place, but we do not believe that there are any dates in Scripture to give us the time of their accomplishment, while our blessed God does direct us to *signs by which we may see the day approaching*—signs which abound all around us at the present moment ; we see them in the world, in Christendom, and among the Jewish people.

The perplexities of nations, the political upheavals, and the general state of things in the world ; the Rationalism, as well as the Ritualistic apostacy in Christendom, and, alas ! the lukewarm state of the Church, and above all the present movements among the Jewish people, all tell us that we are on the eve of some great universal change. What is it ? For the Church it is the grand change spoken of in 1 Cor. xv. and 1 Thess. iv. For the world we believe it is the visitation of the judgment of God, the breaking up of the present political state of things, for the establishment of peace and order under the reign of Christ ; for the Jews it is their redemption as a people, though not till after great and terrible tribulation. We do not make any prediction, or even suggestion, as to the time all this will take ; enough for us that we can see things thus shaping which indicate the near approach of our Lord.

True, even in the presence of all the warlike preparations of every great nation, and of the many conflicting interests

—identical interests which are considered vital, and essential to the existence of the respective nations—such is the irony of human affairs, such the present paradoxical state of politics, that Governments are talking about a universal Peace Congress. But the cry of false peace is among the signs of the last days ; peace must have a solid basis to rest upon. If peace is proposed it is from the same selfish desire as that from which war originates. Even the antichrist takes his kingdom by proposals of peace—comes in peaceably—but that is only a proof of his deceit.

No doubt there is a desire for peace on the part of Governments in view of the horrors of a European war ; but such is the state of the world that the nation that refuses to fight for its existence will lose its nationality.

There are two great ideas struggling in the womb of international politics at the present time ; they are expressed in the words “ War ” and “ Peace.” Which is to be brought forth ? Some politicians say that present preparations for war and the destructive character of modern weapons conduce to peace, but this takes for granted the superiority of certain nations to keep other Powers in check while they themselves have their own way, and it supplies an excuse for such preparations. War is the natural outcome of the rivalry of nations and their conflicting interests, which at the present moment seems to have almost reached its climax. Peace, true peace, is unnatural to such a state of things, and looked at from God's point of view is impossible on account of the inequality of the world, for its cup is nearly full—its measure of iniquity is nearly filled up.

True peace must come, not by an International Congress, but by the advent of the Prince of Peace, for which righteousness alone can prepare the way, and previous to which a thorough purging of the earth is to take place. We believe the time of such purging is near, even at the door.

But perhaps one of the most remarkable signs of the times is the present movements among the Jews. That known as

the Zionist movement has spread with wonderful rapidity among them. It has the following as its objects:—

1. The acquiring of a legally safeguarded home in Palestine for the Jewish people.

2. The fostering of the national idea in Israel.

3. The promoting and supporting of colonising and industrial enterprises in Palestine.

4. The use of Hebrew as a living language, and the fostering of Hebrew literature.

5. The establishing of schools and local libraries, and the taking of all such steps as may tend to promote the educational development of the Jews.

6. The publishing of an universal Hebrew dictionary on historical and philological lines, embracing the whole of Hebrew literature, ancient and modern.

7. The establishing of athletic clubs for Jews.

8. The founding of a Jewish Colonial Bank, as an instrument towards the accomplishment of the above programme.

Some of the most religious among that people oppose the movement, for in itself it is conceived without regard to their condition before God; they are ruled entirely by the desire for their own nationalisation and position among the nations. The most religious among the people see this, and oppose on the same ground, for the Zionists seem ready to accept anyone as a leader or ruler so long as they can get back to Palestine. This is in full accordance with the Word of God, which shows that they will go back in unbelief and apostatise under a wicked ruler, the antichrist; while a remnant will be true to the God of their fathers. And what is still more striking is that among the most religious of the Jews are many who have declared that the nation has murdered its Messiah in Jesus of Nazareth, for we believe that Scripture shows that the remnant referred to will not only refuse to deny the God of their fathers, but will receive Jesus the crucified One as their Messiah.

We help to make known these things with the desire to

stir up the Lord's dear people to more real devotedness to Christ and earnestness in His cause. Can anything be more sad than to find, in presence of such stirring facts, some of the most intelligent among the children of God ordering their course of service with a view to maintaining their sectarian barriers and partyisms, while they are continually preaching up their ecclesiasticisms instead of Christ. Let us cling to the truth without compromise, and walk in it with devoted hearts; but let us seek to spread it among His loved ones, instead of coming together to quarrel over it. Edification, not ecclesiasticisms, is the great subject of the Epistles, and the object for which the gifts are given, the edification of the Church—the body—not a party. We may be sure of it, dear reader, that this party spirit and sectarian prejudice which keep us occupied so much with ourselves, and lead us to set the people and work of God outside ourselves at such discount, is not of God. To recognise and have sympathy with whatever is good among the Lord's people is not unfaithfulness to Him, but the manifestation of His own Spirit; and to break through sectarian barriers and prejudice to carry food to the lambs and sheep of Christ, and to proclaim the truth which He has given us, is not compromise; but to pride ourselves on its possession, while we fail to make such use of it, is both sin against Christ and His people.

The Lord is about to come; we shall soon be caught up to be with Him. O let us arise, receive light, and shine; let us boldly and publicly declare the truth; let us do all we can to reach the whole Church of God with the proclamation of the coming of our blessed Lord; let us put forth every possible effort for the most public declaration of a full Gospel; let us not rest satisfied with our usual preaching in our own little meeting-places, which are attended by so few people who need the Gospel.

We need to put more earnestness and enterprise into the Lord's work; to take public halls and neutral build-

ings into which we may invite the people to hear the Gospel, with more chance of getting their ears. But this involves an expense for which the rich have not the heart and the poor have not the means, and the moment the evangelist, in his longing for souls, steps outside the meetings for such work, the brethren look upon him as having gone outside *their* sphere altogether, and close up, with few exceptions, both their hearts and their purses to him.

The writer has met, during the last fortnight only, no fewer than five recognised evangelists among brethren who bear their testimony to what we here state, and express themselves as well-nigh tired of such a state of things. What is to be done? We are sure it behoves us to cast off all fear of man, and speak boldly, through graciously, of these things, for the time is short. A very little while and the Church shall be with Christ, and the great day of reckoning for the nations will have come. May our hearts be stirred at the most momentous thought.

“ONLY BELIEVE.”

“**B**E not afraid, only believe,” said the Lord to Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, who had come beseeching Him to heal his little daughter as she lay at the point of death, when the sad news was brought to him that she was dead. “There came from the ruler of the synagogue’s house certain, which said, thy daughter is dead; why troublest thou the Master any further?” Evidently they thought that with life all hope had gone; that death had put her outside the reach and power of our blessed Lord, in the same way that we should think death has carried the patient beyond the doctor’s power—that his presence and treatment were no longer of any avail.

This report, when it reached Jairus, was calculated to extinguish the spark of faith that existed in his soul, and to

blight the ray of hope that illuminated his breast and sustained his heart.

Indeed, the intention of the message was to prevent his taking the Lord any farther on the way to his house: "Why troublest thou the Master any further?" They spoke as if they thought it very kind of the Lord to offer to go, and so readily to turn His steps toward the house of the troubled family; but it would now be unkind of them to trouble Him any further; the journey would be to no purpose. He could do no good now, for the girl is dead. Thus in their apparent consideration for Him, desiring to spare Him the toil of a fruitless journey to the house, they set out to meet Jairus.

What, then, is the loving father to do? Is he to allow the spark of faith that led him to the Lord to die away? and is the bright hope that filled his breast when the blessed Lord consented to go with him to prove nothing more than a tantalizing dream? Must he leave the Lord and go back to the house of mourning—the abode of death—alone, only to gaze upon the death-stamped features of his beloved child; to see those bright and winning eyes, which had so often ravished his heart, closed for ever; and those refined lips, which had been in the habit of addressing him in all the love of a devoted daughter, and which had so often kissed his cheeks with all the tenderness of feminine fondness, now for ever sealed; and those arms, which had so often been thrown around his neck in real filial affection, as still by her side as the post of the bedstead on which she lay? We ask, are the rays of hope that filled the breast of that devoted father so soon to give way to such sorrow, gloom, and darkness? Shall the rising sun, whose appearance in the eastern sky announces the dawn of day, whose genial rays have already done much to disperse the darkness of night and brighten up the face of the earth—shall it suddenly withdraw itself and leave the whole scene in gross darkness, before the expected day has scarcely dawned? Impossible!

Shall our gracious Lord turn His face and His steps

toward us for good, to help and succour us in our trial, and then suddenly turn away from us again because that trial has become intensified? Impossible!

And so in the narrative before us, the Lord has hearkened to the cry of distress, He has responded to the feeble faith of Jairus, and nothing shall turn Him back.

As to the faith that has applied to Him, how exquisitely beautiful it is to see Him encouraging and strengthening that in presence of circumstances that were calculated to wreck it. The messengers had scarcely finished telling that father of his loss when Jesus came forth to the support of his faith. "*As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken*, He saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, "Be not afraid, only believe." How gracious! How like our blessed Lord this is! How often He comes, with His own gracious Word, to the support of our faltering faith!

Surely there is a lesson for us in this touching narrative. How very often the words, "Be not afraid, only believe," are needed by us. Perhaps we have been to the Lord with somewhat feeble faith, for help in some trial or difficulty; we have believed that He could and would help us; but suddenly, just while we were in the act of seeking His help, and looking to Him to come to our rescue, things assume a much worse character; all at once the trial becomes overwhelming, the difficulty now appears insurmountable, and our faith is just ready to give way to a terrible fear. But what saith our blessed Lord at such a time? "Be not afraid, only believe." "Only believe; do not allow your faith to falter, and you shall see that I am equal to all; your trial has not assumed an aspect which puts it out of my power."

Thus it was with Jairus, and thus it has often been with us; he had faith that the Lord could heal his daughter, but he was very soon to see that He could raise her from the dead. He thought that while there was a little human hope the Lord could help; he was about to see that His help was

effectual when all human hope was gone, when the case was altogether beyond human help. Just so with us very often ; we seem to have faith in Him to help us while there is some little human hope to support that faith. When the matter is not altogether beyond human aid, then we have faith in Him ; but He would have us to trust Him when all human hope is gone, when every human prop is taken away, when it is, by the nature of the case, made certain that no one but God can help us ; then our blessed Lord would say, "Be not afraid, only believe."

Mary and Martha both said, concerning their brother's death, "Lord, if Thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." But nothing seemed more remote from their minds than the thought that the Lord could and would raise him from the dead. While there was human hope they knew the Lord could help them, but now they seem to think that he was beyond even the Lord's power.

The faith that brings most honour to Him is the faith that trusts Him when no human aid is of any avail, when no human arm can help.

O how little we know what it is thus to trust the Lord. May we constantly hear His Word, "Be not afraid, only believe."

FULL DELIVERANCE.

Romans v.

WE have already had three P's before us—Peace, Position, and Prospect—but we cannot leave the last of these three P's without noticing the beautiful connection of present triumph with the hope of future glory. Following upon the words, "Rejoice in hope of the glory of God," we read, "And not only so, but we glory in tribulation also."

Much depends upon whether or not we are living on the

present or the future; whether our minds are fixed upon the future or absorbed in the present. If I am living for the present I shall be brought beneath the power of present things, and trial and disappointment will fill my soul with bitterness and sorrow. But if my heart is fixed on Christ, outside this scene altogether, and my soul rejoicing in hope of the glory with Him, which is soon to dawn upon all the redeemed, I shall be able to glory in tribulation also.

Thus we see that the Christian, in communion, has the best of it in every way. When rejoicing in anticipation of the glorious future, he is able to triumph over all the difficulties of the present, and glory in all his trials; whereas the worldling who lives only for the present meets with much sorrow, disappointment, and trouble now, and is in constant dread of the future; and the worldly Christian, as far as the present is concerned, is in no better case than the thorough worldling. His future truly is safe, but out of communion with his Lord he does not know the joy of this, while he is filled with bitterness and sorrow on account of trial and disappointment in the present.

But how little any of us know of the real blessedness of this: "We glory in tribulation also." Do we? Is it not rather true of each one of us, when we get into trial, that the very first thought which occurs to the mind is, "How can I get out of it?" Such should not be our first thought; rather it should be, "*What* can I get out of it? God has some special blessing in this trial for me, and I desire not to miss it; or some needed lesson which, if I do not learn in this trial, will have to be learned under a greater one." Hence how very important it is to be really exercised before God in every trial. The reason why we can glory in our trials is given in the following wholesome words: "Knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope, and hope maketh not ashamed, because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us." Thus we see that the

work of God within our souls is accomplished by means of the trials we pass through.

How important, therefore, is that word "knowing," for it is the fact that we *know* that tribulation worketh these things (patience, experience, and hope) in our souls that enables us to glory in it. But as a prelude to this it is absolutely necessary that we should know what it is to "Rejoice in hope of the glory of God." The things that are thus wrought in us also bring us back to the same blessed hope, though we view it from another standpoint which makes it still more dear to us. In verse 2 the hope of the glory is based upon peace with God and our standing in grace; instead of condemnation there is now glory before us in which we rejoice, but in verse 4 this hope is made more dear in our souls by the patience and experience that are gained through tribulation; we are led to cherish the hope of glory more dearly because of Godly experience in the midst of a state of things that is against God. We long more ardently to be in that sphere where everything is according to our God who has pardoned and justified us through Jesus Christ our Lord. This hope does not make us ashamed, "because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." We can think of meeting God and dwelling in the unsullied light of His own presence now with perfect composure, indeed without one blush of shame, because His love fills our hearts, the love that led Him to give Christ to die for us when we were ungodly. That is a beautiful word, "Shed *abroad* in our hearts." The love of God permeates and actuates the whole moral being of which the heart is the symbol. But to make all this good in us and through us we need a power that we have not in ourselves; hence it is, "by the Holy Ghost which is given unto you." This brings us to our fourth P—

POWER.

We have not the power in or of ourselves either to lay

firmly hold of the truth or to practise it, hence God in His grace has given us the Holy Ghost, and we are wholly dependent upon that blessed Spirit for power. A spirit of dependence is the secret of safety and strength in the child of God. The working of evil without and within is great; evil rages in the streets of our cities, enters our homes, and even threatens at times to inundate the Church; but still it is true that greater is He that is in you than he that is in the world. There is, therefore, a greater power, a more mighty force, in the children of God than all the forces of the world and the wicked one. It is by this power that the soul is kept and the work of God carried on; and if we were only more dependent and devoted the power would be more manifest.

“Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high,” said our blessed and adorable Lord to His disciples. The power did descend upon them, and mighty indeed were its manifestations through them. Yes, it is this power from on high that we need—we have no might of our own. After Peter had healed the lame man he said to the wondering people of Israel, “Ye men of Israel, why marvel at this? or why look ye so earnestly on us, as though by our own power or holiness we had made this man to walk?” (Acts iii. 12). How beautiful to see Peter disavowing any power in or of himself for the accomplishment of such a miracle, and to assure the people that the God of Abraham had glorified His Son, whom they had denied and slain, by such a manifestation of His power.

We can readily see the need of the power of the Holy Ghost for *such* a mighty work; but we are apt to forget that the same power is needed for every Christian work in order that such should be effectual and to the glory of God; and, indeed, it is only by the power of this same Spirit that we can live out the Christian life in a way acceptable to God.

We arrive now at the fifth P—

PRIESTHOOD,

which is indicated in verses 9 and 10: "Much more thou, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life." That is, saved in the sense of being preserved and carried right through to the end, for the One who died for us, and by whose death we are reconciled, now lives for us our great High Priest and Advocate. We were, as the next chapter shows, crucified with Him and raised with Him, and our life is now hidden with Christ in God—hidden with Him who said, "Because I live ye shall live also." What security! How blessed to know that we are thus tied up in a "bundle of life" with Himself; and though we are here encompassed with failure and infirmity, yet He lives for us our great High Priest up there, and by His life we shall be preserved through all the sorrow, trial, failure, and infirmity that encompass us here, and shall ultimately be safely landed with Himself in that place He has gone to prepare. Eternal praises to His worthy Name! How blessed to have such a loving and mighty Saviour, such a high and holy Priest!

The writer was one day speaking to a Roman Catholic lady about the blessedness of peace with God, when she replied: "My dear sir, I have peace. I do not carry my own troubles; if anything troubles my heart or my conscience I take it to my priest, and leave it with him; he undertakes all the responsibility for me, and I come away without care." Rather taken aback by the simple yet misplaced confidence of this lady in her priest and his office, I said: "Mrs. C., that is just what I do with regard to my Priest; I take all my cares, trials, and failures to Him and leave them with Him, and come away with His peace. But I think you will acknowledge that my Priest is a better one than yours, for it is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. My Priest is the true Priest of God, the One whom God Himself made High

Priest, therefore my peace is true, real, and well founded, whereas your priest is a sinner like you and I, and is only made a priest by men, and that contrary to the Word of God, hence he is a false priest, and therefore your peace is false; it is a deluded peace. 'They heal the heart of the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.'" I am thankful to be able to add that soon after the above conversation Mrs. C. found the true Saviour, the true Priest, and the true peace, and has now gone to be with Him on high.

Next, in verse 11, comes our

PORTION,

"Joy in God." Once we were afar off from Him, and did not like to retain Him in all our knowledge; the very thought of God struck terror to our souls, but now we joy in Him, we can truly say, "My God, the spring of all my joys." "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance, and of my cup." What a marvellous change! But it is through our Lord Jesus Christ. This brings us to the last P, the

PERSON.

He is the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last. This is the place He occupies in regard to these seven P's, too. The first is, "Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and the last is, "Joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ," and He fills all up between.

Yes, it is the Person Himself that we need—He who is the Truth, the Life, and the Way. Christianity brings us into contact with a real, living, and loving Person, who died for us and rose again, and liveth for evermore, and who will soon have us with Himself where He is. Until that blessed and rapturous time arrive, may we be more concerned to have Him with us by faith where we now are in this world that cast Him out and rejects Him still. He is enough the heart and mind to fill, and He will fill our hearts if we will allow Him; He will come in and sup with us if we will only open to Him, and our hearts will be warmed and filled.

EARTHEN VESSELS.

THE Apostle Paul, with his keen, poetic mind, used many metaphors and similes to carry home truth both in his preachings and writings, and each in their turn is of much interest to the Bible student. Thus in 2 Cor. iv. 7 he speaks of himself as an "earthen vessel," containing the "treasure" of the Gospel. It is not at all improbable that in writing these words to the Corinthian saints he had in mind the words of Acts ix. 15, which twenty-seven years previously were spoken by the Lord to Ananias, just after the conversion upon the Damascus road of the great persecutor of the churches: "He (Paul) is a chosen vessel unto Me, to bear My name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel." A closer examination of the two passages, with their immediate contexts, will also reveal other common thoughts. However, be that as it may, the passage is a striking one, and is not without its lessons. Let us seek to learn some of them, and may the Lord graciously vouchsafe to us the guidance of His Holy Spirit as we reverently search the Scriptures.

I. As already suggested, probably the Apostle was primarily referring to himself under this humble figure of an "earthen vessel." He ever seemed conscious of his weaknesses, his infirmities, and his unworthiness, as so many passages in the epistles to the Corinthians show (see, *e.g.*, 1 Cor. ii. 3, 4; 2 Cor. x. 1, 10; xii. 5, 7, 9; etc.), and we cannot be surprised to hear this humble servant of God thus speaking. But I suppose the appellation is equally applicable to all who in the present day seek, to whatever small extent, to follow in service the example of this champion for the truth. Would that we had the grace of Paul to confess our uselessness in as unmeasured terms as he did!

We have not far to go in order to learn *why* so rich a treasure as the Gospel is entrusted to mere earthen vessels. The writer tells us in the same sentence, "That the ex-

cellency of the power may be of God, and not of us." This is very simple and clear, and needs no lengthy exposition. Which are prized the more—the few bricks which, in one of the walls of the National Bank, are built to enclose the standard weights and measures of pure gold, or the treasures themselves? An answer is unnecessary. Were, however, these treasures guarded in a golden chest, with a diamond-studded cover, then it is probable that *it* rather than its contents would claim the greater esteem. And so the Apostle declares that the Gospel being entrusted to humble earthen vessels, it is impossible for honour to be misbestowed. Notice now how Paul gives force to what he has been saying by describing his own humiliating circumstances (verses 8-18).

It is laid down as a principle in 1 Cor. i. 27-29, that God in His sovereignty chooses the "foolish," "weak," and "base" things of this world to do His service, giving as an explanation, "That no flesh should glory in His presence." The name of our God is Jealous, and His glory will He not give to another. Thus in the divine purpose the greatest teachers and preachers of every age have been called, not from the universities, not from the palaces, but from the people. Some of our Lord's own disciples were but fishermen with true hearts! From what spheres of life did God call men who, in His hand, were to be powerful in pulling to pieces the rotting fabric of hierarchy and popery which, in the sixteenth century, had covered the face of Christendom? Luther issued forth from the cottage of a miner; Zwingle passed his early years as a shepherd-boy upon the Swiss mountains; the father of Melancthon was nothing but a working artificer. And so, in all ages, God has seen fit to cause from insignificant beginnings mighty effects.

We notice that the simile here made use of did not originate with the Apostle Paul, for so early in the history of God's people as the time of Isaiah we find these words in the mouth of the prophet: "O, Lord . . . we are the clay,

and Thou art our potter; and we are all the work of Thy hand" (Ixiv. 8). See also one or two other Old Testament passages.

II. Such a scripture as 2 Tim. ii: 21 does not to the slightest extent militate against what we have been saying. The teaching there seems to have reference to the believer's condition for, and sphere of, service. As in a large house there are golden and silver vessels, and vessels of wood and clay, and each in its own place is useful and honourable, *if clean*, so in like manner in the visible Church on earth is found a diversity of gifts for the edification of the saints. The ruling thought in the passage seems to be the necessity of the vessel being sanctified if it is to be used. "If a man purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the Master's use, prepared unto every good work." The word "these" in the passage is, I suppose, to be connected with the previous verses, 16-18.

It is of the utmost importance for us as servants of God to bear in mind that if we desire to be used by our Master we must be clean vessels. God will not use in His service vessels impure with the dregs of pride and selfishness, blackened through constant contact with the world, or discoloured for want of burnishing. We shall need constantly to be cleansing ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (2 Cor. vii. 1), by the application of the water of the Word, if we would be a power for good. Let us, fellow-Christians, take very particular care of ourselves, and see to it that we are always *ready for use*; and being in such a condition, who can say to what honourable service we may be put, humble as we may be?

" 'My lilies have need to be watered,' the heavenly Master said;
 'Wherein shall I draw it for them, and raise each drooping head?'

" Close, close to His feet on the pathway, but *empty, and frail, and small*,
 Was an *earthen vessel* lying, that seemed of no use at all.

“ But the Master saw it and raised it from the dust in which it lay,
And smiled as He gently whispered, ‘My work it shall do to-day.

“ ‘ It is but an *earthen* vessel, but close it is lying to Me;
It is small, but *clean* and *empty*—that is all it needs to be.’ ”

The subject of practical sanctification might well be introduced here, but as it has quite recently been before us in these pages we will not stay to again go into it, important as it is.

III. But there are other lessons to be learnt from the passage which has been occupying our attention (2 Cor. iv. 7). The text suggests the thought of the earthen vessel being a place of security for the treasure of the Gospel. Baruch the scribe was charged by Jeremiah to put the deeds of the purchase of Hanameel's field in an *earthen vessel*, that they may abide many days—a place of safety. In the same way the Lord has very graciously put us in charge of the Gospel. Of course in a very special way it was confided to the great Apostle of the Gentiles, but similarly to each one of us have these unsearchable riches been entrusted.

How truly we ought, as servants of the living God, to feel our responsibility in this matter. Under the double influence of constraining love and an exercised conscience it should ever be our business to seek by all means in our power to reach the enemies of the Cross with the word of reconciliation. May we always remain conscious of the duty which we have toward the world !

Moreover, it is incumbent upon us to maintain the Gospel, inasmuch as it is in our power, in its simplicity. In these days of increasing error, when the truth is being to such a sad extent adulterated with the poison of men's minds, it is our bounden duty to stand by the Word. While others, through intellectual pride, allow rational error to become mixed up with truth, we will, with God's help, maintain the old, old Gospel in its entirety.

These thoughts which we have penned are simple and

merely suggestive. There are a few other passages which have reference to "vessels," and from which we probably might gather other lessons had we space. As it is we commend a continuance of the study in private. And may the God of all grace make us all more and more susceptible to His teaching, and more deeply conscious of our nothingness, that more truly we may be meet for His use.

CHARLES G. ROBERTS.

GLORY IN THE LORD.

MAN, to be happy, must have something or someone in which to glory; he must glory, he must boast. This is true both of the regenerate and unregenerate man; but the object in which the one glories is very different to that in which the other boasts. The unregenerate man glories in himself, his goodness, his wisdom, his riches, his fame, his nationality, his caste, his class, and anything or everything else that is beneath the sun, that goes to make up his environment down here; but all these are vanity—they are as transitory as the morning vapours; there is no real and durable substance in them—a few fleeting years and they will all be gone, and the man who gloried in them will pass naked out of the world, with not a rag in which to appear before God. Then he will be seen in very different circumstances; his wreath of fame has withered, his riches have taken to themselves wings and flown away, his class distinction has turned out to be but a pleasant dream, and lo! now he finds himself thrust down to hell; the companionship of earthly princes is abandoned for no other company than that of the "devil and his angels." The words of Job are again proven true, "They spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave."

How very vain is such glory!

But the regenerate man soars upward on the wings of

faith, far, far above the sun, and lays hold of that Man in the glory, the risen Christ of God, in whom are centred all the eternal counsels of God, in whom are deposited all true and real blessings for man; and says, "I will glory in Him alone." This I may do. He desires it. Durable riches are with Him, and that honour which fadeth not away; sound wisdom, understanding, and strength are with Him; in Him I inherit *substance*; He is made unto me wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption; before the mountains were formed He was, and shall be to all eternity. In Him, then, and Him alone, will I by grace boast, according to the exhortation, "Let him that glorieth, glory in the Lord."

Without Him I am nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing; but in Him I am complete and perfect (Col. ii. 10; Heb. x. 14), have all things, am enriched with all spiritual blessing, and can do all things. Here is One, then, in whom I may justly glory, of whom I may indeed be proud. His wisdom, His grace, and His power—in these I may and will boast; but of myself I am nothing, nor is there anything in or of man naturally in which I can boast before God, or with any real and solid satisfaction.

My soul, glory thou not in any creature thing; accept all the temporal blessings that God in His boundless mercy gives; accept them with a thankful heart; take occasion of every fresh mercy to renew thy song of praise, but glory only in the Lord. The same applies also to thine endowments and spiritual gifts; glory not in these as if they were *essentially* thine own, as if thou didst not receive them (1 Cor. iv. 7). They were given to thee to be used to glorify the Giver; glory then in Him alone, His love, His mighty power, His rich grace, and His boundless mercy, for all these are engaged on thy behalf. If thou art successful in His service, if He please thus to use you, do not vainly take the glory to thyself, but keep thou humble, and give Him the praise, hide thyself behind him, and the joy and blessing that thou shalt find in Him will be infinitely greater than that obtained by

appropriating to thyself the glory that belongs to Him; give Him the glory, and He will give thee the blessing now and the reward by-and-by.

Alas! dear reader, how very slow we, as the Lord's servants, are to give Him all the glory; how we like to accredit ourselves a little in the eyes of men, rather than to take occasion of the success to exalt Him. It was not so with Daniel; see how careful he was when interpreting the king's dream to give God all the glory. The king asked, "*Art thou able to make known unto me the dream?*" Daniel's reply is, "*There is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets,*" &c.; "*but as for me, this secret is not revealed unto me for any wisdom that I have more than any living.*" How beautiful!

The Lord will take care of our character. He will give us what commendation we need, only let us be concerned to give Him the glory, and find our own heart's portion in glorying in Him. When our hearts are thus devoted, and our eyes thus single, we take occasion of the success of others in the Lord's work to praise Him as much as if the success were our own, for the one great desire of the heart is that He should be glorified. Thus the spirit of envy gives place to the spirit of praise, and a fault-finding propensity is effectively checked by earnest and sincere prayer for our fellow-servants, in those who are glorying in the Lord, and not in themselves or their work.

We believe that spiritual pride lay at the bottom of most of the divisions that have of late years taken place among those Christians known as Brethren; however, that it is spiritual pride that maintains the barrier, and causes the sad, sad rival claims of the respective parties to the same "right position," is obvious. To desire something to distinguish us in a party way from other true Christians is a fascination of pride. "We only are on the true ground of the Church of God." "We alone truly gather around the *Lord's* table." "We are in the right place, and all who disagree with us do so because they do not see their place

with us." "We only bear testimony to the truth of the One Body." "We are the vessel of testimony." O what food for pride is here!

Would the reader believe that different parties of true children of God, who are otherwise godly, devoted, and intelligent, are making such claims as the above, and that several parties make the same exclusive claim? Alas! it is too true. We have only here put into plain words what the whole contention of each party, as such (for there are many bright individual exceptions), maintains. "You have left the vessel of testimony," said a brother to another the other day, because he had gone to one of the other parties, just as earnest, sound, and truth loving.

We believe in maintaining the truth of God and scriptural order in the Assembly, but let us not pretend to, and glory in, such sectarian and presumptuous distinctions as the above, for is it not something like glorying in our shame? Just as the individual who is nearest to God will be the last to say it of himself, but will show it in his life, so the company who is nearest the truth, or rather most under the power of it, will be the last to say this of themselves, but will show it by their practice.

We fully believe in the truth that holiness becometh the House of God, and that scriptural order and discipline should be maintained in the Church, and that a path of separation from the world, and from the corruption of Christianity, is the path of a child of God who desires to be consistent with his calling and relationship. We know, too, that professing Christians generally will speak against this way, and this is why those who love the Lord and His truth, and at least *desire* to walk in obedience to His Word, should cultivate more love for and fellowship with each other, and not stand so much upon their pride of party position.

We were truly grieved by an example of this ecclesiastical pretention at a meeting of brethren in oversight in London the other day. An elderly and devoted brother, who was

more taken up with Christ dwelling in the heart, and love to all saints, than with "the ground on which we gather," spoke a few words from the prayer of Ephesians iii., dwelling especially upon the words, "Comprehend with *all saints*." What he said was entirely in harmony with the Word of God. We believe no *unprejudiced* person would say otherwise; his remarks went mainly to show how dear *all* the saints were to Christ, and hence how dear they should be to us. Ignoring, too, the ecclesiastical halo and mysticism that have been cast about the passage in Matt. xviii. which speaks of gathering to His Name, he rather took it in the simplicity that is natural to the passage, and repudiated its monopoly by the company of brethren represented at that meeting.

But, sad to say, after these much-needed remarks a brother made an attack, in a spirit worthy of his own words, upon the speaker for extending to others the privilege of gathering to the Name of Christ! and even entered the presence of God and rehearsed in prayer his prejudicial views, permeated with ecclesiastical pride. And more staid and elderly brothers, who ought to know better, backed up the attack; and all this happened after an afternoon's prayer-meeting, during which the brethren were mourning before God their sin and the sin of the Church. But we want something more than pious platitudes; we need to *amend our ways* and order *our doings* before the Lord.

With such pride of ecclesiastical position, with such a want of love and sympathy with the Lord's people, with such a tendency to judge all except ourselves, and to repudiate fellowship with intelligent and devoted children of God in their efforts in the cause of Christ, we need not wonder at the lack of power among us, the want of interest and enterprise in the spread of the truth among the Lord's people, and also the lack of blessing in Gospel testimony. Alas! alas! the glorying of brethren in their position at the present time ill comports with their general condition. May our gracious Lord renew a right spirit within us, and give us to

know truth and wisdom in the inward parts. If we write strongly, it is because we feel sure that the disciplining hand of our God has been upon us for some years past on account of our ecclesiastical pretention.

Just in that proportion in which we become occupied with *ourselves* as vessels of the testimony, the testimony itself becomes weakened. If we cleave to the Lord and His truth in real simplicity and purpose of heart, and enter more into His thoughts about all His saints—the whole Church—looking at them in relation to Him as the Head, and not so much in relation to ourselves as a few of the members who boast ourselves on being in the right place while looking down upon them as in the wrong; there will then be the activity of love instead of pride amongst us.

We do not advocate compromise of the truth when we urge those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart, though belonging to different parties or sects, to draw closer together in real Christian love and fellowship, and effort in the cause of Christ, but the practice of it. There are in existence several parties of God's people who equally love the truth, and are seeking to follow it out, and who are equally encompassed with infirmity and failure, who with a little more of the patience and grace of Christ might be thoroughly united in real and Scriptural fellowship; they are separated alone by minor yet exaggerated questions that in themselves only call for grace and forbearance, and by what is worse, ecclesiastical pretensions.

There are also many dear children of God among the different denominations with whom we should seek fellowship and communion in the things of God in an individual way, even when we cannot associate ourselves with the system in which they are found. In these days of peril, of false doctrine and worldliness, we should be more concerned that those who alike love the Lord, are sound in the faith, and desire to walk in obedience to Him, should be drawn closer together in real—if not in conventional—communion,

speaking often one to another, should be more united in their stand for the truth, and more mutual in their desire to help each other. How pleasing this would be to our blessed Lord! He would take note of it; it would get an entrance into His book of remembrance. Let us remember that moral condition is more than ecclesiastical position, inasmuch as ecclesiastical position is nothing (unless indeed it be hypocrisy) without it; and that the growth and edification of the saints of—the Church (not of a party) is the one great object of the Epistles.

We appeal to those of the Lord's dear people whom these pages may reach, and who are sound in the faith, and desire to help in the edification of His people (irrespective of party) in love—for love is the great principle of building up (see Eph. vi. 11, 17)—of construction; but envy and strife are destructive in their character, and envy is the twin-sister of pride, and indeed every evil work is its offspring; we appeal, we say, to those who desire this, and to take a firm stand at the same time for the maintenance of sound doctrine, to help us as fellow-workers for the Lord in our efforts towards such an end.

THE OUTLOOK.

HO! watchman, in yon turret high,
With ear alert, and wakeful eye;
What is the outlook, say?
What means the night-wind's heavy moan,
The distant thunder's threat'ning tone—
What words do they convey?
To thee who, watching from that height,
Well knows the language of the night,
The charge of each dark hour!
What doth the gathering clouds portend,
To what doth all this tumult trend,
This range of martial power?

“The outlook for this guilty world,
Where Grace her banner has unfurled,
And long has been despised,
Is gloomy as Death’s sable pall,
For Judgment, though delayed, *must* fall,
Where Mercy is not prized.”

Alas, too, for religious “*taves*,”
Though each the Christian title bears,
Gathered in varied bands,
Until night’s shadows all are past,
Then shall they in the pit be cast,
Bound by angelic hands.

Ye who deny the Christ of God,
Say “there’s no virtue in His blood
To save the souls of men.”
What will ye do in that great day,
When He His glory shall display?
What will ye answer then?

’Tis but a “little while,” and, lo,
Like Orient sunbeam’s lust’rous glow,
The “*Morning Star*” shall rise.
The Bridegroom for the bride shall come,
To take her to the Father’s home
Away beyond the skies.

Such is the outlook—dark and bright;
Heaven’s bridal morn—earth’s deepest night;
Contemporaneous they.
While untold joys the ransomed find,
Woe to the lost ones left behind
In God’s appointed Day.

A. W. P. S.

“FROM JUDAISM TO CHRISTIANITY.”

DEAR BROTHER,

Thanks for your letter and the little booklet enclosed, “From Judaism to Christianity.” I am sorry to see such a laboured effort to get rid of the simple institution of baptism by water in circulation. O that professed servants of Christ would pause and think seriously before the Lord ere adding to the great confusion which already exists in the Church by sporting their own ideas.

I cannot go into every question that the writer of the little paper raises, nor is it necessary to do so; when once his premises are shown to be wrong, his whole argument falls to the ground, and all the Scriptures that he calls to his aid are then seen to be misapplied. He takes advantage of a transitory state of things to attach to the system that was passing away something that was distinctly given as belonging to the dispensation that was just dawning, and fails to observe the distinction between the purposes and ways of God. As to God’s purpose, we clearly learn from subsequent revelations that the new dispensation and the Church were before Him most distinctly from Pentecost; as to His ways with His earthly people, He would so order these as to leave them without excuse.

The same distinction is to be observed before the Cross. As to His purpose, He had the Cross distinctly before Him; while as to His ways, Christ was presented to the Jews as their Messiah and for their reception. For though delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, the responsibility of man was to have full play, hence the fact that the Lord was thus delivered did not mitigate in the slightest degree the sin of the people in taking, by wicked hands, and crucifying Him.

Thus it was with regard to the nation of Israel during the time of the Acts, though His purpose concerning Christianity was being developed, yet in His gracious and forbearing ways He lingered over the nation of Israel, still holding, so

to speak, the door open to them if they would even now repent, hence the attitude of the Jewish Christians was to some extent in favour of this, presenting a mixture of Judaism and Christianity, for the former had already begun to recede before the gradual dawn of the latter, when baptism (not John's) was introduced. Can it be that baptism was given to bolster up a system that was passing away, and to "associate" even Gentile Christians with that system!

These forbearing ways of God had a bearing, too, on those among the nations who were truly converted, for as Judaism was of God in its place, it could scarcely be expected that they would at one blow, as it were, make a clean cut from it, so God graciously and patiently allows the light of Christianity to dawn gradually, and the Jewish system to recede in the same way before it. It is acknowledged that Christianity is revealed in stages, and why not Judaism recede in different stages. But surely baptism, which was instituted after the death and resurrection of Christ, was not associated with the fold *out of which* the Lord was about to lead His people.

All this would go to confirm that *all* believers were seen of God as connected with the new dispensation, and not with that which was by His will passing away. This is very important, because if all believers were looked at as thus being in Christianity while the ties of Judaism were by the will of God being one after the other broken off, then baptism, which was *introduced* and practised at the time, is Christian and not Jewish. And it is incontrovertible that baptism was practised by all the apostles—Paul as well as the rest—and among Christians everywhere at that time, and by the early Christian fathers, some of whom were contemporary with the apostles.

Another distinction that is ignored in the paper under review is that which existed between believing Jews and the nation as a whole, so, when speaking of the blessedness of

Israel and their being cut off, it entirely overlooks the important fact that there were a large number of Jewish believers spoken of as a remnant according to the election of grace, of which Paul himself was one; these were not associated with the blind nation, yet this paper leaves us to that conclusion. They were undoubtedly brought out of Judaism into Christianity (see John x. xvii. and Eph. ii.). In accordance with this omission (necessary to the argument of the booklet), the writer in his reference to Peter's dissembling at Antioch should have observed that Paul's rebuke was based upon the truth that they were one with the Gentile believers saved in the same way and brought into the same relationship. But I find it a little difficult to grasp what the writer has before him sometimes, and could wish he had been a little more explicit. For instance, on page 11, in his reference to the Lord as the baptiser, he seems to believe that all believers at Pentecost and after, "till the body is complete," were brought into the Church. He also says on page 4 that we have Christian truths taught among the Gentiles in Acts xiii., and yet, on another page that "the change of dispensation occurred, not at the beginning, but at the end of apostolic ministry, as recorded in the Acts," and then he associates the believing Jews with the nation, and their hope as such—in effect at least, and certainly tries to make a distinction between Gentile believers and Jewish believers, again failing, as in the instance given above, to notice that which so beautifully shows their unity, namely, the interchange of fellowship between the first Gentile assembly and the Jewish church. The way in which he makes two distinct aspects of the Gospel, seems to be brought in here to widen the distance between the Jewish believers and those from among the Gentiles, whereas Romans xvi. 25 is simply a newly-revealed feature added to the Gospel with which the Apostle introduces the epistle. The Gospel as given in the first chapter is certainly the gospel of Christianity; indeed, we have in it the great truth that he himself speaks of as a

distinct truth of Christianity, *i.e.*, the Lord presented as the Son of God; it gives, also, faith in Him for justification and righteousness, things which the writer in question also calls Christian truth (page 4). It is quite true, we repeat, that peculiar features are added to it in further developments, giving it a dispensational character, but it is the same Gospel. We may see two aspects in it, but they both apply alike to believing Jews and believing Gentiles. It is also true that the Apostle sometimes refers to the double character of his ministry, nevertheless both characters of ministry were in connection with and for the propagation of Christianity.

Again, as showing how the writer makes everything fit in with his idea that believing Jews were on different ground to believing Gentiles (for this is the only conclusion that can be drawn from his argument); he applies Paul's words, "Unto the Jews became I as a Jew," to that Apostle as having fellowship with Jewish believers and his taking part with them in their ministry, as if those Jewish believers were still of the nation and not on the same ground as Gentile believers. We have only to turn up the passage and look at the context to see that he had before him Jews in their unbelief, for it was a question of gaining them by the Gospel, as it was of gaining also those without law.

I don't know what any intelligent reader can think of the following paragraph concerning Romans vi.: "Paul writes to baptised persons (chap. vi.) not to teach baptism—that is not his subject; he means it to illustrate the truth that by the death of Christ a believer associated with him (baptism being a figurative burial) is justified from sin." Strange perversion this! He does not only "*name* it to illustrate the truth," but he adopts the *use of it* for them and for himself, thus illustrating in a practical way the blessed truth of death and resurrection with Christ. "Know ye not that so many of *us* as were baptised," &c. Yet we are told he did not write thus to teach baptism! Really this is trifling.

Tell me in what way it could be more forcibly taught? We have the doctrine and example of the Apostle himself, and his approval of the practice of it by others, in this passage, and yet he writes not to teach it! What will we not do sometimes to accommodate the Word of God to a pet theory of our own!

In the next paragraph occurs the quotation, with the writer's parenthetical note, "Ye were planted together (associated) in the likeness of His death," applied to Jew and Gentile, "The means of association of Jew and Gentile in confession of Jesus Christ." Now, it is quite true that they were associated in this as in all else that was common to believing Jews and Gentiles; but this is clearly not the thought here. We have only to read the passage to show that it is planted together with Christ; there is nothing about the association of Jew and Gentile in the passage!

I have treated the subject purely in view of water baptism, as the arguments of the writer are directed against this, but there is a theory in existence which shuts out the apostles and early believing Jews from the Church, and makes a separate company of them, forming them into an apostolic Church as distinct from the Gentile Church, which is based upon exactly the same line of argument that is pursued by this writer, but as he leaves things uncertain and vague as to whether he believes such theory or not, I do not go into it. I hope these few remarks will help you.—Yours faithfully in Christ,

J. H. BURRIDGE.

RITUALISM AND THE BISHOP.

THE ignorance of learned divines on the simple teaching of Scripture astonishes even the illiterate but earnest and simple Christian reader of the Word of God.

The whole of the New Testament is united in its testimony that nothing but a radical change—the new birth—will avail anything for man before God, that without it man is left in alienation, he cannot see the Kingdom of God; that a mere

form of godliness without the power and reality thereof, the profession without the possession, leaves a man worse than he was before ; better that he should remain an avowed unbeliever than that he should become a hypocrite. The observance of ordinances and ceremonies, the partaking of sacraments, &c., without having obeyed the Gospel of God, without having been born again, by the Word and Spirit of God, is nothing more or less than hypocrisy. Ordinances and ceremonies, or Ritualism in any shape or form, are not the Gospel of the grace of God. Indeed, as the Epistle to the Galatians shows, they are incompatible with it, and even opposed to it. See also Col. ii. 14-23.

If it be said that these passages refer only to Jewish ordinances, the reply is that they are not replaced by others, *i.e.*, we have not in Christianity one system of ordinances taking the place of another, but ordinances generally displaced by Christ; we have in Himself all the truths that were prefigured in those shadows; but now, having the substance, we need not another system of shadows, types, or figures. It is not by giving heed to symbols, but by holding the Head, that the body is nourished, knit together, and increased. The Gospel presents Christ as the only Saviour to man, and not a religion of ceremonies—the Gospel of the blessed God carrying the glad tidings of pardon and peace through Christ and His finished work, and not through an ecclesiastical system (it is not through the Church to Christ, but through Christ into the true Church); and He will come to take vengeance on them that know not God and obey not the *Gospel* of our Lord Jesus Christ. It does not matter what a man is, what religious name he bears, or what church he belongs to, if he has not obeyed the Gospel of salvation he is not saved, and hence exposed to judgment ; but if he has obeyed that Gospel, of course he is saved, and may be sure of it on the authority of God's Word.

Truly there are two simple institutions (call them ordinances if you like), and only two, associated with Christianity,

viz., Baptism and the Lord's Supper. But these are both for those only who have believed, and hence are saved not by the figure (baptism), but by the reality—the death and resurrection of Christ. Both baptism and the Lord's Supper refer us to the death of Christ as that which has accomplished everything for us in relation to God—baptism figuring forth our identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection, which is judicially true in God's account, for Christ went into death and burial, and rose again for us; while in the Lord's Supper He Himself is simply recalling our hearts to the fact that He, in love, laid down His life for us. It is thus just a simple thing to do in remembrance of Him, though of course very real to faith. They are not presented as means whereby God bestows grace upon us, *i.e.*, as a means of grace, but as bringing before us the manifestation of His grace in Christ our Sacrifice. There is nothing whatever intrinsic in them by themselves, for if any one conforms to the one or partakes of the other without that faith which has already laid hold of the reality thus signified, they profit not one bit. And, indeed, so far from being a means of grace in such a case, they become a means of judgment. However, such is the case in regard to the Lord's Supper. See 1 Cor. ii. 23-34.

Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as the One who died for sinful men and rose again, is the only way of salvation, hence it is Christ the crucified One that we have to present to sinners as the only Saviour; it is the Gospel announcing pardon, peace, and a full salvation through His death and resurrection that we have to preach to all men throughout the whole world, and anything that displaces or obscures this Gospel, pretending to effect salvation or any blessing for man in any other way, is nothing better than a delusion.

Yet the Archbishop of York in his inaugural sermon at the Church Congress, when arguing in favour of Ritualism, tells us that the Church should "counteract the attractions of the outward things of this world, and awaken the interest of the careless in their religious life by presenting before them more

prominently"—what? Christ, and Him crucified? no, but—"the symbols of the religious faith."

This dignitary of the Church does not tell us what those symbols are, nor is this necessary. We have only to look at the Church to see for ourselves. They are made up of other outward attractions, such as a display of haberdashery and lighted candles, processions, postures, and other buffoonish acts.

The Primate, in his visitation address, tries to patch up things a little in view of recent attacks upon such symbols, but to all intelligent Bible readers he only makes matters worse. He says, "Ceremonial is not in itself a matter of very great importance, but it touches our human nature on its weakest side." Of what avail is this while the conscience is untouched? Further on in the same address he says, "The large tolerance of diversity of opinion in the Church, as contrasted with the strictness of the Church in regard to ceremonial, has certainly tended to make many believe that they have a right to claim the same freedom in the one as in the other. If they may teach, why may they not also illustrate that teaching by ceremonial, which seems to them appropriate to the purpose? But to this the answer is plain. It is the unity of the ceremonial that makes the diversity of opinion possible. The ceremonial stands before us as the order of the Church; the teaching is, and must be, to a very great extent the voice of the individual." Thus we are told at one moment that "ceremonial is not in itself a matter of very great importance," yet at another moment that "it stands before us as the order of the Church!"

If the Archbishop had just left the matter thus, we should have contented ourselves with the inevitable conclusion that the order of the Church was "not a matter of very great importance." But it is not left there, for the Primate, in the latter passage, gives it, strange to say, an importance above doctrine. The clergy may teach what they like with impunity as long as they observe the unity of the ceremonial,

which latter makes the "toleration of diversity of opinion possible." Thus we see the great and vital truths of Christianity may be denied so long as the ceremonial has its place. At least, the former may go unprotected, if the strictness of the latter is observed. If, then, ceremonial is not a matter of very great importance, though it be the unity and order of the Church (!), doctrine is of less importance.

We are glad to know many ministers in the Church of England who think otherwise, and give the great doctrines of our glorious Christianity the first place in their hearts and in their teaching. And perhaps one good result of the tolerance of opinion is that such may boldly preach real and living faith in Christ and Him crucified as the only ground of salvation; as long as they conform to the ceremonial act of baptism, which professes to regenerate the child and make him a member of Christ and child of God, they may and do contradict the same in their preaching by proclaiming to those who have been baptised the truth of the Gospel, *i.e.*, that the new birth—that real salvation—can only be theirs by real and personal faith in Christ crucified—that they must be begotten by the living Word of God.

We note, too, that the prayer-book is made of equal authority with the Bible. The Primate, referring to the Bible and the prayer-book, says, "*These, to us, supreme authorities.*" Another source of authority is at the same time brought before us, *viz.*, the Act of Parliament. So that the Bible, prayer-book, and Act of Parliament are the three great authorities for the Established Church. If any one of these authorities is more open to be questioned than the other two, it is the first—the Bible (!); for the Archbishop has declared in another place that there are inaccuracies, and even contradictions, and speaks of these not as the mistakes of copyists or translators, but as those of the original writer. Nor, alas! is he the only one in the Church of England that uses his freedom of opinion to undermine the Divine authority of the Bible. There are many others who do so, but they must not question that of the prayer-book!

This is just what we might expect. If other authorities than the Word of God are sought, or even created, by the professing Church, we might be sure it is for sanction of practices not authorised by that Word, and that the authority of that Word would be weakened by authorities established and appealed to outside it. The Primate also justifies prayers for the dead on the ground that they are not forbidden by the New Testament. On the same ground, prayers for demons might be advocated!

To those simple readers of the Scriptures to whom the Word of God is the *only* supreme authority, the only source of appeal, and the only guide of the Church (and, thank God, they are many), all this is extremely sad. It dishonours Christ, discredits His Word, stumbles His people, and deceives sinners. Poor bishops! they call for the pity and prayers of God's real truth-loving people; let us then pray for them earnestly now while they are living, as our intelligence will not allow us to pray for them when they are dead.

"WHAT IS THE SPIRIT SAYING TO THE CHURCHES?"



OUR attention has been called to two articles in *Things to Come*, viz., "What is the Spirit saying to the Churches?" and the "Counsel of God and the Purpose of God," which pursue a line of argument that we are not able to follow. And as we are sure that the editor of that paper will not blame us for searching the Scriptures to see if the things taught in the articles named are really so, we the more readily make the following few candid remarks. In doing so, however, we would not have it thought that we depreciate that valuable paper. There is so little real interest in sound and solid exposition of Scripture that one is thankful for every effort that is made to encourage it. What even Christians like in these days is something spiced and frothy, by which they are often led far away from sound doctrine.

The former of the two articles limits what the Spirit is saying to the Churches to the Epistles of Paul (adapting them to the significant number of seven), addressed to the following seven Churches:—Romans, Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians. "These," we are told, "contain 'all truth' into which the Spirit of Truth was to 'guide' us." It is noted that it is "all the truth" in the Revised Version.

Thus the writer asks us to believe that "all the truth" which, according to our blessed Lord's words, the Holy Ghost should guide us into, is given in these seven Epistles (there are nine, though addressed to only seven Churches), which are, we are told, "The perfect embodiment of the Spirit's teaching for the Churches," and contain "all the truth"! Do we not then need the guidance of the Spirit for all other parts of the truth of God? Indeed we have to ask, Are there any other parts? for "all the truth" is all the truth, and we are told that these nine Epistles "contain all the truth." We suppose the writer means all the truth that applies directly to the Church (for we know he loves the whole Word of God, and esteems all the books of the Old and New Testaments as such); but he does not say this—he simply says, "all the truth," and the limiting it to the nine epistles referred to finds not the slightest support in the passage itself, or in any other.

The passage evidently speaks of "all the truth" as compared with part of it. The Lord had been teaching them some things—part of the truth; and He had much more to teach, "many things" yet to say unto them, but, says He, "ye cannot hear them now." Who can read this passage without associating what was yet to be taught by the Spirit with what the Lord teaches here, as a further development of the same line of things—the same truths? He had been teaching them part of the truth, as much as they could then hear; but when the Spirit of Truth should come He would guide into "*all* the truth." For most certainly the Lord was giving in this part of John's Gospel "things new."

Yet in the article under review the very words which are obviously intended to embrace the whole truth (not only what had already been revealed, but what should be revealed when the Lord had ascended up on high and the Holy Ghost come down), are strangely construed to mean part of it only!

Truly the guiding into all truth implies the understanding of it, the being able *rightly* to divide it, and to distinguish between the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God. But is not this just what the article before us fails to do? It divides, but does it *rightly* divide? For truth that evidently bears directly upon the Church of God is excluded from what the Spirit is saying to her.

What about the heavenly inheritance, the sincere milk of the Word, the suffering with and for Christ, the exhortation to resist the devil, "stedfast in the faith" ("The faith—an expression meaning the whole code of Christian doctrine), the adding to our faith virtue and other Christian graces, and the exhortation to the *elders*, of the Epistles of Peter? What about the love, truth, and righteousness so largely inculcated in the Epistles of John? The deity, manhood, and perfect sacrifice of Christ also as presented to us in Hebrews; and the Epistles to Timothy, in which he is exhorted to appoint elders, and to give various solemn charges to the saints generally, and the needed exhortation to sound doctrine and godly life. What, we ask, about these? Has the Spirit of Truth nothing to say to the Churches in all these?

Moreover, what about all the predictions of things to come in the Gospels and the Revelation? Are they not embraced in the words "shall guide you into all truth," and "shall show you things to come"? Or are we able to grasp them without His showing?

Shall we be told that the writer of the article is speaking of epistles addressed to "the Churches" as such (that use the formula "to the Church, etc."), and "not merely to the

experience of individuals." If so, we ask what is meant by that expression? If the writer means that they are addressed to the saints as a concrete body, and not to the individual consciences of the saints that make up that body, we utterly reject the idea; but if the epistles that are addressed to the Churches gain their object by acting upon the consciences of individuals that go to make up the Assembly, then we reply, the Spirit is speaking also in other epistles to individuals that go to make up the Assembly, and giving directions such as can only apply to them in their Assembly capacity.

Surely the fact that some other epistles are more general in their introduction, and not addressed to a local Church only, does not say that they have no direct application to the Churches generally. If one epistle is addressed to "strangers scattered," or "sojourners of the dispersion," it is to *Christian* sojourners. If another is addressed to Hebrews, it is to Hebrew Christians whom the Spirit of God would bring out of their Judaism; and if other epistles were written to individuals, it is to servants of God who were to teach in the Assemblies or Churches what was communicated to them; however, such was the case with those to Timothy. And, in any case, all these are included in the words, "shall guide you into all truth," which were spoken, not to the Church as such, but to the servants of God. We make these latter remarks in reply to the foot-note to the article.

(To be continued.)

"CHRISTIAN SCIENCE."

THERE is a new sect (or at least of very recent date) in America who call themselves "Christian Scientists." As their teaching is diametrically opposed to the doctrine of Christianity, and dangerously near to the sin against the Holy Ghost (for though they do not say that Christ accomplished His miracles by the power of Satan as

the Pharisees did, they do say that He did them by a fixed law that is attainable by any or every man, thus denying that they were accomplished by the finger of God directly), the children of God should be warned against it.

The cardinal point in their teaching is that healing is a science—a fixed law—not as practised by physicians, but as accomplished by Christ, and what we call miracles, such as the mighty works of Christ, are not really so, but are accomplished by a higher law which they call "the power of mind over matter." They tell us that Christ accomplished His miracles by this law, and that the same power is attainable by every one who will give attention to the conditions of the same.

The Scripture tells us that Christ did His mighty works by the finger of God, or by the power of the Holy Ghost. Is, then, God or the Holy Ghost a law only, an abstract science. Away with the thought, as worthy only of the infidel or the downgrade theologian of the present day, which latter puts science in the place of God. In miracles as accomplished by Moses, by Christ, or by His Apostles, is seen the direct intervention of the power of God, as contrasted with His ordinary working in nature, hence a manifestation of Himself in a special way.

In explaining this higher law they tell us that there is no real pain or sickness if only the mind can assert its power over the body. For instance, if you have a very bad headache you have only to persuade yourself that there is nothing the matter with you, and the pain is felt no longer. If the power of mind over matter is thus asserted, the cure is effected, they say, hence in applying this law they seek to exercise a kind of subtle, sometimes almost mesmeric, influence over their patients, until the latter is so lifted out of himself that he fancies himself cured; and, indeed, in cases of nervous disease temporary cure may be effected, but this is by no higher law—it is entirely mental. The disease really consisted in a morbid self-occupation through over-

strain of some kind. Exercise some influence over the mind, introduce some change of occupation for the mind, present some fresh object to absorb the attention, and the patient is better, for the time at least.

Who is there among those in the habit of visiting from house to house much who has not effected such cures? The writer not long since visited a lady in a fearful state of nervous depression and mental agony. She thought herself quite ill, and really was so. One commenced to talk about the poor, suffering people around her who had not the home comforts that she herself possessed, but who had real trials of every kind; to remind her of her happy future as a true believer, and persuade her to visit the poor and distressed, assuring her that she would be better and find herself happy the moment she commenced to really live to make others happy. About three months later she testified to a complete cure, and her own happiness, now that her mind and heart were occupied in seeking the good of others, and that the cure came the moment she began to think of the ills of others instead of her own. Many such cases could be told.

A doctor told me some time ago that he knew some years since a doctor who had a lot of nervous patients; he knew they did not want medicine, that if they were only persuaded and convinced that there was nothing the matter with them they would be better. But if he told them this, they would have said that he did not understand their case, so he began by giving nothing but coloured water, with the assurance that it would cure them. There was no doubt about it, he affirmed—it never failed; indeed, if in any case it failed he should conclude that the patient was not suffering from what he or she supposed, and sure enough the cure was certain, the patient invariably expressing great gratification, and thus the doctor became celebrated for that kind of disease. Yes, the cures were effected, but it was the power of the doctor's mind and not his medicine that effected them.

All such cases with the "Christian Scientists" go as tes-

timonies to their higher law—their special science. It is from this class of sufferers that they get their proofs. But their teaching itself is contrary to reason and experience, opposed to Scripture teaching, and refuted by stubborn fact.

If you ask why they cannot raise the dead as Christ did, you will elicit a combination of evasion, mysticism, and presumption. They tell you that the body is nothing, that its resurrection is not the essential thing, that Christ raised the body for example's sake, but it is for us to show that the spiritual significance is the most important thing—death is but a mortal dream; indeed, with them neither pain nor death are stern realities. If you are suffering pain your mind must exert itself and show its power over matter—the body—and when you have succeeded in persuading yourself that there is nothing the matter with you, so it shall be! For, strange to say, though they speak of the body as nothing, and of the mind as everything, their whole religious system and all their efforts are concentrated on the body; to heal the body is their great work—the sum and substance of their religion.

We might find it comparatively easy to understand how a fanciful lady like Mrs. Eddy (the founder of the sect) could write a mystical and dreamy book, propagating an ideal theory as far from the possible to man as it is from the truth, as much opposed to science as it is to Christianity, and as foreign to experience as it is destitute of evidence; but how so many people could take it seriously and sincerely, and vainly attempt to practice such a foolish and illogical theory, finds its explanation alone in the perversities of human nature. Yet such is the case. Thousands of people in America have adopted this self-condemned and impracticable yet fascinating theory, and have christened it with two of the most taking and respected names in our language, *i.e.*, "Christian Science!" They have formed themselves into quite a large society, and have recently established themselves in London.

That it is necessary to warn Christians against such a system is obvious from the fact that already many have been deceived and led astray.

The writer met in America a gentleman whom he had known in Scotland as a professed Christian, and who had a good deal of intelligence in the letter of the Word, if not much devotedness in his life; but one was somewhat surprised as he offered his card, with "Christian Science Healer" on it.

It behoves the servants of Christ who see these evils, and the danger to which the Lord's people are exposed from them, to raise a warning voice. The apostles are often found bidding us to beware of the evils around us, especially in the way of false teaching.

How great and varied are the perversities of the human heart! Materialists of every class give the body undue prominence above the spirit, and think that the body being dissolved there is no conscious part of man left; but Christian Scientists give the spirit undue prominence above the body, and appear to treat the body as no real part of man; that is, in their theory but not in their practice; here the body claims all attention. Such is the inconsistency of the system!

But man is made up of body, soul, and spirit; as such he sinned, and pain and death are the consequences of that sin. Was not the sin actual and real? Certainly; so then are the pain and death. Was it not so to our crucified Saviour? Man is in conscious existence apart from the body, but incomplete—unclothed, as Scripture puts it: hence the resurrection, by which man (redeemed man, at least) will be clothed upon with an eternal body.

But other reflections present themselves. If the sufferings of the body are really nothing, if the mind can rise so superior to these as to ignore their existence and treat them as nothing, why not treat the vices of the body in the same way? It is the body that sins, and it is nothing so long as the mind can conform to a higher law, and so persuade itself. If it be

argued that the mind is responsible for the deeds of the body, as *it* acts through the body, we reply, just so; then the body is something, and the mind conforms to the laws of the body—eating and drinking, &c.—hence the pain of the body is a real thing to the mind.

But logically, that false and flighty theory which teaches that the spirit, by conforming to a higher law, can ignore the pain of the body, which is actual and real, because it is not the real part of man, can also on the same principle ignore the deeds of the body, which are actual and real.

It is either true that man is responsible for all that is done in the body, and affected by all that the body is subject to, or he is neither responsible for nor affected by what happens in or by the body. It is obvious that if responsible for what happens in the body, he must be affected by what happens.

Whether looked at from a scriptural, a logical, an experimental, or a moral point of view, the position of the "Christian Scientist" is entirely untenable.

THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CHURCH.

IN the first three chapters of the Book of Revelation we see that the Church as God's witness or light-bearer in this dark world has failed, and has consequently herself become an object of judgment. Seven is a representative, a complete number. So that in the seven candlesticks or Churches that John sees (i. 20) we have a panoramic view or picture of the Church from the early days of Pentecost (Acts ii.) until the Lord comes and judges it as an apostate thing (Rev. xviii. 2; xix. 2; iii. 16). Of course in Rev. i. ii. iii. actual and existing Churches in Asia are referred to, but the Spirit of God, in selecting and depicting the practical state of these, gives also a comprehensive or pictorial view of the whole.

Notice that the call to "Repent" is found all down the line. The address to the Philadelphian Assembly has been made to apply to so-called "Brethren" and the position that

they have taken in these days; but whether this is a just and true application of Holy Scripture, and whether the marks of the Philadelphian Assembly are indeed to be found within the many circles of "Brethren" to-day, I must leave the reader to determine.

My own thought is that that which takes the Philadelphian position (and which at one time bore some of the marks) has now drifted into the condition of the Laodicean Assembly, *outside of which* Christ is found. The evident teaching of this and other Scriptures is that the Church has apostatised from the truth, consequently judgment begins at the House of God, and the righteous (here on earth) are saved with difficulty.

No Church community is saved as a whole. The collective thing is a failure, and goes to shipwreck (see Acts xxvii.). In the most select companies the worst of men are found. The Spirit of God in Rev. iii. addresses those (individuals) in the Churches who have ears to hear (verses 12, 13, 20, 21, 22).

It is for us to have circumcised ears, seeking to overcome by cleaving fast to Him who has overcome (1 John v. 45; John xvi. 33; Acts xi. 23; xiii. 43; xiv. 22).

Let us earnestly endeavour to walk as He walked, and so be personally pleasing to Him (Heb. xi. 5; 1 Peter i. 13-22; iv. 7; 2 Peter iii. 14).

Of course if we honestly seek to be true to our Lord persecution is the inevitable result, for "all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. ii. 22). The effect of this in these last days is only to throw all true and loyal hearts together (2 Tim. ii. 22), and thus is formed the only thing that now answers to the Jewish remnant of Zeph. iii. 12, 13, and Malachi iii. 16, 17, 18).

R. M. HOLMAN.

THE CHRISTIAN OUTLOOK.

PRACTICAL PARAGRAPHS.

WE insert in this issue a very opportune article by our esteemed contributor, J. James, on "Receiving One Another." We fear that the sectarian prejudice which it condemns runs so high, and the truly Catholic spirit—the spirit of Christ—which it inculcates, is, alas! so little cultivated among brethren, that it will not meet with the approval of many of our readers. Nevertheless, believing that the article teaches what we are—and have been for some years past—convinced is the truth of God, we make no apology for its insertion.

We know it becomes very difficult in these sectarian days to express what we mean about collective responsibility and privilege without perhaps inadvertently using some sectarian term, or sectarianising some precious scriptural phrase; but the sad part about it is that the sectarian *spirit* exists, and such terms become the natural expression thereof. It is certain that when the scripture exhortations to reciprocity of saints, and such as show my attitude toward believers generally—whether in love, in care, in ministry, in forbearance, or in tender consideration—are limited by me to the few with whom I am, as we say, in fellowship, I am sectarian in heart, for I ignore my responsibility and privilege in relation to all other saints but such few—such exhortations, to my mind, impose no responsibility upon me toward Christians outside the circle of believers "with whom I am in fellow-

ship." How very far from the mind of Christ I must be when such is the case with me!

The only remedy for such a state of things is to drink more deeply into the spirit of Christ, and receive more grace from Him who giveth it. If we are filled with the spirit and grace of Christ, our hearts will go out toward all His dear, redeemed ones, and we shall lose no opportunity of manifesting that grace whenever we meet them; if the soul is in a proper state the kindred spirit will express itself, and it will be seen that we *are* one, the unity of the Spirit will be seen, and we should never dream of excluding brethren from the Lord's table because they had not been "received in our fellowship."

There may be in the Lord's people thus drawn together much difference of judgment and intelligence, such as calls for mutual help and forbearance, but the unity of the Spirit is manifested even in such forbearance. We are here taking for granted that there is soundness in the fundamentals of Christianity, and godliness of life. It is vain to talk of love to all saints if that love is not in operation. Love is not a passive thing. "Let us not love in *word*, neither in *tongue*, but in *deed* and in *truth*."

"COME, SEE A MAN."

NOTHING can be more instructive and beautiful after its order than the real and simple way in which the woman of Samaria received Christ—received Him, we believe, in all that He had made known Himself to be to her—as the giver of eternal life and the Messiah. What a wonderful change had taken place in that poor, sinful woman's soul through that meeting with the Saviour! She went to that well a poor, wretched, and sinful creature,

suffering and toiling under the burden of a sinful life, but she returned to the city a renewed, blessed, and delighted woman.

Forgetting her present necessities, for she left her water-pot behind, she runs off with a full and overflowing heart to tell others of the Saviour she had found.

"The woman then left her water-pot, and *went her way* into the city, and saith to the men, Come, see a Man, which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?"

"The woman then left her water-pot, and *went her way*." It was a new way to her, a way she had never before taken. Is it not so with all who know anything about this real meeting with the Saviour? It puts us into a new way altogether; our way is to run off immediately and tell others of the Saviour we have found, and that from the force and power of the springing well within.

Oh! the transforming power of this real meeting with Christ Himself, brought into His presence by the tender drawing of His grace, and the shining forth of the light of His omniscience. We could not stand the light without the grace; so our gracious Lord—as was the case in His dealings with that woman—so tempers the light and the grace that while the light detects our sins, the grace attracts our hearts; while the light deals with the conscience, the grace entwines itself around the heart.

All this is very real to those who have been thus brought into contact with the Lord Jesus by faith—the soul is saved, the well of living water (eternal life) is within, the heart is filled, and the life is changed. Who then can describe the blessed and glorious results of a real meeting with the One for whom the whole creation travails and groans; He who alone can disperse all the varied forms of human woe that rend the hearts of mankind and fill the earth with sighs and groans; He who alone can meet every form of human need; who can allay our fears and alleviate our sorrows; who can fill the hearts of men with peace, joy, and gladness; yea,

who can, and will, fill the whole earth with peace, righteousness, and glory.

Yes, it is Christ, and Christ alone, that can do all this. The one great, great need of man—of the world—is the Christ of God, the blessed One who met that woman—a true type of the sinfulness and misery of mankind—and pardoned her soul, filled her heart, and transformed her life; who has done the same for thousands more. He will yet transform the very world itself, though judgment will play a great part in such transformation.

Think not, ye nations of the earth, that the peace of the world is to be secured by any conference that ye may convene, and any confederation or compact that ye may make. The rejected King of kings, the Prince of peace, alone can bring this about. We find no fault with your attempts to secure peace; as far as man is concerned they are laudable, they are philanthropic, but they display a sad ignorance of the state of things in relation to God. Nevertheless, go on with your peace project, put forth every possible effort, and strain every nerve to maintain peace; still remember that God has said, "Overturn, overturn, until He whose right it is shall come." The world has rejected the Prince of peace, and it must suffer the consequences, until He comes back again in judgment upon the world for their sin, culminated, as it will be, not only in the rejection of the true Christ, but in the reception of the false Christ.

And think not, ye moralists, that the world is going to be improved by reformation. Set about such work with all your might; ye may lighten the burden of a few individuals, and make things a little better for them for a short time, but it is Christ, it is Christ alone, who can meet the great need, the eternal need. Reformation leaves the soul still away from God, and therefore unpardoned, unsaved, and unsatisfied.

And ye Christians who are occupied with great philanthropic enterprises, go on with your noble, yea, Christian

work, but do not put it in the place of Christ. Do good unto all men, attend to their every need, but, oh! do not forget that the one great need is the need of Christ; all other good done to men and women leaves them still away from God, and hence in their misery.

It is Christ, the Christ of God, that men need for body and soul, hence the appropriateness of the woman's message, "Come, see a Man." She did not say, Come and join the Jewish Church or the Samaritan Church, Come and join this society or that society, Come and sign this or that pledge. No; her simple message was, Come to Christ—"Come, see a Man." She knew that there were fulness of grace and a mighty power in that Man, which would meet all their need and change their lives. To get them to Him, therefore, would remedy everything from which they suffered, would be not merely a moment's sunshine as a temporary relief in a dark and stormy region, but the beginning of a cloudless and endless day—the "dayspring from on high." She knew it; she had felt that power, and tasted that grace, and experienced such change.

The woman's message was simple yet emphatical, and it was with unction and power, in the force and freshness of the springing well that was in her soul. "Come," says she, "see a Man, who told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" All the dry, theological sermons and moral essays that were preached by professors, doctors, and reverends throughout the country all last year did not do so much as this poor woman's simple message did in Samaria that day.

Yes, it is true that no real and permanent good can be accomplished for men and women by anything short of getting them to Christ; in Him alone is found eternal salvation; in Him, and in Him alone, too, are found effectual deliverance from present evil and a remedy for present ills.

Let, then, the burden of our message be, "Come, see a Man." Let all that we do be in view of bringing people to

Christ, for only in Him is their need fully met. Let this be our message both to saint and sinner, for the latter needs Him for eternal salvation as well as present deliverance from the evil that is in the world, and the saint needs Him for daily power, holiness, and blessing. We need Him every hour, and in Him our need is fully met.

If you meet a hardened sinner who is even now suffering the result of his own sin, who is finding that the way of transgression is hard, say, "Come, see a Man," and begin to unfold the simple story of His love as manifested in the Cross.

If you meet a labouring and heavy-laden soul, troubled and toiling under the burden of sin, say, "'Come, see a Man'; He will give you rest."

If you meet a troubled and sorrowful saint who is passing through deep waters, still say, "'Come, see a Man,' who is able to succour you, for He has passed through far deeper waters than ever you will have to wade; yea, the mighty billows of the judgment of God have rolled over His soul for you, and He is willing to succour, and able to deliver you from or carry you safely through all your trials."

If you meet a discontented, fault-finding, peevish saint of God, let your simple message be the same, "'Come, see a Man,' who is meek and lowly of heart, who is gracious, patient, and forbearing, and who is enough to fill your heart with real satisfaction and holy joy, and those lips that have dishonoured Him by murmuring and complaining shall be filled with praise, which is far more comely to the redeemed of the Lord."

If you meet a saint who is more taken up with ecclesiasticisms than with Christ, who is more filled with party zeal than brotherly love, strike the same note in his ears, "'Come, see a Man,' who loves the whole Church, and let us learn how very dear all His people are to Him."

It is the ministry of Christ Himself, the crucified Christ, the glorified Christ, the coming Christ, that will go to

the inmost springs of the new life in the soul; before such a ministry false doctrine will not be able to stand for one moment (for it is the true Christ of God and of the Scriptures that we speak of); sectarian walls will be abolished, and worldliness will find no place. "Without Me," says the blessed Lord, "ye can do nothing." "I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me," says the apostle.

FAITH.

FAITH is not that mystical and inexplicable thing that so many people take it to be: it is a real and simple principle that evidences the word of God in my soul, and makes present an absent Christ to my heart.

It is not a blind following of something that it supposes to be true without any evidence outside itself: it is rather that clear, God-given sight which enables me to see what really is, and hence stands out in direct contrast with Rationalism, which is always found groping its way in the dark labyrinths of uncertainty.

First, faith enables me to see my own sinful condition before God, not only as stated in His Word, but as evidenced in my life; then, it enables me to see God's remedy for such condition in the sacrifice of Christ, the need and efficacy of such sacrifice being made known in His Word, the truth of which is evidenced by His mighty works, and the Word of God being evidenced as such by prophetic utterances throughout, or rather by their fulfilment, years, and in some—in most cases—centuries after they were made, confirmed by mighty signs and wonders, and finally endorsed and enforced as the Word of God by the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom we see the manifestation of divine power in the presence of—and to the confusion of—all the unbelief and superstition of the world, and who was raised from the dead, and ascended into heaven in the presence of His believing people.

That word, then, that revelation from God forms the solid ground of faith, while God, as now manifested in Jesus Christ, is the object of faith. Thus it is in Christianity, and although the Patriarchs had not the same full revelation of God and His purposes that we have, they nevertheless had such clear manifestations of Himself, His power, and glory as enabled them to lay hold of Himself and His power in a beautifully simple and very real way.

Faith, therefore, is by no means a blind following—as infidels say—of a religious system. Though faith lays hold of much that has not yet appeared in actual fact, and hence is the twin sister of hope, yet all this is made sure and certain by what has already been seen and witnessed—by that word which is proven to be the Word of God by “many infallible proofs.”

There is, doubtless, also what we may call the intuitive character of faith coupled with experience, hence many souls may not be able to give a clear and intelligent description of what they believe, or to point out the proof of it; nevertheless their conviction is firm enough, and their experience of the truth real enough. Many people eat their food and get the benefit of it without being able to analyze it and describe the different ingredients of which it is made up. Indeed, many of God's believing people are confirmed in the Gospel by their experience. The writer heard the other day of a poor man who could scarcely read a line when converted, yet he laid hold of the Lord and His Word in a very real and blessed way; and when preaching in the streets of London one evening some sceptical young men called out and said, “Don't talk like that: how do you know that you are saved?” when the preacher simply replied, “Why, was I not there when it happened?” He had experienced the change, and this was at least one ground—though not *the* ground, that was the word of God—on which he knew it.

The man who possesses this simple principle—faith—who being thus fully convinced by the most indisputable proofs

—external, internal, and experimental—that God has spoken, dares to believe Him rather than man, and knows with the most perfect certainty what all the great philosophers are ignorant of and searching after; he knows that the worlds were formed by the word of God.

While ancient philosophy and modern scientists have spent their lives inventing absurd theories by which to account for the existence of things, the simple, and may be illiterate, man of faith understands the whole matter; he simply brings God in and all is clear. The beginning and end of things are avowedly outside the precincts of science: it simply searches out what is, and discovers the present workings of things in Nature, but can tell us absolutely nothing as to how such things come into being, and like a man who, when he pretends to be what he really is not, becomes a fool, so science when it steps outside its own sphere becomes folly, and presents us with the greatest absurdities.

“With regard to creation. Lost in reasonings, and not knowing God, the human mind sought out endless solutions of existence. Those who have read the cosmogonies of the ancients know how many different systems, each more absurd than the other, have been invented for that which the introduction of God, by faith, renders perfectly simple. Modern science, with a less active and more practical mind, stops at second causes, and it is but little occupied with God. Geology has taken the place of the cosmogony of the Hindoos, Egyptians, Orientals, and philosophers. To the believer the thought is clear and simple; his mind is assured and intelligent by faith. God, by His word, called all things into existence. The universe is not a producing cause; it is itself a creature acting by a law imposed upon it. It is One having authority who has spoken; His word has divine efficacy; He speaks and the thing *is*. We feel that this is worthy of God, for when once God is brought in all is simple. Shut Him out and man is lost in the efforts of his own imagination, which can neither create nor arrive

at the knowledge of a Creator, because it only works with the power of a creature. Before, therefore, the details of the present form of creation are entered upon, the Word simply says, 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' Whatever may have taken place between that and chaos forms no part of revelation. It is distinct from the special action of the deluge which is made known to us. The beginning of Genesis does not give a history of the details of creation itself, nor the history of the universe. It gives the fact that in the beginning God created; and afterwards, the things that regard man on earth. Angels even are not there. Of the stars it is only said, 'He made the stars also'; when, we are not told. By faith, then, we believe that the world was created '*by the word of God*'!"

The order presented in this wonderful chapter (Heb. xi.) of faith is very beautiful and instructive.

We have (1) the definition of faith, verses 1, 2, (2) the exercise of faith in relation to creation, verse 3, (3) in relation to redemption, verse 4, (4) in relation to our walk and testimony, verses 5, 6, (5) in relation to the judgment of the world and a remnant brought through, verse 7. Thus, in the first seven verses we have a brief outline of the whole course of faith; then the rest of the chapter gives the general working of faith. But even here order is observed.

There is from the eighth verse the patience of faith trusting God for what it does not yet possess, but for which it waits, assured of fulfilment; faith which makes one a stranger on earth by virtue of links with heaven; the confidence of faith; faith making its way through all kinds of difficulties that oppose its progress; faith availing itself of means which God sets before us, but which are out of the reach of nature; finally, the energy of faith in varied circumstances.

The outline given in the first seven verses is in the most perfect harmony with the dispensational order presented everywhere in the New Testament.

After the creation, sin entered and put man at an infinite distance from God; so that it was impossible for him of himself to get back again, though God, before the Cross, gave him every opportunity of doing so if it had been possible, but every fresh opportunity served as another proof of the impossibility of such a thing. The Cross, the means of God's own providing, is the only way back to Himself. This, faith lays hold of, and seeing that the blood of God's own Lamb alone can put away sin, comes to Him only on the ground of that sacrifice, while unbelieving self-righteousness is always struggling to work its way back to God by means of its own—presenting to Him the fruits of its own labour as the ground of merit; but such a sacrifice is rejected. It is the fruit only of unbelief. God has said, Without the shedding of blood is no remission; by faith Abel saw this before the full revelation of it was made, and he got the blessing—"by which he obtained witness that he was righteous." Here, then, we find faith in exercise in regard to redemption; it is effected by the blood of God's sacrifice, the Lamb of His own providing.

The redemption of man is a fact which owes its origin to the counsels of eternal love, a love which finds its manifestation to man in the accomplishment of those counsels, and by the operation of which all is made good in our souls—faith laying hold of Christ as the Lamb slain as its only ground of approach to God.

And how blessed to see that it is God who declares that Abel is righteous, but it is by the sacrifice—God testifying of his gifts. All we have really to bring to God acceptable to Him is Christ—Christ crucified is our only ground of righteousness and acceptance before God. Then we can say, "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth?" Wondrous redemption! and how infinite the love that planned it! Do we not willingly give to God the undivided glory of our salvation?

But faith does not stop here; redemption being effected,

salvation secured, and the soul brought to God, faith now finds its exercise in walking with Him. "By faith Enoch was translated, that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God." The faith that enables me to see the need of the sacrifice of Christ, and God's acceptance of that sacrifice for me, enables me as a redeemed soul, not only to see, but to do what is pleasing in His sight. How delightful, to the new man, to be able to please God. This is impossible to the carnal mind. If I am looking at things from a carnal point of view, and judging of things after the outward appearance, I cannot please God; only by that faith which looketh not at the things which are seen and temporal, but at those things which are unseen and eternal, can I please God. It is the walk of faith alone that can please Him. "We walk by faith and not by sight." Twice in the Old Testament it is said that Enoch walked with God, and here it is stated that he pleased God.

Oh, how little we know about this walk with God. It is this alone that keeps us in habitual self-judgment, that gives us the victory over sin, that makes us overcomers in temptation, that keeps us above petty ecclesiasticisms and sectarian strife, that enlarges our apprehension of divine things and our hearts toward all the Lord's people, and yet keeps our feet in the narrow way; that imparts that exalted nobility, true fortitude, and unaffected humility that combine to make up the true Christian character; that keeps us sound in and tenacious of the great doctrine of Christianity, and yet preserves us from becoming mere theorists; that preserves us from fleshly pride and selfish ambitions, and leads us in self-forgetfulness—yet with real pleasure to ourselves—to desire ardently and seek constantly the welfare and blessing of others. It is, we repeat, this walk with God, as manifested to us in Christ, that adorns the life with such graces, and preserves us from all kinds of evil. We repeat, very little we know about it!

There are two most precious things stated in this verse about the man who walked with God, and was translated: (1) He pleased God, and (2) he knew it. Can there possibly be any higher aim, any more exalted object, or any more sublime occupation than to walk with God; and can anything be more gratifying, can anything give more real satisfaction to the renewed heart than to have the testimony of this in one's own soul; for it is said: "He had this testimony, that he pleased God."

Not only that it was borne to him, but *he had* it—had the *witness of it in himself*. Oh, let it be our most ardent desire to get such testimony. It is of infinitely more value than gold and silver or earthly fame: it is better than the applause of the whole Church, and it will more than compensate the frown and persecution of the world, or the censure of the Church. To please God, let this be our one great concern in life; but without faith it is impossible.

We shall soon, very soon, be translated; if, therefore, we desire this testimony—which Enoch had—before our translation, there is no time to lose.

But Enoch, the man who walked with God, and pleased Him, was not left to go through the world's judgment. There must indeed have been a decided line of demarcation, a great moral distance, between this man who walked with God and the world which had corrupted its way before him, and was filled with violence. Think of the immense chasm that must have separated this man from the world whose wickedness was great in the earth, the imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man being only evil continually.

And is the world any better to-day? Not one bit. The Lord says: "As it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be in the days of the Son of Man," &c. Depend upon it, Christian reader, that if we are to walk with God there must be a true and real separation from the world. The very faith that enables us to walk with God and please Him places a great moral distance between us and the world that

lieth in the hands of the wicked one. The friendship of the world is enmity against God.

The world is going on to judgment as it was in the days of Enoch, while the Church is going on to glory, and is to be translated to that glory before the judgment of this world, as was Enoch. Just as Enoch was taken to heaven without passing through death before the flood, so will the Church be raptured before the flood of great tribulation which shall come upon all the earth. Surely nothing inculcates a path of real separation on the Church like that great and grand truth of her rapture to heaven before the judgment of God falls upon the world through which she is passing, and in which she is a stranger.

After Enoch was translated, we have the testimony of Noah, who was preserved through the world's judgment, and brought out into the recleansed earth, just so after the Church is taken to heaven there will be the testimony of the Jewish remnant who will be preserved through the great tribulation, and brought out into the millennial blessing of this earth.

Such is the order presented in the New Testament, and such is the order typified in these events of the Old Testament.

We have the faith of Abel enabling us to rest upon the sacrifice of Christ for our acceptance and righteousness before God. May we also have the faith of Enoch, that we may walk with God and please Him; and to walk with God is to walk in separation from the world.

RECEIVING ONE ANOTHER.



ONE of the greatest proofs that the unity of the Spirit is not being kept, in fact, that it has almost, if not entirely, been superseded and dropped out of sight, is the prevalence of the idea that we receive into fellowship. This is a doctrine that has grown from small

beginnings, alongside of the gradual loss of the truth of what the Spirit's unity is, and is a necessary result of that loss. Wherever and in whomsoever the notion that we receive into fellowship prevails, that is itself a proof that the unity of the Spirit is not being kept. The two doctrines cannot exist together; they are mutually opposed, they represent two different unities—one of the Spirit's making, into which God alone can and does receive, the other a unity of our own, into which we can, of course, receive, but which, for that very reason, cannot be the Spirit's unity. Another proof that it is not the Spirit's unity, if it be one into which we can receive, is the fact that those whom we assume to receive into fellowship are already in it. We cannot receive into that in which a saint already is. The receiving doctrine creates another unity, and that is of man and not of God, and which is a denomination, sect, or party to which people belong, as much as any other. While, in fact, the exclusivism that always accompanies, to a greater or less degree, the receiving practices, makes the resulting party more unlike the Spirit's unity, in respect of lowliness, humility, meekness, love to all saints, and other features that ought to characterise us, than anything else that exists among true Christians. There are the highest possible claims made to ecclesiastical perfection by the different parties that are thus formed, while that for which these high claims are made is only a human unity or "circle" after all, the limits of which are humanly defined.

But it must not be supposed that the unity of the Spirit is not professed to be held. It is held, but in word only. Other so-called "principles" are also held, and the latter form another law warring against the law of the Spirit, and bringing into captivity to the law of man. In this way it is done: The unity of the party is identified with the Spirit's unity, and all outside the party are treated as not in fellowship, and no one is keeping the unity of the Spirit except those who are in that party! And to justify the resulting

deeds, the doctrine has been actually formulated that the Spirit's unity is a lesser unity than the one body of Christ, and that in face of the fact that Scripture so plainly states, "For by one Spirit are we all baptised into one body," and "there is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling"—making them co-extensive and co-exclusive.

Every effort has been made to find Scripture for a basis of fellowship narrower than that of the one body. Some have tried to base it on Acts ii. 42; but this is accompanied by the assumption that only they are continuing in the apostles' doctrine, &c. But in making that assumption they are themselves departing from apostolic doctrine, as well as from the practice of those very saints of whom we read, "And all that believed were together" (Acts ii. 44).

We should never speak of any saint of God as not in fellowship. There is nothing that I have common participation as a saint of God that does not equally belong to every other saint. I have no exclusive right to the Lord's Supper—it belongs to every member of the body of Christ. A saint who has become a "wicked person" has to be excluded from it for a time, until the discipline has done its work; but the whole force of his exclusion lies in the fact that it belongs to him. If it does not belong to him, his exclusion is no discipline at all. No one can be punished by exclusion from what they have no title to in any case. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ?" Communion is common participation, and this participation belongs to every blood-washed saint. The fact that it is the communion of the blood of Christ makes participation in the cup to be the inalienable right of all true saints—unless excluded for moral or doctrinal evil, as always understood.

The Lord's Supper is the centre of the manifestation of the Spirit's unity on earth, and must therefore be spread for all in that unity. The proof of this lies in the fact that the

unity of the Spirit is the one body of Christ ; that is the only unity which the Spirit of God has made, and the partaking of the Lord's Supper is the declaration in itself of membership of that one body. Not the loaf on the table, but the *partaking* of it. "For we, being many, are one loaf, one body, for we are all partakers of that one loaf" (1 Cor. x. 17). "We are *all* partakers." So wrote the inspired apostle, and the "all" of this passage must be identified with the "all" to whom the epistle is addressed. "Unto the assembly of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both their's and our's (1 Cor. i. 2).

I am aware that since 1848 ingenuity of interpretation has been exhausted to make 1 Cor. x. 17 apply to a narrower circle than 1 Cor. i. 2, but that ingenuity has overdone itself, and the present results were probably little anticipated by the departed servants of the Lord with whom the distinction originated.

Our importance, too, is considerably diminished when we find that reception belongs not to us but to God, and that in itself is no small gain. We are too important. We have not to receive to the Lord's table at all, either as individuals or as gatherings, but have to own the title of all to partake because already received—a title we do not, nor cannot, confer on any one, but which we can recognise on adequate evidence: which evidence may consist of a letter or personal communication, or his own testimony.

There is no scripture for assemblies sending letters of commendation; they are always individual, and have but the weight which attaches to the signer of them. Assembly letters, so called, have got to be certificates of party membership, that fact established giving title to fellowship. That is all wrong; the results have proved it to be so, for saints are refused, no matter how much their letter may establish the fact of their godliness and soundness in the faith, if it

does not come from a meeting in their fellowship! The unity of the Spirit is again superseded by a human rule.

A new cart may seem to be a very good expedient for carrying the Ark of God; and if fault was found with this human plan, the fact that they had possession of the true Ark itself would silence all qualms of conscience, or doubts, if any existed, as to the way of carrying it; and David and all the house of Israel could play, even before the Lord, on all manner of instruments. But the fact that they had the Ark of God became the occasion of judgment from God, and joy gave place to sorrow. And we too have experienced our "Perezuzzah" unto this day (2 Sam. vi. 8). The unity of the Spirit cannot be kept by human expedients. All such are sure to supercede it, and establish some human system.

It being the Spirit's unity, we need to be spiritual in order to keep it, and we need to be humble in order to be kept from establishing anything of our own. The Ark of God must be carried on the shoulders of the Levites; just because it is God's Ark it must be carried in God's way. A human thing can be carried as men may choose and devise, but if we know what it is to have the carrying of God's Ark, or if we really have the Divine unity to keep, let us not make a new cart to carry it on, although that seems a much less burdensome way than on the shoulders of the Levites. Let us make no human rules, however plausible, for our guidance, but let us rely on the Spirit's guidance by the Word for every step. Otherwise it will be but an empty shell, an outward form with no inward power.

Let us not be afraid to look into this, and subject all our "principles" to rigid tests. We shall find that we ourselves need these tests quite as much or more than saints who have been refused by human ones. Men love the pre-eminence, and many a Diotrophes exists to-day who, when the gathering itself hesitates to exclude a true saint, will take the full responsibility of doing so, with much assumption of extra piety. But here the simple words of the "disciple whom

Jesus loved" apply: "Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good" (3 John 11). No matter who it may be that may set the evil example, no authority can change what is evil into good, and to refuse saints of God at the Lord's Table is evil.

Receiving one another is mutual, and not into the assembly at all, because of being in it already. We receive "one another" not to become that. We must be of those called "one another" in order to be received by each other, whenever we meet one another. "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God." And all true saints are of the "one another."

Let us urge on beloved brethren obedience to the command of the apostle, "That there be no divisions among you." Not only that there be no divisions in your own party, but that your party itself is not division; that you yourself are not separated from true saints of God. We may and ought to be separate from the worldly systems in which so many of them are, but not from true saints who are in them. I repeat there is no scripture authorising, in the remotest way, separation from true saints who are sanctified in Christ Jesus, and call on the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord—both theirs and ours.

How much more cogently can we urge the truth upon saints to be consistent with what God has made them to be; by recognising them to be in the unity of the Spirit, instead of requiring them to leave one party and to join another, possibly narrower and more sectarian than the one they are in; and where, instead of coming out to recognise all that is of God in the whole Church, and to refuse all that is of man, they henceforth are to recognise as "in fellowship" only the few they happen to break bread with, and that few separated by high bars from the rest of the Church of God. This itself is division, and not unity at all, and much less is it the endeavour even to keep the unity of the Spirit. We cannot keep the Spirit's unity except by recognising every true saint

to be in it, and refusing to make any other "circle of fellowship." No charges about leaven elsewhere, urged by party leaders against one another, is to be a pretext for the allowance of the leaven of division where I am, amongst saints that are pure and sound.

Is it not time, beloved brethern, that we began to present a different front from that which has prevailed so long to the rest of the Church of God. Our aspect towards the world in the Gospel has been generally good and scriptural, but our attitude towards the rest of the Church of God in these days of division has only been that of further division instead of Divine unity. Let us revive the true Christian endeavour of Ephesians iv., and not allow it to be superseded after all by any kind of new cart.

J. J.

CHURCH OFFICES.

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—God willing, I should very much like, if possible in your next issue of *Christian Outlook*, if you could give your readers a few thoughts on the following scriptures, viz., Acts vi. 3; 1 Corinthians xii. 4, 10, 28, as some prominent brethren among us are bold enough to assert that we, as brethren, are not meeting according to New Testament order, and especially so with regard to Acts vi. 3 and Titus i. 5, and thus claim these scriptures as a warrant for the election of elders, or *overseers*, for the government of the assemblies. Now, dear brother, if I may offer a few thoughts on the subject, it is a meddling with foundation truths, for it is very clear to my mind that God has placed in the Church all the necessary gifts for the edification, help, government, &c., from its foundation to its end (Eph. iv. 8, &c.; 1 Cor. xii. 28, &c.; Acts xiii. 4; xx. 28), and I consider that Acts vi. 3 is the work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles, and not the act of the apostles alone, for it may be said that, with regard to what is called the Acts of the Apostles, it would be more in

keeping if we said *Acts of the Holy Spirit*. Then, again, with regard to Titus i. 5, &c., it is, I take it, the Holy Spirit through the apostle that is giving instruction to Titus to lay the foundation in those Gentile assemblies for all that should come after to build upon throughout the Church's history on earth, and I cannot see one office left by our Lord, when he ascended up on high, to be filled by the Church, but rather that we should be all looking out for those gifts that the Lord has placed in the Church, and not place stumbling-blocks in the way by giving cause for envy and jealousy, shouldering out of the way those the Lord has chosen. But, of course, man has largely destroyed the old order of things by the many divisions that have taken place; one gift is here, and another there, shut up unto man, so that the true Church is a very great loser. But this does not, I think, destroy the fact that God has given to His Church all necessary gifts for His glory, and for the help of His people. But these are days of departing from the Living God and His truth. Again, looking back on Numbers iii., we find God giving instructions and marching orders to Moses and Aaron for the children of Israel, as they were about to set out upon the wilderness journey towards the land of Canaan, and not an office was left for Moses or Aaron to fill that I know of, but the all-wise God ordering all for His glory. Fancy God leaving to poor, proud, selfish, self-wise, and partial man to choose for God! and may our own unworthiness and God's holiness keep us from meddling with matters far too high for us, and that belong to Himself, the all-wise God, and let us bow our heads and worship as we behold His wisdom, grace, and glory in the great work of redemption through our Lord Jesus Christ. Dear brother, I feel the need of being more and more outspoken in these last days for the defence of the truth. It has been my lot and duty to testify against a good many things that are unscriptural and, to my mind, opposed to truth. Now, the above things complained of have, I

understand, been already enacted in some assemblies, and a limited number chosen as an inner circle, and this action has caused a great murmuring among the flock, and a flat, formal, and cold assembly. Now, in and among the assemblies there are matters arising that call for Divine wisdom, grace, and judgment that is altogether beyond a *novice* to judge, and therefore it is no place for any one who is young in the faith and without experience; but it may be also said that there are men with grey hair who are also only *novices*. But God grant to us all not to be envious and jealous one of another, for the same lips which said "Rebuke not an elder," also said "Let no man despise thy youth." I must not say more now, but leave it to your higher discernment of the Scriptures, and I should be very glad of further light upon the subject, as I believe others would also, and the Lord grant to us all the right understanding of the Scriptures and His will, and above all that we may all be found walking in the law of the Lord; to do this will keep us much upon our knees, and in constant communion with the risen Lord, and beholding Him by faith we shall be changed from glory to glory, &c.—I am, dear brother, yours in Christ Jesus,

J. L.

WE feel compelled by the above letter to say at least a few words on a subject that we would not voluntarily introduce into this paper; indeed we feel a great reluctance in taking up the subject at all. But our desire to help the Lord's people in all difficult matters overrules our reluctance to take up a subject about which there is such a diversity of opinion and so much prejudice on all hands.

At the same time we feel that such an independent and impartial paper as we wish ours to be should be held open for the investigation of all reasonable questions and difficulties by which the people of God generally are tried.

But the ventilation of the peculiar and strange views of perhaps a few individuals is a different matter; this we decline as not being calculated to help the Lord's people generally, but rather to unsettle them.

In the matter before us, however, we are able to advance nothing very decided, though we have been much exercised about it, and can just give the results of our exercise, which we believe, indeed are sure, represent the exercise of hundreds of brethren at the present time. We wish to go just as far as the light we have will allow us, and no further, and what we say will be chiefly suggestive. Hence the difficulty will be far from being settled in this short article; indeed it will be no more than the opening of the subject, with the desire to hear what others have to say.

For one to speak of the appointment, election, or even recognition of pastors among the meetings of brethren as being warranted by Scripture, was, a few years ago, enough to draw forth the strongest deprecation against any such idea, and accusations upon himself of going back to system, of seeking to make brethren a sect (!), &c., &c. But a great change is at the present moment taking place in many quarters. Brethren are beginning to see that something is evidently lacking in their assembly order, and to ask themselves the question, "May we not, while seeking to avoid human order, have gone over to the other extreme and ignore at least some important feature of divine order?" We think that there are very few intelligent and unprejudiced brethren, who have a godly care for the sheep of Christ and godly exercise as to past troubles and the present state of things among the assemblies, who do not feel that there is such a lack.

There is a great tendency in mankind to reject altogether a thing that may be right in itself because of its abuse. We see, or think we see, this even in the nations of the world. Undoubtedly monarchical government is the form of government instituted by God Himself for the nations of this world;

but because of its abuse many nations have rejected it entirely, instituting in its place a democratic form of government. Has not something of the kind taken place in the Church? However, that democratic spirit that obtains so largely in many assemblies, especially in the North of England and Scotland, is not of God—is most unscriptural. This much, at least, we think perfectly clear.

God is a God of order; we see it in creation, we see it in His ways with Israel, and we see it in the Church of the New Testament, but, it is being asked in many quarters, do we see it in the assemblies of brethren?—a very important question which we do well to face in the light of the New Testament, if our old prejudices do not forbid such a thing; but if they do, sad is our condition, which will go from bad to worse. We don't want human order—we are sure there is too much of that in the various denominations of Christians—but to have no order at all is not much better. We don't want lords over God's heritage; we want devoted servants—pastors to feed the flock of God, and leaders to lead, not to drive them. We want order, but let it be divine or scriptural order.

It is certain that order, by certain appointments, obtained in the churches of the New Testament times which has been ignored in the assemblies of brethren. And we think the arguments used against such appointments are very questionable; they certainly find no support in the Scripture.

It has been said that only the apostles and their immediate delegates had the power to appoint bishops and deacons, and with their departure, not the bishops and deacons, but their appointment to their special work ceased; thus they would be left to find their place as best they could without any certain order, and others who were not at all qualified for the place be found pressing themselves into it, for in all probability those most suited for it would be the first to retire from it if others were aspiring to it. A servant of God is much more happy in his work when he knows that

no one will look upon him as assuming a place and work that are not his own.

Two things in connection with the important subject before us are certain. In the first place the need of bishops (bishop, elder, and shepherd are synonymous) and deacons existed, and in the second place bishops and deacons were appointed to their special work. And the apostles were most careful to see that there were elders in every church or city (Acts xiv. 23; Titus i. 5). The "office of a bishop" and the "office of a deacon" were special and definite offices in the Church. We were surprised to be told the other day that the word rendered "deacon" was simply a general word for minister or servant, and applies to any or every servant of God generally. Now, that the word may be thus rendered is quite true, but that the term as used in Scripture applied to any or all servants or ministers in the Church is absurd; we only need to call attention to the passages in which it is used, and ask the reader to study the context, to show that such was not the case. The term Minister is applied to every member of Her Majesty's Cabinet, but they do not all occupy the same office. (See Phil. i. 1; Tim. iii. 8, 10, 13.)

Now, seeing that the apostles were so conscious of the need, and solicitous of the appointment of both bishops and deacons, are we really right in concluding that such order was only for their own day—was never intended by God to continue? Would it not be much more in accordance with reason and Scripture (for we have order inculcated all through Scripture) to say that in these cases we have the order of the Church of God established? And should we not be much more safe in following that order?

Again, is not the simple method of choosing certain suitable men for a special work, such as we find in Acts vi., rather meant as a precedent for the Church than something that we should do wrong to imitate? These seven men are generally supposed to be deacons, though not called by that name, yet called to the work of deacons. A man being a

deacon does not necessarily mean that he may not be an evangelist, or even a teacher, as well.

Again, are not the minute instructions of 1 Timothy iii. and Titus i., concerning bishops and deacons, meant for the guidance of the Church in all the dispensations, as well as 1 Corinthians xii. and xiv.?

We understand that the verse referred to in the foregoing letter—1 Corinthians xii. 28, showing that God, among the different gifts, hath set “governments” in the Church—implies a definite and recognised order—that “governments” were represented by certain men, as well as the various gifts, though, of course, neither the governments nor the gifts could find their proper place or use to the edification of the assembly apart from subjection to the Lord Himself under the guidance of the Holy Ghost. And let us here say that the edification of the assembly is the one great object before the Lord and the Holy Ghost, and should be before every member of the assembly, and especially before the bishops and deacons.

But still remains the most difficult part of our subject, about which we cannot speak very decidedly, feeling our own need of light, namely, the scriptural means whereby these scriptural offices in the Church are to be filled, whether by appointment, choice, or only a more definite recognition. There are truly no apostles to appoint, and that wicked invention of Satan, called apostolic succession, we recoil from as the most wicked and terrible monster of our day; and the manufacture of ministers by mere college training, and their appointment or election consequently upon educational proficiency, we look upon as entirely human, and as being pregnant with evil results in the Church; indeed, this subject of offices and ministry in the Church has been made, by the most flagrant perversion, the tool of devils, the most effectual instrument in the hands of antichrists, and so terribly abused, even by Christians, that we do not wonder at the rebound from it to an opposite

extreme which we think has taken place in the assemblies of brethren. Nor do we wonder at the solicitude of our brother in the foregoing letter. And we would urge brethren to be exceedingly careful to go no further than the clear light of Scripture would lead in this matter, and to give very special heed to the qualifications of both bishops and deacons. Of this we are sure, that if the bishops and deacons—however they may find their place in the assembly, by whatever method they may be installed into their office—are God-given and up to Scripture requirements, they will not be a cause of strife and contention; their whole soul will be so absorbed with the desire for the edification and welfare of the assembly that they will be ready to sacrifice anything, that only touches themselves, to such object.

We leave very much more to be said, but for want of space we must close. All we do is to invite the calm and unprejudiced consideration of the subject, and in a most careful and prayerful spirit.

We would just make one more remark. It is certain that the Lord gives the gifts; the most essential appointment is His appointment. May we not choose and definitely recognise and pray publicly for those whom it is clear He has appointed? This is simple enough; we cannot go wrong in doing this, can we?

The writer of the letter that has opened this subject may think that his questions are not all definitely answered. To do this would mean going into the subject in a more exhaustive way than is possible for us here, and would require more light on the subject than we as yet have. We wish to hear what some others say. May the Lord guide us in this important matter, that what is lacking may be made up!

FULL DELIVERANCE.

WE now come to a turning-point in the Epistle to the Romans; there is an obvious division of subject between verses 11 and 12 of chapter v. Hitherto it has been more the practical condition of man that has been before us—his sinful life; but from verse 12 onward to the end of chapter viii. it is his position—the state of his nature—that is especially dealt with: a most important difference. For the want of seeing and understanding this, many quickened souls are kept in at least partial bondage, and many others are led into the perfectionist error.

There are the sins that come from the sinful nature, and there is the sinful nature from which the sins come. The former are forgiven through the atoning death of Christ; the latter is condemned in the death of Christ—crucified with Him; and yet, though judicially judged and ended before God, it exists in believers as to fact, hence we are exhorted to reckon ourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God. Unless it were really true before God that the old man is crucified with Christ, there would be no ground on which to reckon it dead.

Redemption goes right to the root of the matter; it reaches to the lowest depth of man's sin, and to the highest heights of God's glory. The full results of that redemption work are not yet accomplished; our souls are redeemed and quickened, and our bodies are purchased, but not yet redeemed—they will be soon. We are delivered from the power, but not yet from the presence, of sin, though faith enters into the victory; but the fact that continual prayer, faith, and watchfulness are needed to keep us from the influence of sin is a proof of its presence, but it has so lost its dominating power over us that we must yield ourselves to it in order to be overcome by it.

As we have remarked, till we get to verse 12 of chapter v. it is the question of man's practical condition that is dealt with—exposed by God and met by the death of Christ—

hence nothing is said about Adam's sin and its far-reaching consequences in the first four chapters ; it is the sinful condition of all nations and classes of men, of all forms of human society in itself. But when we get to chapter v. 12, this sinful condition is traced to its source : " Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."

Thus Adam's sin involved the whole human race ; through it man became a fallen, a sinful creature. But being born with this sinful nature, " all men have sinned." Albeit from Adam to Moses, though death reigned, sin was not of the same character as that of Adam ; it was not transgression—that is, there was no definite commandment to break, as in Adam's case, and as in the case of man after the giving of the law by Moses. Sin was present and men were responsible, but it is not definitely imputed where there is no law, hence we are told that " the law entered that the offence might abound." In chapter iii. we are told it was given " that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God." In chapter vii., also, we find that the design of the law was that by it sin might become " exceeding sinful."

Thus we see that the great design of the law, which is holy, just, and good, is to bring home the sin and guilt of man in such a way as to leave him condemned, and without a word to say for himself—" that every mouth may be stopped," &c. And this in order to make way for man's redemption by sovereign grace alone. God would show that such was the condition of man,—that he could do absolutely nothing for himself—in order that He, blessed be His great and glorious name, might do everything for him. He would prove that man deserved nothing but judgment at His hands, in order that He might magnify His grace in giving him eternal blessing and glory. Praise our God, then, all ye His saints, and give glory to Him for ever, through Jesus Christ, our adorable Lord.

As we have seen, through Adam's sin all were possessed of a sinful nature. But a second Adam appears on the scene, the Lord from heaven, and taking upon Himself our sin—for in Him was no sin—He went down into death under the judgment which we by that sin had incurred, exhausted that judgment, and in resurrection became the source of life and blessing to sinful men and women. Adam sinned in disobeying God, and so involved all his posterity in sin and death. The Lord Jesus came to do the will of God, to obey; His life was spotless, pure, and holy. By it He proved Himself entirely free from sin, and hence the only one who could be made sin for others. His whole life was one perfect offering to God, but no atoning sacrifice; had He gone back to heaven without dying, we should have been left in our sin. But this obedience did not stop with His life; He was obedient even unto death. It is by His obedience thus looked at that many are made righteous. It was in His death, and not in His life, that he was made sin, and we are made the righteousness of God in Him who was thus made sin for us; so the argument here is, just as by one offence judgment came upon all men to condemnation, so by one righteousness the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. For as by one man's disobedience many were made [constituted] sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made [constituted] righteous.

That idea which makes the righteous law-keeping of Christ in His life, and not His death and resurrection, the ground of our righteousness, we have investigated in previous papers, and do not therefore go into it now any more than to say it is certain it cannot be His righteous life and His atoning death both that are the ground of righteousness, for if His life is imputed to me, it was absolutely righteous, and hence I am righteous without His death; but if His atoning death is needed for my righteousness, then His righteous life is not reckoned to me.

But we do not again dwell upon this subject; it was

necessary to refer to it, as this passage is taken to teach the idea that the whole righteous life of Christ—His perfect law-keeping—is imputed to me for righteousness, but it does not say so. It is no more the whole life of Christ by which we are made righteous, than it was the whole life of Adam, by which all were made sinners. In Adam it was one act of disobedience that involved the whole human race in sin and death; in Christ it was the act of obedience which answered to or met Adam's act of disobedience, that is, His disobedience unto death by which many are made righteous. The whole of the Gospel supports this truth, and there is not one text of Scripture that says the *righteousness of Christ* is imputed to us: it is always the *righteousness of God*, and always based upon the death and resurrection of Christ. Yet so strong is the prejudice in favour of the unscriptural phrase, "the imputed righteousness of Christ," that two subscribers ceased to take this Quarterly because we sought to show—and, as we believe, did show—from Scripture that we are made the righteousness of God in the One who was made sin for us, and in His being made sin for us and not through His righteous life, though He could not have been made sin for us if He had not been, in Himself, perfectly righteous, which fact was fully demonstrated in His life.

The one great and grand truth to be emphasised in the end of this chapter is the blessed fact that we *are* made righteous, and that not by any merit of our own, but through what another has done. Just as absolutely as we were made sinners by Adam's sin, just so absolutely are we made righteous by the obedience of Christ, the One who said, "Lo, I come . . . to do Thy will, O God." The will of God was that He should become a sacrifice for our sin. He was obedient unto that will, hence our eternal blessing. "By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (See Heb. x. 5-10.)

“PEACE OR A SWORD?”

(FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.)

DOUBTLESS many who have read the words of our Lord in Matt. x. 34, “Think not that I am come to send peace on the earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword,” have wondered at their seeming opposition to the general trend of His teaching. Did not the angels in announcing His birth sing of “*Peace* on earth, goodwill toward men”? Is not one of His choicest titles “Prince of Peace,” and do we not read in His farewell words to His disciples (John xiv.), “Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you”? And yet, notwithstanding all these, we hear Him in the passage before us announcing Himself as on a warlike mission, rather than a peaceful one.

But I think we shall see that both are true, and that both have their place in our Christian experience.

The danger is that we are too apt to take a one-sided view. Thinking of the peaceful aspect of Christ’s mission, we begin to think that our trials and difficulties are already at an end, and that peace unbroken is ours; then, when after a short experience we find that we have still to combat trials and temptations, we fly to the other extreme, and think that it is all desperate struggling and fighting, that there is no real peace *here*, and that our duty is to do battle in a sort of stoical manner, never expecting relief until this life ends.

Now, what is the real meaning of these apparent differences? Seemingly just this: that the verse before us refers to the external life of the child of God—his life towards his fellow-men; while the verses which speak of the gift of peace refer to the internal life—the life towards God. The sense of the presence of Christ dwelling within us is bound to produce peacefulness, and this is the peace which he gives to us; while, on the contrary, the very fact of our being citizens of a heavenly city, and strangers in a world that despises the God of Heaven, proves that we can have no peace with all those things that pertain to it.

For a proof of this statement I would ask you to consider two things:—

- 1st, Christ's own Life;
- 2nd, The History of the Church.

As one looks at the life of Christ, one cannot fail to be struck with the fact that there was very little outward peace in it. If it was not the devil tempting Him, then we find the lawyers trying to trip Him in His words by asking subtle questions, or the priests trying to stir up the people against Him. His very times of prayer had to be taken repeatedly from the hours of earthly sleep. From a natural standpoint His three years' public ministry was one prolonged strife.

As with the Head of the Church, so with the Church itself. The history of the Church is the history of continuous fight. From the beginning until this very time the Church has been a Church militant in the full sense of the term. There have been persecutions involving the giving up of many a noble life, there have been the seductions of an ungodly world to resist, and there have been the attempts of so-called scientists and critics to turn the Church away from the simplicity of the truth. And much of this we have even to-day. If this be so in regard to Christ, and to His Church generally, how much more will it be true regarding the individual members of that Church?

Now, in order to arrive at the clear understanding of the difference between this external and internal peace, let us consider—

I. THE PEACE WHICH CHRIST GIVES.

This comes largely from a knowledge of sins forgiven, and of eternal life secured to us. "Being justified by faith we have *peace with* God through our Lord Jesus Christ." We were formerly enemies of God, refusing His Son, and despising His law. As such we could have no peace with Him, but now, through our acceptance of the atoning work of His Son, we are made at one with Him. His Son has become our Mediator, and while Christ lives our peace is secure.

But this is what I may call the lowest ground of peace—though this can never be lost to us. There is, I think, a higher peace to be obtained too, and it is found in this—the doing of the will of God in the life. As He reveals His will to us, and we seek to occupy ourselves in the doing of it, so shall we enter upon a deeper and nobler sense of His peace. Did not Christ Himself say, "Take my yoke—learn of Me—and ye shall find rest (*i.e.*, peace) unto your souls." Nevertheless, the former must first be known.

We need, then, each one for himself to seek to know His will; and as to a great extent the will of God differs for each individual, this becomes mainly a personal matter. But there are a few of His revealed teachings through His Son that are for all of us. Here are some:—

"He that loveth father and mother more than Me is not worthy of Me."

"Whosoever shall confess Me before men, *him* will I confess before My Father which is in heaven."

"He that taketh not his Cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me."

These show us how tremendous are the claims made upon us, and we shall find that, as we study to know His will, His claims involve our everything and our all, but He Himself is ours. It was the way of the Cross for Christ, and it is the same for His followers. In no other way could He make our peace, and in no other way can we enter into the fulness of the "peace of God which passeth all understanding."

Some one has said:

"The path of sorrow, and that path alone,
Leads to the land where sorrow is unknown;"

and that in some degree is true, though it need not be true of the *inward* life of the soul, for as we render to Him an undivided obedience, so shall we enjoy an unbroken peace.

And yet it is true that—

II. THERE IS A SENSE IN WHICH THIS PEACE MAY BE LOST.

I am referring here to what I have called the higher

peace, or the peace of God. I have already said that the peace *with* God secured to us by the sacrifice of Christ can never be taken from us, but I want here to deal again with the peace which comes through the doing of His will in the life.

It will be at once seen that if, as stated, this higher sense of peace is dependent upon an unbroken obedience to the revealed will of Christ, then the refusal to obey His will naturally carries with it the loss of this peace. And this refusal very often is not a positive one, is not a direct refusal to obey His will. I will venture, therefore, to point out some of the ways whereby, even perhaps unconsciously to ourselves at the time, we draw back from Him and so lose this sense of peace.

(1) *In attempting to serve two masters*—Christ and the world, Christ and pleasure, Christ and business, Christ and—anything that may be allowed to occupy a place of power in our lives. The distraction caused by our efforts to make two things that cannot agree come together in our lives *must* rob us of our peace.

(2) *If we become satisfied with our present spiritual attainments.*—This is perhaps one of our greatest dangers, because it appeals so strongly to *young* Christians. We attain a certain measure of success in Christian life and work, and even with it comes the temptation to take things more easily, to neglect the soul's welfare a little, and to rely upon the past, and the good reputation it has made for us. So little by little we grow careless, until almost ere we are aware of it we find that there is another king in our lives, that Christ has been dethroned, and that our joy and peace in Him have diminished almost to vanishing point.

I hardly need to suggest more to you. The peculiar circumstances of your own lives will at once supply you with others, but to generalise them let me say this, that to neglect the things of God, or to live in any way lower than our knowledge of His will, is bound to cause us to lose this sense of His glorious peace.

He is our King, His claims are upon *all* our life, and He cannot condone with any divided allegiance. Nothing less than this can satisfy Him, and there is no real satisfaction to us with less. As we value the joys of our salvation, we cannot, dare not, allow them to slip from us by allowing other things to creep into our lives, and like the worm at the root sapping up the life of the plant, sap from us that which we must have, if our spiritual life is to be healthy, joyous, and strong.

Is it not foolish of us, then, to live a low-level life, when this higher life is the only possible peaceful and useful one.

III. THERE IS A PEACE WHICH WE HAVE NO RIGHT TO EXPECT.

I have already described this generally as external peace, and I will now endeavour to define it in its details. It is, peace with the world, the flesh, and the devil. For proof, let us look at Scripture.

Regarding the world we read (James iv. 4): "The friendship of the world is enmity with God."

"Regarding the flesh (Rom. vii. 18): "In my flesh dwelleth no good thing."

Regarding the devil (1 Peter v. 8): "Your adversary the devil . . . seeketh whom he may devour."

Then it must of necessity follow that all these are arrayed against every child of God, and that, so far as it be in their power, they will so join issue with him that peace between them will be out of the question. And the more he advances in the ways of God, and the more Christ-like he becomes, the more fierce will the battle be, and right on to the end of his earthly course he will find them to be his sworn foes. Even were he, by the surrender of his principles, to endeavour for a time to make peace with them, it would but be false peace, for he would be giving up the higher so as to gain the lower, with almost the certainty of losing both by so doing. No! When the Christian tries to obtain this outward peace by making friends with his foes and God's foes he is bound to find, and that speedily, that the peace he

has thus sought after is like a "will-o'-the-wisp," and eludes his grasp even as he thinks he has gained it.

Now, because these are arraigned against the Christian, and because so often many of the relatives and friends of Christians are found serving and following these, the sword that Christ speaks of is rendered necessary.

One in a family, perhaps, takes a stand for Christ and right. The probable result: social isolation, hatred, and sometimes rejection. The taking of such a position, perhaps more than anything else, causes the parental love to grow cold towards the child, and the children's love towards the parent. Nothing else in the world makes such separations in families. And is it not bound to be so? The very essentials of the characters of each are opposed the one to the other. The one loves God, the other despises Him. The one trusts in Christ, the other rejects Him. The one seeks to do God's will, the other does his own. The one lives to please God, the other pleases himself. The one denies self, the other indulges it. Therefore it follows that when the two come into contact there is friction.

So to all those who follow closely in the Master's footsteps this warfare—these separations—come; for "as He is, so *are* we in the world." This is one of the forms of cross-bearing, and this is one of the marks which denote His disciples.

Possibly one of the reasons why so many professed Christians fall back is because they have not fully reckoned upon this; they do not expect such isolation and such persecution. To my mind this is a matter which might well have the prayerful attention of preachers and teachers. Do they sufficiently bring this side of the Gospel into notice, or do they by preaching of peace, unintentionally possibly, lead their hearers into the belief that the Christian life is one long, continuous peace in every sense, both spiritual and temporal.

On the other hand, many who *know* of these things stumble at them. They think that if conversion means the possible

breakings of friendships, hatred where love has been, persecution where affection has been shown, it cannot be worth the having. They do not think that the compensations equal the losses, and that from an earthly view salvation is not worth receiving.

I am not sure that it is right for us to indulge such a thought for a moment. God has not presented the plan of salvation to be picked to pieces, criticised, and demeaned by us. It is His solution of the greatest problem of the universe, and when we can find or produce a more efficacious solution, then, and not till then, have we the least right to say it is not worth receiving.

While, because His solution has *proved* to be the only one that could settle this awful problem, God has a right to, in the words of the Apostle Paul, "command all men everywhere to repent," we, for the selfsame reason, have no conceivable right to do other than obey His voice.

Yet, because the question mentioned has been raised in the past, and is still being raised, it may possibly be wise briefly to endeavour to answer it in the hope that it may help any unsaved reader. Let me then say

That this outward strife can never disturb our inward peace. Sailors tell us that even when the fiercest storm is raging at sea, down but a few feet all is quietness and peace. The commotions of ocean never penetrate to its depths. So with us; our inner life lies deep in Christ, and the storms of time and circumstance cannot cause commotion there. Using another simile, have you ever watched from the top of a rock, in a storm, the waves beating furiously against it, appearing at first as though in their fury they would sweep it away? Yet the rock has for centuries withstood them all, and will continue to do so. Our life is built into a rock; that rock is Christ, and all the storms that may ever come upon us cannot for one single moment remove us from Him. (See the apostle's words in Romans viii. 35-39.) And this being so, "our peace remaineth and our joy no man taketh from us."

Then outward strife may probably come to us even apart from salvation. Though, perhaps, we may not be brought face to face with such tremendous conflicts as may be the lot of the Christian, yet it is hardly possible that we can go through life without much trouble, and even strife. We shall not always be able to preserve our friendships intact, and trials will not always pass us by. And if we have to meet even these minor trials and difficulties of life with our own resources only, we shall be overcome by them, and they will sour and embitter our lives. Have you not met such people? If we could only get at their history we should almost certainly find this to be true regarding them. Thus we should become losers in this life, without speaking of our eternal loss in the world to come. So I close with the remark that

"Salvation is best for now, and then." We commit our lives to One "who is able to keep" them, to One who has promised that "all things (shall) work together for good to them that love Him," and to One who has promised that "no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."

The testimony of all the ages confirms this. Martyrs have gone to the stake for their Saviour in the full enjoyment of this peace. Men have suffered persecution, pain, imprisonment for Him without one thought of complaint. Others have been compelled to leave homes and loved ones, and wander in the deserts, among the mountains, and hide in the caves and dens of the earth; yet despite these things their testimony to us is clear that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." That future revelation became present to them, and they lived in its full enjoyment.

If it be true that "experience teacheth," then the experience of the people of God through all time confirms our remark. Thus we lose our lives in this world to find them in the eternal world. And by committing ourselves to His keeping the life is cleansed, purified, and re-

fined through these outward trials, until we are "transformed into His image," and until "He can present us faultless before His Father with exceeding great joy." And until that time may "the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep our hearts and minds through Jesus Christ."

BAPTISM: A REVIEW.

FROM a friend in the North of Ireland we have received for review two lectures on Baptism delivered by W. J. Lowe, M.A., in the Strand Presbyterian Church. As he seems so desirous of being scriptural he will no doubt allow us to leave out the "Rev.," a title which is given in the Bible to God alone. The object of these lectures, with two given before them (for we only have the third and fourth), is to justify infant sprinkling, as practised by Presbyterians, and to condemn the *intelligent* subjection to baptism, as witnessed throughout the New Testament. This, we say, is his object. In pursuance of it he, as far as we can see from the two lectures before us, thinks his safest course is to make an attack on Baptists, not so much as to the question of who should be baptised as that of the mode of baptism.

It is far from congenial to us to enter upon this old controversy. We would much rather be dwelling upon the beauties and glories of Christ, and the realities of His death and resurrection, for professed Christians have been carrying on bitter controversy about baptism, as well as the Lord's Supper, for centuries past, while the great realities of the ruin of man, the atonement, the glorification, and coming again of the Lord Jesus, have had but little place.

Baptism is an outward, administrative figure which may be held and contended for, in any one of the modes that obtain, irrespective of the moral condition of the soul, but to hold and cherish such a truth as the second coming of the

Lord requires a corresponding moral condition of soul. This, doubtless, accounts for the fact that baptism, which (in every shape and form of the word) is mentioned, I think, about eighty times in the New Testament, has always found a very large place in the ministry and controversies of the professing Church, while the second coming of Christ, which is mentioned, either directly or indirectly, considerably over three hundred times in the same part of God's Word, has been almost, if not entirely, set on one side.

Still, much as we would prefer to be taken up with something better, as the lectures in question are sent to us with a request for a few remarks which may be helpful to the Lord's people, we cannot refuse. Yet, in entering upon the subject, we would say that it must not be supposed for one moment that we say all that might justly be said in reply to the puerile arguments that make up the lectures.

As Mr. Lowe seems to think that all who believe in baptism by immersion are semi-illiterate (which we gather from Mr. Robert P. Sawers' letter), we may of course conclude (if his own testimony justifies such conclusion), that he has stopped at no half measures in his own education, but has made great attainments in that direction, and hence will be able to appreciate any point that is against his arguments, or that weakens them in any way. For it seems to us that such an estimate of all the good and learned men who have written on the subject carries with it the assumption that the one who forms it is himself more learned than them all. We might have found a little consolation from this conclusion if in our own minds it were justified, but as we proceeded with the perusal of his lectures we could not resist the impression that, after all, this may only be a conceit of his own mind. At least, that perception, that largeness of vision, and expansion of mind which are the results of a thoroughly trained and distinguished mind, are conspicuous by their absence in these lectures. But perhaps that is owing to his

“Presbyterian prejudice.” The cocksure way in which he speaks of being assured of his ground, the complacency with which he proceeds with his arguments, and the triumphant air with which he draws his conclusions, all savour of conceit, especially when the character of those arguments is tested.

We will just briefly examine two or three of those arguments, which will be quite enough to show the untrustworthy character of the whole.

In the first place he does credit to the intelligence of the Baptists by showing that they do not go to the Old Testament for *Christian* baptism, and the fact that he has to fall back upon that part of God’s Word for arguments for his own mode of baptism shows both the weakness of his cause and his own want of intelligence.

Mr. Lowe may, as he boasts, have a prejudice in favour of the Old Testament as being the Word of God, but though we are not Baptists, yet we know something about that body of Christians, as we do also about Presbyterians, and we think that, not for prejudice, perhaps, but for loyalty to the Word of God, embracing both Old and New Testaments, the former will most favourably compare with the latter.

To confound, in any way whatever, Christian baptism with the washings of the Old Testament simply because the same word is applied to them, displays a lack of intelligence that is almost incredible in a Christian minister, but we rather suspect that Mr. Lowe has not only an “old Presbyterian prejudice in favour of the Old Testament,” but also an old Presbyterian prejudice in favour of his mode of baptism.

That is what it comes to. The baptisms of the Old Testament were “*divers*”—there were many of them; sometimes the body was bathed all over, sometimes the hands only, or hands and feet only, were washed, and other times parts of the body were sprinkled.

As there were many kinds of washings—or baptisms, if Mr. Lowe prefers, though he knows that a Greek word

cannot in every case be rendered by the same English term, but we cannot here stop to dwell upon the elasticity of words—in the Jewish ceremony of the Old Testament, they afford not the slightest clue as to the mode of Christian baptism. Baptism of the New Testament or Christianity is one.

Secondly, the very passage that Mr. Lowe quotes as justifying his reference to the Old Testament tells us that those baptisms, &c., were associated with “a carnal ordinance *imposed on them until* the time of reformation.” The verses that follow show that, Christ being come, they are done away with; they were only “figures for the *time then present*”; hence all arguments from the Old Testament washings are entirely irrelevant to the question. Yet Mr. Lowe’s mode of baptism is entirely based upon the Old Testament! Even as types those washings do not typify baptism; the Red Sea does this! And be it remembered that even John’s baptism was entirely distinct from the divers washings of the Old Testament; though we agree that it was not *distinctly* Christian.

The passage quoted from Hebrews ix. entirely refutes Mr. Lowe’s statement that “the Lord laid hold of a rite that was already in use, a rite that had been in use for ages as part of the Jewish ceremonial, a rite with which his disciples and the people generally were perfectly familiar.” For our own part we would rather believe the Word of God, which tells us those washings, those Jewish ceremonials, were for that time and not for this time (see Galatians and Hebrews).

Mr. Lowe’s arguments concerning the three thousand souls converted by Peter’s preaching are imbecile to an extreme.

In the first place, all his reasoning about scarcity of water is based upon ignorance, for it proceeds upon the ground of the present geographical condition of Jerusalem and its vicinity, which is no criterion whatever of its condition in

the days of our Lord. Any one who has the most casual acquaintance with history knows that the scarcity of rain in Palestine during the Christian era, to which the present barrenness of that land is due, was quite unknown in the previous period except in times of famine. Common sense, too, would tell any thinking man that the scarcity of water supposed by Mr. Lowe is quite incompatible with the good sanitary condition of that large city at that time. How does he or anybody else know what pools or public waters were at the disposal of the disciples? The state of the brook Kedron, too, as a consequence of the more regular rains, would be very different in those days from its present state, and so far from Pentecost being in a dry season, it came just about the time of what were called the latter rains. The latter rains fell in the Jewish month Nizan (March), and in Abib (April) the rivers were nearly always swollen; this settles the whole question, for the brook Kedron would be full. Scripture also is against his arguments, for we read, "For the Lord thy God bringeth thee into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, that spring out of the valleys and hills.

If the minister of Strand Church finds it necessary to his arguments to follow the spies of old in their false report of the good and pleasant land, we are not all driven to such necessity. We do not believe that Palestine in its normal condition (for its present condition is abnormal and judicial) was the most thirsty of lands, and Jerusalem the most thirsty of cities.

Then, as to the time taken and the number of baptisers, Mr. Lowe concludes that only the twelve apostles baptised, and so makes his calculations accordingly. Now, we would ask, What is, or where is, his ground for such conclusion? Are we told anywhere that the apostles *only* baptised? We are not; on the contrary, we find that although the Apostle Paul was at Corinth two years, and very many people converted—a large church formed—yet Paul baptised two in-

dividuals and one household only. Who baptised the others? No official capacity or authority was needed by any servant of God to enable him to baptise *those who believed*. There were *hundreds* with the apostle who would be ready to help; we read that the Lord Himself "*was seen of above five hundred brethren at once.*" Thus the arguments of the Strand Church minister on this point also are seen to be of the most superficial character—they are entirely disposed of by simple facts.

But still more is to be said on this point. Though we maintain that with plenty of water, which, as we have shown, there must have been, and plenty willing hands, it was quite possible to baptise by immersion three thousand souls that day if the Scripture said so, yet, we ask, Does the Scripture say they were all baptised that day? It says they were that day added unto them, but it was their conversion, and not their baptism, that added them to the number of believers. It simply says, "Then they" (or they then) "that gladly received the Word were baptised: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." The purport of the verse is simply that the three thousand souls that were *added that day* were baptised. "The same day" certainly refers to the day of Peter's preaching and their conversion, but does it *necessarily* include their baptism? At the same time, if this view of the passage is not received, we do not press it; it is by no means necessary. We maintain the possibility of baptising the number named on the very day, for Christians in the days of the apostles did not think much of staying up all night if the Lord's work required it. And if we only suppose one hundred out of the more than five hundred brethren that were in Jerusalem at that time were occupied in baptising, the number to be baptised by each person would be thirty only. We have seen this number baptised in a brief hour after an ordinary Gospel meeting.

The arguments in this lecture against the immersion of

the Ethiopian nobleman, Paul, Cornelius, Lydia, and the Philippian jailer, are really too flimsy and frivolous to waste much time over. It ought to be enough to note that they are all gratuitous; but we will notice one or two points.

Mr. Lowe gives no proof that the water the Ethiopian came to was only about a basinful, and not a pool of sufficient depth to serve the purpose of immersion. The fact is, they came across water; and on the same ground on which the lecturer reasons that there was not enough for immersion, anyone might reason that there was none! Hence we say the following statement is a mixture of conceit and presumption: "The language that is used in reference to this case does not imply immersion, and the circumstances of the case positively exclude immersion. We are perfectly convinced that the eunuch was not immersed."

From Mr. Lowe's reasoning against Paul's immersion one is led to think that he entertains the idea that while sprinkling is washing, immersion is not! And in his reasoning about Cornelius he seems to think that while it is possible to forbid a basin of water, it is impossible to forbid a bathful, and that not to forbid the water necessarily means to bring it to one! And as to Lydia, the customs of her country would not permit her to be immersed, therefore the scriptural mode of baptism has been especially moulded and fashioned to suit those customs—at least Mr. Lowe can thus mould and fashion it! How does he know what conveniences there might have been at that river side—what dwellings, &c., were near? But for the scarcity of water argument which did duty in the case of the three thousand, and that of the eunuch being excluded here, some other must be found! And the water argument is called into requisition again in the case of the jailer. But again we ask, How does he know that there were no facilities for immersion, neither in that jail nor in the jailer's home? He gratuitously tells us, in his usual presumptuous way, that "There was not even a bath there." He seems sure enough about it himself, but we cannot imagine that eight hundred people in that church were so weak and foolish as to take his word as being infallible.

Mr. Lowe's arguments in his fourth lecture are even more imbecile than those we have reviewed in his third, but we

cannot afford space, not to say waste time, for the consideration of them now, though we will just give one or two examples.

He says that "If the Baptists could prove immersion in nine cases out of ten, and if in the tenth case immersion were improbable, or even doubtful, then their labour would be in vain and their cause would be lost." We may, with the greatest propriety and in the strictest accordance with logic, entirely reverse this argument and say, "If the Baptists could *prove* immersion in one case out of ten, and if the nine cases were improbable or doubtful, then their labour is rewarded, and their cause established," for improbable and doubtful simply mean *unproven*, and if one case is proven that logically decides the matter for the rest. For be it remembered that when it is seen that Old Testament washings have nothing whatever to do with New Testament baptism—and it is most obvious to any intelligent and unprejudiced mind that they have not—not one single case of baptism by sprinkling can be produced.

As to the arguments against the truth of God, as presented in Romans vi., they are pregnant with so much that is erroneous that we cannot attempt to examine them all here, but must, with just the following remark or two, leave them to the judgment of those who heard or have read them.

In his laboured effort to deny what is there so clearly taught he is driven to a most erroneous statement. In the first place he confounds the figure with the reality. The reality is that I, as a guilty sinner before God, died with Christ—the old man was crucified with Christ—and I am now alive with Christ risen. Baptism is the *figure* of this in verse 3, and all through the chapter, and those that were baptised have owned by profession that the reality is true of them, and in that sense have put on Christ. Such profession in the act of baptism, as well as in the word of the mouth, may be unreal, hence Mr. Lowe is right in saying that "A man may be united to Christ who has never been baptised with water, and, on the other hand, one who has been baptised with water—yes, and one who has been immersed in water—may not be united to Christ." Every sound Baptist believes this, because they know that baptism is not the thing itself but the figure of it, and as such it may

be applied to any individual of whom that which is figured is not true. For the following remark, "To say that by water baptism we are baptised into Christ is to teach baptismal regeneration," is based upon the confusion of the figure with the reality, which we have already pointed out.

But this drives him to something more. He says that here baptism is the baptism of the Holy Ghost, that the identification, or union with Christ spoken of in Rom. vi., is our newness with Christ, or our being united to Him by the Holy Ghost. This is really serious, because the union treated of is the identification of the old man—the sinful nature—with Christ in his death, hence the forcible argument of the chapter is, "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" Is it the old man which was identified with Christ in His death for judgment, that is baptised into the body of Christ by the Holy Ghost? The thought would be blasphemous. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is another, and a distinct thing, uniting us as *new creatures* to Christ risen for eternal glory.

But it is as clear as words can possibly make it, that the baptism of Romans vi., figuratively, identifies the *old man* with Christ in His death for judgment before God, hence, too, we are to reckon it dead, for God sees it so, and faith always reckons with Him.

The Scripture reads thus, "How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" How did we become dead to sin? The next verse answers the question, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptised into Christ Jesus were baptised into his death?"

We cannot go further into this matter now; we have said quite enough to show that Mr. Lowe's arguments will not hold water for one moment, and that hence he leaves the truth of baptism by immersion more demonstrated than before, for in his attack he has evidently brought up all his force to batter the fortress of truth, but retires without having made the slightest impression, though, strange to say, he thinks he has shattered it; for he is somewhat more than sprinkled with his own arguments—indeed, he is thoroughly *immersed* in them.

THE CHRISTIAN OUTLOOK.

DIVINE COMPASSION.

IT is our desire here to say a few words upon a subject that we feel to be very far beyond us in its reality, fulness, and depth; for who can fathom the depth or the heart of God? It is like a mighty ocean, without bounds or bottom; or who can measure the compassions of our Lord Jesus Christ? They are like a refreshing river that finds its source in an exhaustless reservoir, continually flowing, but never exhausted.

When recounting the sin and rebellion of God's people, the Scripture adds, "But He being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not" (Psa. lxxviii. 38). Again we read, "But Thou, O Lord, art a God full of compassion, and gracious, longsuffering, and plenteous in mercy and truth" (Psa. lxxxvi. 15). And three times in three other Psalms we find the words, "The Lord is gracious and full of compassion." And we are told that it is "because His compassions fail not" that His people are not consumed.

Several times we read in the Gospels that the Lord was moved with, or had (same word in the original), compassion. The vast multitude, scattered as sheep, having no shepherd; the hungry multitude; the mournful widow, bereft of her only son; and the poor man smitten with leprosy, are sights all of which moved our blessed Lord with compassion. The father also, when he saw the prodigal returning, "had compassion on him." The word used in these passages literally means to have the bowels yearning. The equivalent in

Hebrew is thus rendered in 1 Kings iii. 26. Speaking of the woman to whom the living child claimed by another belonged, when the king proposed to divide it, it says, "*her bowels yearned* upon her son." The word thus rendered in this passage is rendered "compassion" in chapter viii. 50 of the same book.

O, who can tell the tenderness, the pity, and the yearnings of the heart of our Lord Jesus Christ!—language fails. We can only behold, wonder, adore, and rejoice, and surely desire to imitate Him. Where should we be were it not for His compassion? Should we not have been consumed? Is not the sin of the professing Church as great as that of Israel? We take too selfish and narrow a view of things. We just look at ourselves and our own little party of believers, and, in our own eyes, however, "we are separate, we are right, we are not connected with nor responsible for the sin of the professing Church in any way whatsoever." Such is our thoughts, and, indeed, often our words. But this is a narrow and selfish way of looking at the state of things, and calculated to fill us with spiritual pride and ecclesiastical pretension—indeed these fruits of the flesh have been and are too painfully manifested among those who make such loud professions of separation.

The Lord has compassion on the *scattered* and hungry multitude; but where is our compassion on such? We say, "Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread." But the Lord's word is, "Give ye them to eat." Our reply in effect—to be gathered from our attitude and our reasoning—is, "O no, Lord; they are scattered; we are gathered in the right place, and cannot defile ourselves by taking food to them." O, how little we enter into the heart of Christ concerning His people. We help those who think as we ourselves do, and hence, in our eyes, are right; but we are too holy to go to those whom we think ignorant and out of the way! They must betake themselves to the Ritualistic

wolves in "the country and villages round about," or to the Rationalistic downgraders of our cities, who give them the subtle serpent instead of fish, and stones of doubt and uncertainty instead of bread. But our blessed Lord has "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way."

There is a broader, though a more humiliating way of looking at the sin of the professing Church, which can only lead us to real contrition and confession before God, and deepen the sense of His superabounding grace. Is not the true Church responsible for what the professing Church has become? Has not all the corruption of Christendom manifest to-day grown out of the true Church, as established by Christ and His apostles? Was it not *while men slept* (words that surely imply failure in the responsibility of *the Lord's people*) that the enemy sowed the tares among the wheat? Was not the Church responsible for the introduction of evil in the first place? It is quite true that the professing Church became so corrupt by the growth of the evil thus introduced that those who wished to be faithful to their Lord had to separate themselves from what is called by that name; but is it not humbling to such to think of what the Church has become (that is, outwardly) on account of unwatchfulness, in the first place, on their part?—that is, on the part of God's own people.

There is still indeed a path of faithfulness and obedience for such as will seek grace to walk in it, but surely it should be under the sense of the sin of the Church before our God, and not as thinking that we are entirely free from that sin, for all the sad ruin and confusion is continually before our eyes.

And will not those who are nearest to the heart of Christ partake most largely of His compassion toward the scattered and hungry multitude of His people? How much do we know of this yearning of the bowels after the welfare of the Lord's people, not after a sect or party, not even after a

faithful few only, but after the scattered multitude—after His people generally, in all the divisions of Christendom? All are dear to Him, and happy is the man who is near enough to Him to enter into His thoughts about them, and partake of His compassion toward them, and run at His bidding to take them food and care for them. Surely the unity of the Spirit is thus manifested among the Lord's own people, *in spite* of the sad divisions and sectarian barriers which otherwise seem to deny it.

The Lord was moved with compassion before the foundation of the world, when He volunteered Himself a sacrifice for our sin; He was moved with compassion to come into this world; He was moved with compassion to go to the Cross; He was moved with compassion to send down the Holy Ghost; He was moved with compassion to speak life to our souls by that same blessed Spirit. May we, then, be moved with compassion toward each other, and toward our fellow-men and women around us who know Him not.

If the spirit and love of Christ, the comfort and consolation, the bowels of mercy that are in Him, are in any measure in us, there is so much around us to call these into operation, and it is impossible for such graces of Christ to be present and yet inoperative. Nothing displaces strife and envy like the exhibition of the grace of Christ. When in communion with our blessed Lord, the very things that would otherwise fill us with violent passion, fill us with real and deep compassion, and the soft answer is given that turneth away wrath. But this comes only of the new nature nourished and fed by communion with Christ.

CHRISTIAN COURTESY.

THE word "courteous" only occurs once in the New Testament, but the meaning of that word is inculcated everywhere in that part of God's Word.

The place where it is found is 1 Peter iii. 8. "Finally,

be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous." The word in the original literally means "kindness"; but it is the kindness of love, or "loving-kindness." It is not merely external or affected amiability acquired by education, and displayed mechanically—*i.e.*, in outward manners only—without any real inward spring; but it finds its springs in the emotions of brotherly love.

•As we have observed, it is inculcated everywhere in the New Testament. "Be kindly affectioned one to another," "Prefer one another," "Consider one another," are all exhortations to Christian courteousness. Indeed, it is one great characteristic of the new nature, therefore the children of God should be courteous and amiable without even studying the laws of etiquette: it becomes natural to them if living in the company of Christ, and hence manifesting the traits of the new life.

The ceremonial superfluities that are called etiquette in worldly society, and against which we have nothing to say, are by no means essential to real and substantial Christian courteousness. A Christian who is drinking into the Spirit of Christ will seek the good of others, consider their feelings in every possible way, be exceedingly kind to them, and watch opportunity to serve them, all in a quiet and humble spirit, without any great outward show; at the same time, sufficient demonstration of manner to show that the kindness is intentional there may be, as also to show appreciation of kindness when it is received.

In the world, courteousness is especially associated with high birth and good society. But the highest birth that can possibly be known, surely, is to be born from above, and the best society that can be enjoyed is the society of heaven—the company of our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of kings. And shall not those who are thus born be courteous? Yea, and they will be if they are enjoying their birthright, *i.e.*, the blessing that is theirs in Christ Jesus,

and walking with Him; for we must walk *with* Him to walk worthy *of* Him.

The most genuine refinement is that which comes from a heart purified by the blood of Christ and the Word of God, and filled with divine love; hence such refinement is often manifested through what we call a very rough exterior. The kind consideration, the humble and simple demeanour, and the readiness to serve others, which are often manifested by the poor and uncultured of the flock of Christ, who are filled with love to Him, is peculiarly beautiful: its very artless simplicity adds to its charm, and proud Christians lose a great deal by avoiding their company. A servant of God, who was what people would say of good birth and well connected, but was also born from above and filled with divine love, was in the habit of saying that he did not know a greater luxury than to go and sit down in the humble but clean cottage of a child of God who is what the world would call poor, and take a cup of tea with such: he then especially felt he was where the Lord Himself would be. The keen appreciation of a visit, the kind consideration of the visitor, the eager desire to do the best for him or her, and to give the best, is most refreshing to one who sees Christ coming out in it all. O how very much the proud among God's people lose.

Though the Lord's people who are born from above belong to heaven, they are the excellent of the earth. The world may not see their excellency, but the Lord is pleased to see it, and in them is all His delight (Psalm xvi. 3).

The fact that there is such a deplorable lack of this Christian courtesy among God's people shows how little the new nature is in exercise—how little we enjoy the company of our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the confession of Christ and belief of the Gospel we have put off the old man and put on the new: this is an absolute fact as to our standing before God. Ephesians iv. 22-24 should read, "Having put off," and "Having put on": this is absolute, it is the "truth as it is in Jesus"—that

is, it is true in Him (ver. 21). So also Col. iii. 9, 10. The exhortation, "Lie not one to another," is based upon this absolute fact, as also the exhortation, "Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering," &c. These are the fruits of the new life, or—as they are called in Galatians—the fruits of the Spirit, for it is only by the power of the Spirit that we can live them out.

How very happy would the people of God be if the selfish strife, bitter contention, and groundless suspicions that are, alas ! too manifest in their conduct toward each other, were displaced by such Christian courteousness. But in selfishly seeking our own things we become hinderers and stumbling-blocks to others and great losers ourselves ; while in seeking the good of others they are helped, and we become great gainers.

But not only in the Church and among Christians generally is there a lack of Christian amiability, but even in Christian households between husband and wife, Christian parents and Christian children, Christian masters or mistresses, and Christian servants.

There should be no happier scene on earth than should be witnessed in a Christian household, whether it be in the humblest cottage or the most stately mansion, where all have the same interest in our Lord Jesus Christ, all are made partakers of the same divine nature, all belong to the same heavenly home, and all have common interests in the cause of Christ on the earth ; and, what is more, are most intimately related to each other irrespective of natural ties altogether—children of God and members of the body of Christ. We say that such a household should present the happiest scene on earth, and will do if each one keeps his or her place according to the relationship occupied, and fulfils the obligations thereof with exercise of conscience before the Lord—as beneath His eye—and with the real exercise of Christian love toward all other members of the household, and the true manifestation of the natural love

that is peculiar to the relationship of each, whether it be husband or wife, parent or child, brother or sister. Natural ties and natural love are not superseded or weakened, but established and strengthened, by spiritual ties and divine love. If I know the love of God I should love my wife and children, or my husband and children, as the case may be, more truly and devotedly than any one who does not know the love of God. For though divine purpose and love bring me into higher relationships—holy and heavenly—yet this comes down and instructs and exhorts me to behave in these lower or earthly relationships in such a way as to manifest therein the higher and heavenly. Wondrous grace !

Thus the husband has two springs of love to his wife, as also the wife to the husband, *i.e.*, divine love, as heirs of the grace of life together, and the love that is natural to the earthly relationship. He, or she, has also two motives for the manifestation of such love, *i.e.*, the Lord is thereby pleased, and pleasure is given to the one loved. What an example, then, of courteousness, of real and true amiability, of tender consideration for and yielding to each other they should set before the whole house ! Nothing can be more displeasing to the Lord, more ruinous to the happiness of those concerned, and more to the discredit of Christianity in the eyes of the world, than a quarrelling Christian household.

The case is very different where some members of the family are converted and some are not ; but even here those who are saved should manifest this Christian courteousness. Nothing would be more calculated to reach the hearts and consciences of the unsaved members, even though the latter may be entirely divided against the former.

May we be more exercised before the Lord concerning these matters, that the grace of Christ may be more fully manifested in our lives, as lived in the bosom of our own family, in the Church, or in our contact with the world in business, &c.

DIVINE COMFORT.

“**B**LESSED be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort.” What a precious word is this—“Father of mercies, and God of all comfort!” There is not a mercy that we enjoy that does not come from Him. His mercies are many and continuous; they are showered down upon us daily—we cannot number them. In the showers of rain that fall from heaven; in that glowing orb, the greater light that rules the day, whose bright and genial rays are so conducive to the happiness of mankind, and illuminate and fructify the whole earth; in the lesser light that rules the night, whose clear, bright shining makes the temporary absence of the sun more tolerable; in those myriads of orbs that sparkle in the canopy of heaven, giving such peculiar charms to the night season, supplying such wholesome food for pious meditation, and such instructive material for the pensive mind, so that, indeed, while day unto day uttereth speech, night unto night showeth knowledge; in the green meadows and the fields of corn; in the herd of the stall or the cattle that feed on the hills, and the refreshing springs that rise up out of the earth—in all these, and in ten thousand more things and ways, we see the mercies of our God, too numerous to count. Blessed be His name! “His mercy endureth for ever.” He is the “Father of mercies;” they all find their origin in Him. It is because of what He is in Himself that these mercies fail not, for they are showered upon an ungrateful people.

These are all temporal mercies, and are common to all mankind; but what can we say about His spiritual mercies. If the goodness of God comes out in such a marvellous way in His dealings with fallen and rebellious man, how very much more so in His dealings with redeemed man. If He cares for the needs of the body, how much more so those of the soul!

The mercy of God does not stop with these temporal blessings, but, as man is fallen by sin, it provides an eternal salvation for him; it plans and secures, at tremendous cost, his eternal blessing, and all who believe the Gospel—the wondrous message of mercy to mankind—are the daily recipients of higher mercies which minister to the needs of the soul, and fill the heart with joy and the lips with praise; such can say, not only “goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life,” but, “and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.”

But, though surrounded by all these mercies, we pass through a scene of trial and suffering; trials of various kinds, sometimes deep and sore, press upon us. But in all these our God is the “God of all comfort” to us.

In all our trials, sorrows, suffering, and, may be, persecutions, we cannot get on without divine comfort; but with divine comfort we are made most happy in them, so happy that it is worth being in the trial, sorrow, or suffering in order to experience the comfort of God. Of course, simple faith is required to make it good in the soul. It is not that we resign ourselves with a kind of stoical resignation to our lot, whatever it may be, but that we experience such a real happiness and profound peace, by the sense of divine sympathy, in the path of trial or sorrow as could not be ours in any other circumstances. It is far, far better to be in a path of trial with God than to be in a path of what men call pleasure and prosperity without Him, or away from Him. Faith knows this well. The way of God is *always* in the sanctuary; it is sometimes in the deep waters. “Thy way, O God, is in the sanctuary;” “Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and Thy footsteps are not known” (Psalm lxxvii. 13, 19).

It is not the most tried that are the most unhappy, but the disconsolate—those who know nothing of the sympathy of Christ nor the comfort of the Holy Ghost. All kinds of trial may be pressing upon a child of God, yet he, if faith in

God be in exercise, can say, "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy comforts delight my soul." Here we find the comforts of God are a real source of delight. Hence all the trials and difficulties of the way are food for faith; they do but afford occasion for the experience of divine comfort, and for the proof of the over-ruling power of our God. Thus the true meaning of Samson's riddle is again verified, and the trial that would otherwise eat the vitality and freshness out of the soul is made to yield meat by which the soul is cheered and invigorated, and the "strong"—the opposing forces by which our hopes are blighted, our efforts rendered abortive, and our plans frustrated—instead of embittering the life and temper, are made to yield sweetness by toning down the haughty spirit, and softening the harsh manner. The one thing that we need, above all others, for the honour of Christ in our lives, a path of successful service to God, and our own happiness, is that exercise of simple faith which keeps the heart and life in contact with God Himself.

Let us then take heed lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the Living God. But may we go on with such a sense of His goodness and mercy as will inspire in our souls a real, simple, and firm confidence in Himself, ever remembering that we have not to interpret God by His ways with us, but we interpret His ways with us by what we know of Himself as revealed in Jesus Christ—as made known in the Gospel. Often have we so experienced the peculiar blessedness of His comfort in trial that we have said, "It is worth being in the trial to get the comfort."

How gracious of our blessed Lord to tell His disciples, at the moment when they were so troubled at the thought of being left alone in this world without Him, not to be troubled, that He would pray the Father, and He would then send another Comforter to them, who would not leave them as He was doing. How touching, too, even after the promise

of the *other* Comforter, to hear Him saying, "I will not leave you comfortless; I will come to you."

"Comforter!" what an appropriate and precious title for the Holy Ghost; the Spirit of Truth. The work of a comforter is not to chide or upbraid, but to caress; not to occupy us with the trial or suffering, but to speak of better and brighter things to our souls, and thus to occupy us with these; not as being beyond our reach, but as being our very own. Hence we read: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, *He shall testify of Me.*"

This, then, is the blessed office filled by the Comforter; it is to testify of Him; to take of the things of Christ, and show unto us; to tell us of all we have in Christ—love, sympathy, power; to make known all He is to us—our Saviour, Shepherd, Friend, Priest, and Bridegroom; and to remind us of the glory that will soon be ours in and with Himself, thus giving us to see that "our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," and that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

How well calculated to comfort our hearts in the heaviest trial is all this! Yes; our God is "the God of all comfort;" and in 2 Cor. i. and vii. the apostle is full of it. He was proving that comfort to such a great extent that he desired to pour it forth into the souls of others. Thus it always is; when we ourselves experience this comfort we want, and we are able, to comfort others, and so we become comforters of each other. "Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." O that there were more of this comforting each other; why is there so little of it? Is it not because we do not go to Him for comfort ourselves? We seek to draw comfort from

other sources rather than "the God of all comfort." We look anywhere and everywhere rather than to our Lord Jesus Christ for sympathy, and thus the Holy Ghost, who would be our Comforter, becomes grieved; and how can we effectually exhort others to look to God for comfort if we do not do so ourselves?

Speaking of the coming of our blessed Lord for His people, the Scripture adds, "So shall we ever be with the Lord, wherefore comfort we one another with these words."

Reader, are you passing through any trial or sorrow? Then ponder over this wonderful and blessed truth—you are going to be *for ever with the Lord*; dwell upon it till the magnitude of the fact dawns upon thy soul in such a way as to minimise in thine eyes the greatest trial that you can possibly have on earth to such a degree that you see it is not worthy to be compared with the glory that awaits you; and thus you will be filled with comfort, and exceeding joyful in all your tribulation (2 Cor. vii. 4).

"CHURCH OFFICES."

DEAR BROTHER IN CHRIST,—I have read, with deep interest and great care, the letter of our brother J. L., also your paper on the above subject, and, as you wish others to give their thoughts, I shall endeavour to state what I have to say as clearly and concisely as I can.

Let me notice, first, the distinction between those who were chosen by the Church, or Churches, as in Acts vi. and 2 Cor. viii. 16-24, to look after the contributions to the poor, and those who were chosen and called by the Lord to do spiritual work.

The confounding of these two things together has caused much confusion of thought. Those to whom the Church was to commit the keeping and laying out of their contributions were chosen by the Church. They were the *stewards*

of the Church, and as such were accountable to the Church. Whereas the bishop is the "steward of God" (Titus i. 7): he is chosen by the Lord, and is accountable to the Lord (Heb. xiii. 17).

Let us now try to find out the scriptural meaning of the term "deacon." The seven men who were chosen in Acts vi. are not called deacons by the Holy Spirit. At the same time, I do not believe it is an abuse of the word to call them deacons. But to limit the application of the word to that special department of service unto which they were called is to misunderstand the whole subject of deacon service in the Church. On examining a Greek concordance, I see that the word which is rendered in the Authorised Version, "the office of a deacon" (1 Tim. iii. 10-13), is applied to the ministry of the Lord Jesus, also to the ministry of angels, to the ministry of the apostles, to the ministry of women, and to service generally.

The word which is rendered "deacon" in Phil. i. 1 and 1 Tim. iii. 8, 12, has also a wide application; and in these two passages it has, to my mind, no reference whatever to that kind of service unto which the "seven" were set apart in Acts vi. The idea of associating the word deacon with what is known as the "temporalities" of the Church is purely *traditional*—it has no foundation in Scripture.

The charge which was given to the brethren to "look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom," to look after their contributions, I have no doubt was designed to be a precedent for the assemblies of God all along the Church age. But I cannot see how that can have anything whatever to do with an assembly choosing or appointing men to do spiritual work. For any one to use Acts vi. as a precedent for such a thing is to confound things which are essentially different.

When we come to look at the exercise, or recognition of, spiritual gift in the Church, we are upon entirely different ground. I believe we are all agreed that the Source of all

spiritual gifts is the exalted Christ in heaven, and that the power of all ministry in the Church is the presence of the Holy Spirit. The real difficulty seems to be this: Was the action of the apostles in Acts xiv. 23, and the charge given to Titus (chap. i. 5-6), designed to be a precedent for the Church, the same as in Acts vi.?

When we come to the question of ordaining elders, the difficulty at once meets us: Where is, or who has, the power to do it? To my mind it is perfectly clear that the Churches never did appoint their own elders, nor were they charged to do so. The charge which was given to look out men to take charge of their money matters was given to the "multitude of the disciples" (Acts vi. 2); whereas the command to ordain elders was given to an individual, and cannot legitimately be claimed by an assembly. Those who bear rule in the Church must get their authority "from above," else their title to rule is not divine. Scriptural authority always comes from *above*: it never can come from *beneath*. When the apostles ordained elders, they did so by divine authority. And when Paul charged Titus to ordain elders, he simply passed on to him that divine authority. But I fail to find in Scripture any trace of that authority being committed to the Church. Whilst I believe that the claim to apostolic succession is a powerless pretence, yet those who make this claim are consistent with their practice. Whilst they attempt to do apostolic work, they claim to have apostolic power to do it. But those who deny apostolic succession, and yet attempt to ordain elders, their practice contradicts their belief.

For assemblies of saints to choose and appoint their own guides is a leaf taken from the democratic government of the world. Whether in God's dealing with Israel or with the Church democratic government has no place in Scripture. To have no rule whatever is not democracy, it is anarchy. Democratic rule is *rule according to the will of the people*. That is, the people vote into places of power those whom they

believe are best fitted to rule. The divine principle of government always was, and ever must be, a *Theocracy*; that is, *rule according to the will of God*—men chosen by the Lord, through whom He will administer His will to His people. For this service it is not only necessary to have certain qualifications, but also to be in a certain spiritual condition. If a man is to guide the flock of God, he must himself be in divine leading. Here comes in one of the special dangers of men being set apart by the Church. One may be eminently fitted to be a guide when he is chosen, and yet soon be all wrong with God; and the greater his gift, the more harm will he do, and if he has been officially set apart his power for evil is almost unlimited.

As to the "recognition" of those who are to guide and minister in the assembly, there is, to my mind, no other safe way than that enjoined in Scripture: To "know them," to "esteem them" (1 Thess. v. 12-13), and to "obey them" (Heb. xiii. 17). However much we may be grieved by the lack of godly order in the assemblies, to attempt to remedy things by going beyond Scripture, and put our own puny, erring hands to what is the divine prerogative, may seem to make things look better for a time, but for assemblies to set apart men to act as guides is the first step on a downgrade which will ultimately lead into the snare of clerisy.

I am sorry to write such a long paper, but I could not say what I believe needs to be said in fewer words.—I am, yours in the Blessed Hope, GEO. ADAM, Stranraer.

WE are thankful for the preceding contribution to this immensely important subject. It makes some cardinal points very clear. At the same time it by no means exhausts the subject, or clears up things in a conclusive or satisfactory manner.

On the one hand, the enemy is making such disastrous use of the subject to clothe his emissaries with a spurious

authority over the souls of the Lord's people with the object of destroying their faith; and on the other hand there is in the minds of those who see the wicked use that is made of the subject such indefiniteness and confusion of ideas that now it is brought up in this Quarterly it is our desire that there may be a somewhat full and unprejudiced enquiry into the Word of God concerning it, in His fear and with a real and sincere desire for His will, and we feel sure He will teach us; for it is certain that our testimony against the abuse of the subject must be more effectual when we rightly understand and can clearly define those passages of Scripture on which the wicked assumptions are based. Denying, ignoring, or even misunderstanding a truth does not strengthen our testimony against its abuse. We desire, therefore, that our enquiry shall be in a spirit of dependence and submission, but real and thorough.

If such enquiry into the Word of God confirm us in our present mode of action, the enquiry will have done good. We should be ready to bring our views to the Word as often as they are questioned, and that with an unprejudiced mind, for if, on the other hand, it enables us to see that something is wanting, we may surely be thankful for such discovery. Therefore let us hope that the Lord's people who have well studied the subject in the fear of God, and are able to give a few helping words, will not fail to do so.

The following points in the preceding paper we, and we trust all our readers, consider conclusive: 1, The distinction between those chosen by the Church, or Churches, as in Acts vi. and 2 Cor. viii. 16-24, to look after the contribution for the food, and those who were chosen and called by the Lord to do spiritual work; 2, That there is no such thing as apostolic succession, and therefore no ground for an individual, or individuals, to appoint authoritatively elders or bishops; 3, That there is no example given in Scripture of the Church choosing them (*i.e.* in the sense of setting them apart to the work), much less of such choice

conferring authority on those chosen, though they did definitely recognise, and even invite, those who were appointed by the apostles or given by the Lord; 4, Appointment and authority must be from above, or it is not of God; 5, That the divine principle of government is Theocratic, *i.e.*, rule by the will of God.

These are cardinal and important points, and we are glad that so many of the Lord's people are agreed on them, and who, we trust, would think it better not to move a peg than to infringe or weaken one of the above points. We need continually to emphasise them. At the same time, among those who thus agree there are many who think that there must be a godly way of giving more practical point and real effect to these very truths than that which obtains in most gatherings of brethren.

We will here make just a few remarks with a view to help in the further study of the subject. First, we notice that our brother leaves the special character of the deacon's office rather vague and his work undefined. We think perhaps this vagueness arises from the fact that he attaches too much importance to the varied use of the word itself, and not enough to the *special* office or service to which it is applied in the epistles, where its application is evidently limited to a special work, which cannot be interpreted by other uses of the word. For is it not evident that the office and work of a deacon was special, whatever other use the word itself may serve? It is taken for granted that he might be gifted for and engaged in other work besides the special work for which he was chosen.

Secondly, is there not also another important distinction observable in the Scriptures, namely, between the special gifts for teaching and preaching, and that for ruling? Are not the "governments" that are set in the Church distinct from all gifts of teaching, &c.? and may not one have the gift, or grace and wisdom, of ruling who may or may not have that of teaching or preaching, or that of teaching and

preaching without that of ruling, *i.e.*, is not rule or government in itself distinct ?

Thirdly, as to elders, bishops, or pastors (titles that are synonymous in their meaning), it is certain that the Lord gave them, and that they had, an acknowledged place in the assembly by appointment, though the latter was by the apostles. It is also certain that the Lord gives them still, and is there not some simple and definite way in which they are to be acknowledged as set apart to such office and service, though certainly it is not by apostolic authority ? May not such acknowledgment take the simple form of choice, without conflicting with the fact—which we must ever bear in mind, and even use for guidance—viz., the Lord alone gives the gift, confers the authority, and makes the appointment. Is it unscriptural for an assembly to extend an invitation to a brother whom it is evident the Lord has made a bishop or pastor to come and help them, and even to ask him to stay in their midst for pastoral work, and definitely recognise him as a God-given pastor ? Is not this one way of receiving and acknowledging what the Lord has given ? This is as simple as the cry from Macedonia, yet it wears the form of choice. But it is not choosing a man to become a pastor, but receiving one who is already a pastor by divine appointment. God made David king, yet the people received and crowned him as such. We only refer to this as a simple illustration. Indeed, assemblies at the present time are continually choosing their teachers and preachers. When an assembly invites a teacher or preacher for a month’s ministry among them, do they not choose the one they think most fitted for the work, and suited to the need of the gathering ? What is this but choice ? Yet it is not democracy. It is receiving a brother to do a work which he is evidently appointed to by the will of God, though being by invitation it takes the form of choice. And if it is right for an assembly to choose a pastor for a month, why not three months, or indefinitely ?

We are far from dogmatising on these points. We raise them in a spirit of enquiry, and with a desire to know the Lord's will.

Finally, let us give heed to our brother's closing words in his paper, that "However much we may be grieved by the lack of godly order in the assemblies, not to go beyond Scripture to remedy it." But we do not believe that such lack of godly order arises from following the instruction of the Word of God, but rather from not giving heed to it, or from misunderstanding it. Scripture does not leave us to such lack. What we desire to know is the godly way of making practical and effective what is there taught.

That God is a God of order, is testified everywhere in Nature, in Israel, and in the Church, as constituted in the New Testament, and that subjection to His will (and not that of anyone else), as taught in His Word, is the only way to effect it, according to Himself, in His assembly is obvious.

There are dangers on all hands, hence we need to be kept sensible of dependence, and in a spirit of watchfulness; even the elders appointed by the apostles needed the exhortation not to lord it over God's heritage, nor to do their work for filthy lucre' sake. A God-given guide may do wrongly or teach wrongly, hence the need of vigilance on the part of the assembly who are to judge in such a case (1 Cor. xiv. 29).

THE WORKS OF THE FLESH AND THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT.

Gal. v. 13-26.

THE description which God has given of the works of the flesh is a humbling one, because it is the description of what we are in the flesh. Thank God, if we are believers we are not in the flesh (Rom. viii. 9), but the flesh is in us; and it is unaltered in its character by our conversion, for conversion does not consist in any change of

the flesh, but in a new birth of the Spirit, by which we receive a divine nature, which remains in us distinct from the old nature or the flesh, and which two natures are opposed to one another. These are called the law of sin and the law of the mind (Rom. vii. 23); or, rather, the flesh is that in us which serves the law of sin when the latter is allowed to act.

We can conceive it to have been possible that, at conversion, God might have eradicated the law of sin in our members, but then we would have missed the lessons to be learned from the conflict with it. Besides that, such a change, at conversion, would involve the communication of spiritual life to the body itself, so that at new birth the mortal would have put on immortality; but this will not take place until the Lord comes, when the Spirit of Him that raised up Jesus from the dead shall also quicken these mortal bodies (Rom. viii. 11); then the body will be no longer a natural or a soul body, but a spirit body (1 Cor. xv. 44), like the Lord's body in resurrection.

But this, it is not necessary to say, has not yet taken place. It is what we hope for. We are saved in hope, and that hope is the redemption of the body. Salvation includes the body as well as the soul, and while we have the salvation of the soul at new birth, the redemption of the body we shall not have until the Lord comes; and until that change takes place the law of sin remains in the members. Our members, therefore, which are upon the earth are to be "mortified," or held for dead (Col. iii. 5), so that the law of sin may not use them. "If Christ be in you, the body is dead because of sin" (Rom. viii. 10). The Christ who is in us is the Christ who has died for us. I am, therefore, to reckon His death to have been my death. The sentence of death upon my body has been executed in the person of Christ. I am, therefore, to reckon my body to be dead because of sin, so that sin may not use it, and the Spirit of God who dwells in my mortal body is the power to produce

righteousness in my life. "The Spirit is life because of righteousness."

This is to go on until the change of the body from mortal to immortal at the coming of the Lord. Then, and not until then, will the full answer be given to the cry, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. vii. 24). Then He who is able to subdue all things to Himself will change this body of our humiliation and fashion it like to His body of glory (Phil. iii. 21). But, while the full answer to the cry for deliverance will not come until then, the wretchedness is not to continue, for captivity to the law of sin is not necessary; and not only is it not necessary, but we are responsible not to allow it. But how can we prevent it? Do we not read that notwithstanding that "I delight in the law of God after the inward man," that the law of sin in the members is too strong for us, and is not this verified in the experience of all? Doubtless this is true; yea, this is the very lesson to be learned in order to deliverance, for deliverance is not of ourselves at all, not even of ourselves as born of God—it is "through Jesus Christ our Lord." Sin in us, and the fact that it is too strong for us, is intended to teach us the lesson of our weakness and the need of dependence. If we have been brought to cry, "Who shall deliver me?" there is One who has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Cor. xii. 9).

Realised weakness, then, is the essential condition; that leads to absolute dependence on the Lord, and to the disallowance of everything in our lives that would grieve the Holy Spirit who dwells in us. The strength is the strength of the Lord Jesus, working in us by the Holy Spirit, in response to our dependence upon Him. We can do nothing apart from Christ. Any good done by us is done by the Lord Jesus. It is His strength. So fully was this realised by Paul that he went so far even as to glory in his infirmities, that is, in what made him weak, that the power of

Christ might rest upon him (2 Cor. xii. 9). He had been brought to the extremity of all his own resources to find himself bankrupt of power to accomplish the good that he desired, and in order to learn that which could be learned in no other way, viz., the reversal of that independence of God that led to the fall, and the being brought back again to the only proper place of the creature—to dependence and obedience.

But O how many little experiences of what the flesh is have we to pass through before we cease to lean on self and on our own strength, and are glad to be weak, because it is only when we are weak that we are really strong. All that tends to realised weakness, therefore, should be welcomed by us, as it was by Paul, as it is not only the knowledge that we are weak, but the experimental realisation of absolute powerlessness, that casts us in entire dependence upon the Lord for deliverance. There is no condemnation for us because we are in Christ Jesus; that is, we are identified with Him risen from the dead. And His life is in us—the eternal life which we receive at new birth—setting us beyond the death and judgment which He has passed through for us, so that, possessing His life in resurrection, we are viewed as having passed through death and judgment ourselves; and in His death the sin that is in the flesh was condemned. So we are completely delivered from the condemnation of what we are, as well as from the guilt of what we have done (Rom. viii. 1-3). There only remains, therefore, the question of power for our walk in the meantime, until our body is changed into His likeness at His coming again, and this, we have seen, is by the Holy Spirit. “Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh” (Gal. v. 16).

But what is a walk in the Spirit? It is dependence upon the Lord. The result will be seen in the fruits brought forth in our lives. If we are walking in the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit will be brought forth; if we are not, the works of the flesh will appear. The flesh lusts against the Spirit

to hinder the Spirit from doing what He would, and the Spirit against the flesh to hinder the flesh doing what it would. But while the law of sin can bring *me* into captivity to it, it cannot bring the Spirit of God into captivity. On the contrary, I have but to cease the struggle and to look off to Jesus to find the power of the Spirit of God lifting me up into freedom from it, and keeping me there as long as I remain dependent. If I cease to be that, I am already walking in the flesh, and some form of fleshly evil will soon appear in my life, and is probably already working within. There is, therefore, the need of continual watchfulness and prayer. There is no way of ceasing from sin but by suffering in the flesh (1 Peter iv. 1); that is, by death. We must, therefore, "arm ourselves with the same mind"; that is, reckon that the sufferings our sins brought upon the blessed Lord Jesus were as if we had suffered ourselves, and as had died and ceased from sin; or, as Paul states it, "always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," that is, reckoning His death to have been our own death, and to be always applying His death to ourselves, that what appears in our lives may be "the life of Jesus made manifest in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. iv. 10, 11). This is not any improvement or change of the old nature, but the wise setting aside of all of us, and Christ in us instead, and the life we live in the flesh being a dependence on Him who has loved us and given Himself for us (Gal. ii. 20).

For our warning the Apostle Paul has given us an inspired list of "the works of the flesh," which we do well to examine in the light of the fact that it tells us what the flesh in each one of us is capable of. It was pointed out recently by a beloved brother that the first six things tell of the corruption into which man has fallen, in body, soul, and spirit:

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| 1. Adultery, | } Corruption of the body. |
| 2. Fornication. | |
| 3. Uncleaness, | } Corruption of the soul's affections. |
| 4. Lasciviousness. | |

- | | | |
|------------------|---|--|
| 5. Idolatry, | } | Corruption of the spiritual nature ;—
man perverted from the worship of
God to that of demons. |
| 6. Witchcraft or | | |
| Sorcery. | | |

The number six is significant, as is that of 666, the number of the beast, the complete manifestation of what man is away from God. It is the leprosy of the flesh—body, soul, and spirit utterly corrupted.

The next seven things are of a different character ; they point out to us the way in which the flesh often works, alas ! even in saints of God, whose wills have not been broken and brought into subjection to God, and by which the Church of God itself has been broken to fragments and scattered, and which to the present hour opposes the keeping of the unity of the Spirit. They begin with

1. Hatred. This may be merely dislike, but which soon grows to enmity, and then follows
2. Variance, or strife—quarrel, rivalry, contention, wrangling (compare 1 Cor. iii. 3). This leads to
3. Emulation, or jealousy in a bad sense (malicious enviousness), which produces
4. Wrath—anger, rage, strong passion, fermenting of the mind.

As is often the case in a series of seven, it is divided into four and three. The next three are—

5. Strifes. The word really means canvassing and intriguing for party leaders ; hence, party spirit, faction (see 2 Cor. xii. 20).
6. Seditions. A standing apart, dissension, division (Rom. xvi. 17 ; 1 Cor. iii. 3).

Man's work has now been done, as six signifies ; division has been accomplished. It only remains to complete it by each party making its claim to the maintenance of some doctrine or principle by which it seeks to justify its separate existence. Scripture calls this by its true name of

7. Heresies. A sect or school ; a choice, or preference in joining a party ; a set of principles or doctrines that distin-

guish those who hold them, separating them from the whole, which those who join them adopt. A man acting in the interest of a party, or in a way to form a party, is a "heretic" (Titus iii. 10).

It is only necessary to read the two Epistles to the Corinthians to see how these evils worked in the early Church, and the divine remedy there prescribed for them. Let us watch, then, that so-called "principles," which are really "heresies," and which have their origin in hatred or dislike, do not obtain the mastery and control us, and thereby set aside the activity of Christian love in our souls, making us mere partisans.

We next have four things which, like the first six, are characteristic of man unrestrained by the fear of God :

1. Envy. Jealousy of another's success, depreciation of his worth, envy of his excellence. The Greek word is allied to murder in sound and sense (1 John iii. 12).

2. Murder. To kill man who is made in the image of God (Gen. ix. 5, 6; James iii. 9).

3. Drunkenness. The senses stupified by intoxicating drinks, or drugs such as opium, and in a lesser degree by tobacco, so as to silence the voice of Conscience, and to render him oblivious to his guilt.

4. Revellings. Drunken abandonment to evil. Unrestrained license, without conscience or fear of God.

The first six are corruption; these last four are violence. The evils which brought on the flood (Gen. vi. 11; 2 Peter ii. 10-13; Rev. xvi. 6. Contrast Isa. liii. 9).

"But the fruit of the Spirit is"

1. Love. God's character reproduced in man. Complacency in its object, leading to self-sacrificing devotion. The opposite of hatred, and incompatible even with dislike.

2. Joy. Delight, gladness (compare Rom. xiv. 17, xv. 13; 2 Cor. i. 24; 1 Thess. i. 6; John xv. 11).

3. Peace. Untroubled repose, rest, the end of strife (Rom. viii. 6; Eph. vi. 15, 23; Col. iii. 15).

The first three are personal state; the second three are relative to others.

1. Longsuffering. Forbearance, endurance, long before being angry.

2. Gentleness. Kindness, usefulness in benevolence and good deeds to others (2 Cor. vi. 6; Col. iii. 12; Acts ix. 39; Gal. ii. 10).

3. Goodness. Moral worth, spiritual excellence (Rom. xv. 14; Eph. v. 9; 2 Thess. i. 11).

The next three are again personal:

1. Faith. Firm persuasion, based on trust, not on knowledge; firm confidence, bidding defiance to opposing contradictions.

2. Meekness. Lowliness towards others, tenderness of spirit, and freedom from haughty self-sufficiency.

3. Temperance. Self-control, mastery of the body, the grace by which the flesh is controlled.

(The meanings are from Dr. Büllinger's *Lexicon*.)

Three times three, the manifestation of the Divine nature in man by the power of the Holy Spirit. As to the flesh we read: "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts" (Gal. v. 24). Not, must do so, but have done it. The moment I believed in Christ I crucified the flesh in doing so. It was done for me in Him, and it is as if I had done it. It is that which I never could do for myself, but Christ has been crucified for me, and I am reckoned to have done it because I am Christ's. He did it for all His people; all have done it in Him. Let not our lives, therefore, be inconsistent with this great fact, but "if we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit," in lowly dependence on the Lord Jesus, in the consciousness of having no strength of our own, and whose grace alone is sufficient for us. He has told us, "Without Me ye can do nothing." Let us cling, then, to Him in our weakness, ever remembering that that alone is our strength. J. J.

NO AMALGAMATION—NO DISOBEDIENCE.

WHAT an apparently inextricable confusion is on every hand! What difficulties! What perplexities! What dangers! Every effort to put matters right only seems to make them the more wrong. Every desire for order seems but to increase the confusion. The truest motives appear powerless to prevent the worst results, till on every side the dearly-loved saints of God are settling down to a kind of despairing fatalism—a drifting, “can’t-be-helped” spirit.

Now, my only object is simply to warn against one very plain danger in connection with this condition of soul. It lies in the opposite direction to that of fleshly activity—the restless longing to put matters right, the effort to patch together the broken fragments of the Church and restore an outward unity. The opposite danger is in actual disobedience to plain commands of our God—a disregard of what is clearly His will, because of the difficulties in the path of fulfilling it. All our failures do not affect or modify one jot of His holy Word, and increasing sorrow and shame will be our portion if we become content to settle down in direct disobedience to one clear, plain command of the One we love, and who tells us that obedience is the evidence of that love: “If ye love Me, keep My commandments.”

God, we are sure, will never patch up the broken fragments of His people. It is not His way. He has permitted the separations, even as they have been the natural fruits of our inward condition; and they may still serve to yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness to every individual who is exercised by them. The effort to amalgamate this company with that—to heal the breach between this section and that—is foredoomed to failure, however good the motive that leads to the effort may be. For one vital error lies at the root of all; it ignores a unity already existing, and would substitute

for this divinely-constituted unity another, which has still to be made, and hence is of human manufacture.

The obedience of faith will simply recognise the truth of what God has already in His grace done. In spite of all difficulty, of all confusion, of all opposition, of all accusation, of all misunderstanding or misconstruction, even though every party-spirit turns upon one, still, through all, the path of obedience lies in recognising the truth of the Oneness of the Body of Christ, composed of all true believers.

“And who does not know this?” I hear it said. “Which party is not loudly proclaiming the fact that it is the only one so acting, and claiming adhesion to itself on just this ground?” True; but were they to act on it truly, where would be a party at all? Which of the many parties truly welcomes every believer in Jesus to evidence that he is a member of the One Body by breaking into the one loaf, apart from some unscriptural test of separation from some other believers? When we refuse, or silently share in the refusal of even *one* who evidences himself as a child of God, are we guiltless? Is the word expunged from our Bibles, “Beloved, follow not that which is evil”? And is not this very evil thus spoken of, “Neither doth he receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church”? Mark it well; the simple desire to receive the brethren is basis enough (of course under some specious plea) for casting out those who have such desire. Has there never been anything like this now-a-days? Say what we will; reason as we may; seek to quiet our consciences in any way we prefer; cling to what this deeply-taught brother says, to what that godly man teaches; rest on the numbers with us, or the piety of those in the same case; still, are not *brethren*—undoubted brethren—so evidenced by every mark of the new birth; by the fruits of the Spirit; sons of God as being “led of the Spirit of God” (Rom. viii. 14); refused and turned away, simply and solely because they cannot be made in conscience to promise not to receive

other equally clearly evidenced *brethren*? Is it false? My dear reader, I am persuaded *you know it is true. It is notorious!*

Must there not be, then, some fatal error in some human view or interpretation of some passage that has brought us to evident disobedience to so plain a Scripture? Indeed there is; and if we are sincerely exercised, and not content to “drift,” “God shall give us understanding in all things” (2 Tim. ii.).

The effort to amalgamate, on the other hand, is in itself a denial of truth; how, then, can it succeed? We, dear fellow-believers in Jesus our Lord, *are* amalgamated, or rather, we cannot be amalgamated, for we *are* one, and you cannot amalgamate “one.” There are not two assemblies, but one; and that one God-formed, God-made. Yes; God by His power and grace has made us one—one by the mighty operation of His Spirit in new birth, wherein the same holy, loving, divine nature was implanted in every child, leading necessarily by its very essence, if it be left untrammelled and unbound, into the same holy, happy paths. “How good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” One by the baptism of the Spirit into the One Body, so that we are really members one of another. Will not obedient faith break away from anything, everything, that compels disobedience to God’s plain Word to receive “the brethren”—not exactly into fellowship; this may in itself lead to a wrong thought, for they *are* in fellowship, but “among yourselves” (1 Cor. v. 13, whence a “wicked man” must be put away); to the breaking into the one loaf, which is the evidence of the one body, “For we, being many, are one bread, one body, *for we all are partakers of the one bread*” (1 Cor. x. 7).

Think of it! This brother is “in fellowship,” that brother is “not in fellowship.” What confusion of language, springing from and leading to more confusion of thought! A *brother* (not one merely “called a brother,” for of such it is possible that we may truly have to say, “He is out of fellow-

ship," for he may be out of fellowship with God, and this be evidenced by wickedness of life, or doctrine, or character, by wilful association with wickedness, but one truly evidently a brother) is by that fact in fellowship. God has made him so, and shall *we* refuse him? Are we guiltless in so doing? There are not two fellowships in this sense, but one, any more than there are two heads, or two bodies, or two Christs, and the same evidence that one is a member of the one Church, which is His body, of which He is the one head, is equal evidence that he is in the one fellowship.

"But," one asks, "is there not another 'fellowship' connected with the truth of gathering alone to His Name; and may not, therefore, those thus gathered be said to be 'in fellowship' as others are not?"

There is more than one answer to this question. First, Do *you* so use the term "in fellowship"? Do you mean to include *all* those gathered out to the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ? or do you not still refer to a more limited number of even these, viz., those comprised within the limits of your own smaller circle? In consistency you must either deny that any outside that particular circle are so gathered at all (and there are those who do not shrink from this extravagant assumption), or that "in fellowship" does include saints outside your "circle of fellowship."

But, secondly, the confusion arises through another bearing of the word "fellowship." If you mean, "Do not some of the Lord's people share together this precious truth of gathering to His Name, whilst others still lack it?" Yes, surely, but is not this the case with regard to every truth? and in this lower sense there are necessarily many fellowships. Saints who share together the truth as to the Lord's coming are "in fellowship" as to that truth, and so with every other. But all these are fellowships dependent on varying degrees of intelligence; but shame, sorrow, and confusion ever have and ever will result by permitting these precious but still lesser truths held in common by a

comparative few to get out of their place: to be held out of their proper proportion, and to overshadow or nullify the one infinitely overwhelming truth shared in common by *all* true saints, and shown out in the breaking with the one loaf, viz., that Jesus of Nazareth is the Christ, the Son of God, and that His finished work is the perfect propitiation for our sins—truth as to the person and work of Christ which indeed cannot be really touched without affecting fellowship in its truest sense.

Do we fear another and an opposite danger? Well, one is at least quite safe in ceasing to do evil; it is the step that precedes learning to do well. There is indeed an opposite danger, and one to which our brethren in the recognised human systems and denominations are peculiarly open—nay, alas! we may say from which they are suffering—a very real, a very grave danger of “evil communications” and the consequent corrupting of “good manners” (1 Cor. xv). But is it a less sin to call good evil than it is to call evil good? Is it not as evil to condemn the righteous as to justify the wicked? Is it not as evil to separate from evident saints as to be in association with evident sinners? Is not the leaven of the Pharisees as evil as the leaven of the Herodians? Is not the evil of 3 John as real as that of his 2nd epistle? *Both* are evils, both are dangers, and the living, loving, saving Lord Jesus Christ alone, by His all-sufficient grace, avails to keep from both.

But do not let your conscience be defiled, my dear reader, by any known disobedience to a plain command. God never patches up broken fragments. True. Nor does, on the other hand, one word of His ever change or lose its force. Israel was not to be re-united to Judah by Rehoboam's sword; but still Jerusalem was the one only appointed centre where His Name was placed, and where every single Israelite should still go and be welcomed; the going to Bethel or Dan was *sin*, down to the very end. Nor did faith ever recognise less than twelve tribes; nor will faith

now ever recognise more bodies than the One, or act contrary to that truth, but will freely welcome every clearly evidenced member of that mystic Body, putting away only a "wicked person."

Because God will not patch together the fragments we in our sin have made, is that to be a reason why we should make His commands of none effect on account of this very sin? thus adding sin to sin, recognising these humanly effected fragments, and permitting them to come between us and other saints, instead of recognising the one unbroken unity still existing, and, because divine, untouched and eternal? a unity that carries with it the responsibilities of mutual love and care for, and submission to every single member of that One Body, and not to those only of one little fragment.

Beware, O beware, lest the heavier guilt of direct disobedience be ours through the failure and confusion on all sides.

The truth is, there is ever—apart from all controversy—a "law of gravity" in man ever drawing downwards, ever tending to degeneration; and as the Church to-day shows awful evidences of this law as compared with the Church of the first few chapters of the Acts, so do we who have been gathered out to His Name show the same sad evidences of this law as compared with the lowly, simple, unpretentious, unworldly, spiritual character of that truly divine movement of seventy years ago. But this law works only in the flesh, and its evidence is only evidence that we are in this measure walking in the flesh, and not in the Spirit.

The only object of this paper is to let clear evidences of unscriptural actings stir up our consciences and humble us together in His sight, who ever meets, and in tenderest grace lifts up, all those so humbled.

F. C. J.

FULL DELIVERANCE.

THUS we see from the latter verses of chapter v. that salvation is most absolute: it finds its origin in sovereign grace, its foundation in the death and resurrection of Christ, and is made ours by free gift in the most sovereign and absolute way. It is by faith and not by works that we are justified; and it is by the obedience of Christ unto death, and not by our own merit, that we are made righteous. All is free grace: where sin abounded grace hath much more abounded.

This gives rise to the question: "What shall we say, then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?" This seems a very logical question: if the grace of God has so abounded over sin to the glory of God and to our blessing, then why not continue in sin that grace may still, and yet more abound? But the answer is just as logical, and most conclusive: "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" The old man—the sinful nature—is crucified with Christ, and we have a new life in Him risen from the dead: we ought, therefore, to walk in newness of life. We have the life, and should walk in it. In this wonderful way we have been freed from the bondage of sin and made the servants of God, therefore we should no longer serve sin in the lust thereof, but yield ourselves unto God to serve Him. Reckoning ourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God, that what is absolutely true may become practically so. Such are the forcible arguments of chapter vi.

Christ died for me, He was made sin for me, God judged Him there in my stead, and now looks at me as having been judged in Him, and alive in Him risen, justified and righteous. Thus it is absolutely true before God that the old man is crucified, and that I have a new life in Christ. But this blessed truth should become practical. Hence the exhortation: "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead unto sin, but alive unto God."

This chapter does not teach the eradication of sin, but its judgment at the Cross, its presence in us, but not imputed to us, and our deliverance from its power. I need to see that sin, the old man, or nature, has been judged in Christ at the Cross for my peace: I need to judge it daily, by reckoning myself dead, for practical holiness. Sin being present in me, I need to know what place it occupies in relation to God, before I can have real peace, much less full deliverance. It is that very sin, or principle of sin, that is in me that was imputed to Christ on the Cross, and found its end in Him there, under the unmitigated judgment of God, therefore God is not going to judge me for it: this is peace. But this blessed fact in itself is the ground on which I reckon myself to be dead. Unless it were true before God that the old man was crucified with Christ, there would be no ground on which I could reckon myself dead; and yet unless it were true that it is still present in me, there would be no need of the exhortation to do so. It is a matter of faith, and faith always reckons with God. The great fact is that God so looks at it, and faith says, "I am glad to do so too." To treat the flesh, or the old man, as dead is not to allow it to act, and I am able to do this only in the power of a new life and by faith, which life becomes active when such is the case: hence true holiness. To reckon myself dead is to pass judgment in a practical way upon that which God has already judged absolutely. The moment I see the flesh acting in me in any way—by temper, by lust, by covetousness, by self-righteousness, by evil thoughts or words about my brethren—this is the remedy to be applied, viz., *death*; that is, the fruit of the old nature which caused the death of Christ, and met its death in His, must not be allowed to live in me now. This is possible to the child of God in simple faith and conscious dependence, for he is clothed with a new nature, and has the Spirit of God dwelling in him: sin having lost its dominion, we are, hence, not to allow it to reign. It has lost its mastery, and it is only

when we yield ourself to it, or allow it to reign, that it rules over us. That a child of God does sin is, alas! too true, but to say that he *must* sin is to deny the blessed results of the glorious work of Christ. The presence of sin, we believe, must become more evident to us the more we dwell consciously in the divine light; but the faith that enables us to overcome it will be more active, and hence our victory over it practically more sure.

IS CHRST DIVIDED?

THIS is a difficult day in which our lot is cast. We are distinctly commanded in Scripture to disallow division, but divisions exist and increase. We are appealed to by the Apostle Paul, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, that there be no divisions among us; and lest we should say that the circumstances are different now, and are such as call for division, this appeal is made in a letter to an assembly where both moral and doctrinal evils existed. Not, of course, that the Apostle Paul countenanced these evils for a moment; but he had other remedies for the condition into which the assembly at Corinth had fallen (see 1 Cor. i. 10; iii. 3, 15; v. 5, 7, 11, 13; vi. 6, 15; xi. 17, 28; xv. 12; 2 Cor. vi. 14; xii. 20, 21; xiii. 10). I beg the reader to carefully read these passages.

I do not mean by this that a gathering which deliberately shelters moral or doctrinal evil is to be owned while that condition exists; but that means are to be taken to both purge the gathering and prevent division, and that the Epistles to the Corinthians prove beyond question that division is not God's way of dealing with it, for at Corinth the first thing condemned was division. It is a work of the flesh, which had to be first dealt with before the other evils could be taken up. This is a fact on the face of Scripture which I beg my brethren to weigh and consider the force of.

If division could be justified anywhere, it was at Corinth, but it is just there it was condemned.

But if this be so, what can be said in defence of divisions between gatherings in which not only is neither moral nor doctrinal evil, but which are composed of those who are zealous for the honour of the Lord? Yet these are divided from one another! If the apostle in the case of Corinth inculcated "no divisions," what would he not urge upon us if he were among us to-day? Would he, who condemned even the incipient division at Corinth, justify the absolutely divided state in which we are? What do we learn from Paul's epistles would be the sole ground on which he would endorse divisions. Or, if indeed we do confess to a low spiritual condition, is not that condition evidenced more by our divisions than by anything moral or doctrinal? In fact, is it not the case that there is nothing of that kind to warrant them? Then, if this be so, is there any Scripture to justify them?

Yet, in spite of Scripture, divisions exist, and to heal them seems a hopeless task; and in the hopelessness of it, saints have settled down in the divided state, while holding the very truths that condemn it. But does that relieve us from responsibility? By no means. There can never be a time when we are not responsible to obey Scripture; but to do so has been the test of faith in every age and dispensation, and it is no less so to-day. Personal obedience can never be impossible. I cannot command collective obedience, but I can be obedient myself. I can put myself in a scriptural attitude towards every member of the one body of Christ. If a professed believer is one who is not sound as to the fundamentals of the faith, and does not bring the doctrine of Christ, I am commanded not even to salute him, much less to receive him into my house or at the Lord's table. Such an one is not in fellowship. He denies that in which the fellowship consists; he cannot therefore be in it. But with all who "call on the Lord out of a pure heart," irrespective of sect or party, I am to endeavour to keep the unity of the

Spirit in the uniting bond of peace. There must be nothing on my part to hinder this. "All the religious relationships of the soul, all the points in which we are in contact with God, agree to form all believers into one in this world, in such a manner that no man can be a Christian without being one with all those that are so. We cannot exercise faith, nor enjoy hope, nor express Christian life in any form whatever without having the same faith and the same hope as the rest, without giving expression to that which exists in the rest. Only, we are called on to maintain it practically" (J. N. D. on Eph. iv.).

"Maintain it practically." How? Make a "circle of fellowship" separate from other saints, and only own those to be in the unity who join it, and thus deceive ourselves into the idea that we are keeping it? Is not that the very thing we are warned against in the command—that there are to be no divisions (1 Cor. i. 10)? Would not such a course but add another to the divisions already existing? What is to be done, then? Be obedient yourself, even if you are alone in it. First get into a right state of soul toward "all saints." Judge as evil any division between yourself and other saints as sound as you are yourself. Then take an attitude towards them consistent with that. How? Receive them instead of rejecting them. Open the door of your house to them. Own them as in the unity of the Spirit.

But the unity of the Spirit is a smaller circle, is it not, than the unity of the body? I do not see that Scripture so teaches—quite the contrary; there the two are identical. The unity of the body exists by virtue of the one Spirit having baptised all believers into the one body. It is therefore the unity made by the Spirit. But, be it so if you will, what is the unity to be expressed at the Lord's table? It is the unity of the body. "We being many are one bread, one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread" (1 Cor. x. 17). So that if you do insist that the

unity of the Spirit is a smaller circle than the unity of the body, yet it is the larger circle that partakes of the bread and cup. There, at the table of the Lord, according to this Scripture, the unity of the one body of Christ is to be manifested; not by putting the one loaf on the table and saying that is a symbol of the one body, which it is not; but is a symbol of the Lord's human body in death for us; that which He said was His body the night on which He was betrayed, when as yet the body, the Church, had not come into existence. But the unity of the body, the Church, is manifested by all partakers of the loaf. This is a most important Scripture. It shows that no assembly which spreads the Lord's table for any lesser circle than the whole body of Christ is acting according to it. The exceptions proving the rule, are stated in the same epistle that states "we are all partakers." As to those who hold fundamentally false doctrines, they are not in fellowship by that fact. The foundations of the faith on which we stand, and in which fellowship consists, they deny. They are not on the foundation, and are therefore not in fellowship. All others are in fellowship, so at least Paul insists when he says, "We are all partakers of that one bread." To say that only those are in fellowship who break bread with us is only one of our assumptions which we do well to utterly discard.

But, further, the Lord's Supper is itself that which should unite all the Lord's people together, for it expresses that in which every one who is sound as to the Person and work of Christ must be of one mind about. Whatever differences there may be as to other things, all must agree in what is symbolised and partaken of at the Lord's table. It is the communion of the body and blood of Christ. Do we not all unite there? Can we not then partake of it together? Is Christ divided? Why, then, should saints be divided? This is Paul's argument; has it any weight with us? Must the saints who remember the same Lord, and have identically

the same communion of His body and blood, be separated from one another in partaking of it, when at the same time they are commanded to show that they are one body by all partaking ?

What has gone wrong with us that such an anomalous condition should be possible ? The things that have divided such saints from one another cannot be so great as that which unites them. But this last has been lost sight of. It is a spiritual unity, formed by the Holy Spirit, and we require to be spiritual, do we not, to perceive it ? Herein lies the reason that the divisions at Corinth specially indicated their carnal condition, of which the moral and doctrinal evils were only the outcome. They could not see the spiritual unity ; it is intangible to them, hence visible leaders become a necessity, and prominent teachers become heads of parties. It is the same to-day. If we are not walking in the Spirit, and bringing forth the fruits of the Spirit in love to all saints, we shall walk as men ; and men cannot, of course, appreciate an unseen Head and an invisible bond of union. They neither see nor know the Holy Spirit. And how like men we are !

But God's truth will never alter. "There is one Body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." But this is no longer acted upon, except at least by comparatively few ; and not only that, we have reached a day when to act upon it brings into discredit and reproach even among those who profess to follow Scripture. We have not yet done with overcoming, then, even if we are in what professes to be Philadelphia. J. J.

THE NIGHT OF THE BETRAYAL.

IT is Passover week at Jerusalem, and the city is again crowded with the thousands of worshippers which the feast of unleavened bread annually brought with it. According to Josephus, no less than three millions thronged

the holy city upon the occasion of this feast. Seated in an open room, and away from the clamour and noise of the surging crowds in the streets below hurrying hither and thither in the preparation of the approaching feast, are the Lord Jesus and His disciples. For them, the ceremonial supper is over; the feast of remembrance, too, has been introduced by the Saviour, and partaken of by the twelve. In words few but unmistakable the Lord has again been speaking of His approaching decease, and now the little company has lapsed into silence. The Saviour is deep in thought, and so, too, are the disciples. The thoughts of the latter are in a very few minutes to take the form of words, thereby exposing to the disciples themselves and to generations following them the littleness and meanness of the natural mind, even although in the immediate company of the Eternal God manifest in flesh, and under the elevating influence accompanying His actual presence. The Lord is troubled in spirit; the first moments of His "hour" have come, the hour when He, the Eternal Son of God, alone, was to enter the lists matched against the combined forces of earth and hell. Full well He knew that soon He was to be the object, on the one hand, of the hatred of the heart of man in all the perfection of its development; and, on the other, of the implacable justice of a holy God in the highest revelation of its purity. As a panorama the crowded events of the next few hours must have passed before the mind of Christ, and keenly would His finely strung and sensitive soul have felt the horrors of the darkness into which He was about to enter. Though not from the physical sufferings—the bruising, the spitting, the inhuman insults, the nailing—did He shrink: these, and more, He might have borne; but that which sorrowed and burdened and "tormented" the blessed Lord

"Was our sin's heavy load."

But while thus the shadow of Calvary is glooming the

spirit of the Redeemer the disciples are engaged in petty strife. While *He* is labouring in soul on the verge of an awful darkness, *they* are adding grief to His sorrow, tears to His pain, by disputing among themselves, by manifesting their lack of unity, their want of sympathy, before His very eyes. Surely, we might have thought, if any were able to enter into the sorrows of the moment it would be those who for three years had been the companions of the Lord, or, as the Lord Himself so graciously put it, who had continued with Him in His temptations. On the contrary, what do we find? These, from whom we might justly have expected at least some sympathy to flow, are wasting their time, abusing their opportunities, and, what is worse, grieving the heart of their Master by quarrelling. Evidently they knew but to an infinitesimal extent what it meant to "suffer by the power of sympathy."

The cause of the dispute among the disciples upon the evening of the betrayal was a well-worn one. Feelings of jealousy had long been rankling in their breasts, and upon more than one occasion had burst out into open dispute (Mark ix. 34; Matt. xviii. 1; cf. Luke ix. 46; Matt. xx. 20-28). The immediate cause of the old sore being opened at the unhappy moment that it was, we do not know. Some have suggested as a cause of all the strife the probability of the "goodman," or master, of the house being unable to perform his duties as host in bathing the feet of his guests (Luke vii. 44), he himself being absent, perhaps in another part of the city, eating the Paschal Lamb. He had very generously placed at the disposal of the Master and His disciples a room "furnished and prepared—furnished with cushions and divans, according to Eastern custom, prepared—for the Passover feast, and had placed ready for use a towel and water for the feet-washing. But in the absence of the *host*, the question would probably have arisen, Who will take the place of *slave* and perform the ceremony? The act in itself was a simple one, but the circumstances would

place the performer in a position, morally, below his brethren ; indeed, would make him a slave to them for the time being. Hence the strife.

Others have thought it possible that the relative position of the twelve at the supper table may have prompted feelings of jealousy to arise.

Or is it not quite possible that the very recent ministry of the Lord had had an undue and unintentional influence upon the hearts and minds of His disciples, in leading them to think of their individual positions in, what they thought to be, the approaching political, earthly kingdom? Whatever the exciting cause of rivalry, here we find them disputing among themselves "which of them should be accounted the greatest," and that at so solemn a moment !

But let us now for a moment notice the condescending grace of the Lord Jesus in dealing with the disciples *apropos* of this spiritual condition (John xiii.), and in order to teach them a lesson which, let us think, they never forgot, He emerges from the darkness of His own intense sorrow, and in a very practical way teaches them what is true greatness. Laying aside His upper garments He girds Himself with a towel and proceeds to wash His disciples' feet, or, in other words, takes upon Himself the duties of a slave to perform them (cf. 1 Sam. xxv. 41). From Peter's remark we can well imagine the thoughts of them all. How utterly abashed they all must have been by the intentional rebuke of this act. They had been striving among themselves for mastery, for lordship ; and now the Lord in turn gives to each of them a taste of the uncomfortableness of the very position into which each was making such strenuous efforts to get. They all well knew that the position so much sought after was not ordained of Christ, and that the one who eventually, by dint of much striving, managed to struggle there would be in a false position. In the kingdom of which the lowly Man of Galilee was the Head there was to be no such a thing as lordship, and this the Saviour was anxious to

impress upon all before returning to the Father. The disciples were on a common basis of acceptance, and no one was entitled to a position of lordship. If *Peter* had had committed to him "the keys of the kingdom of the heavens" (Matt. xvi. 19), his brother *Andrew* could lay claim to being first called (John i. 37, 40); and if *John* leaned continually upon Jesus' bosom, basking in the sunlight of his Master's smile (John xiii. 23), *James* was chosen as co-witness with him and Peter of the highest revelation of their Lord's glory (Matt. xvii. 1, 2), the greatest manifestation of His power (Mark v. 37-43), and the hour of his deepest woe (Mark xiv. 33-42). Neither could establish his claim to leadership.

Now, what is the great practical lesson for us in this act of the Lord's? Just this, that in our attitude to our brethren we should seek to cultivate a spirit of lowly, unassuming love, and allow that love to manifest itself in serving them. "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one anothers' feet." It is noticeable that this act and example of the Lord's is given in distinct concomitance with the pregnant command "Love one another" (John xiii. 34). Humility is love's counterpart, and the two are inseparably united. There is, of course, that false kind of lowliness which, not being characterised by love, is at once a caricature and an insult. It is *such* a loveless, not to say unlovely, humility which has led Emperors and Popes to undertake the ordeal of washing the feet of a number of paupers at certain seasons. But what we now speak of is the genuine thing—the outward manifestation of an inward lowliness of heart and mind. Confucius being once asked if he could sum up the whole duty of life in one word, suggested the word "*serve*." Probably the same word might be used to summarise the duties of the Christian life.

"Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" (John xiii. 13). As *disciples* we learn of our *Master*, as *servants* we obey our *Lord*, and it is only under the influence

and power of Christ's undying example that we are enabled in any measure to "serve one another." What is not too mean for my Master is certainly not too mean for me. "The servant is not greater than his lord." There are many opportunities in our assembly life for showing forth our unpretending love to our brethren and our obedience to the example of Christ. May we each have grace not only to prove ourselves disciples, but also servants—to Christ and to one another.

CHARLES G. ROBERTS.

SECTARIANISM.

WE do not know anything more deplorable than the way in which some brethren insist upon sectarianism, and persistently refuse to bow to Scripture as to the only one and true fellowship and ground of gathering. Surely nothing is more condemned by the New Testament than the positive refusal to own in a practical way the relationship into which all God's dear people are brought, to express the unity that God Himself is making, to seek the "edification of the *body*" of Christ, and not that of a *party* only.

In England, through mercy, the brethren have been learning something of the evil of refusing God's people, of separating themselves from real and true saints of God, in ecclesiastical pride and under the plea of separation from evil. But in America, and in some parts of Scotland, there is still an element that insists upon making a narrow ecclesiastical system of those professedly gathered to the Name of the Lord—to have something into which *they* can receive, and out of which *they* can expel. This is not to be wondered at, because it makes something of man. It is comparatively easy, according to conditions, to form such a system. Many a body of professed Christians have done it

before, but it is not so easy, and certainly not so self-exalting, to own that we have nothing to make, nothing to form, but simply to own, to bear testimony to, what God is doing. It is only by humility that the unity of the Spirit can be kept, of which the ecclesiastical pretension referred to is the antithesis.

The presence and working of the evil we here speak of is at this time manifested in America by complaints against some articles in this magazine on the unity of the Spirit and the receiving one another. If those who complain would join us in searching the Scriptures on the subject, and send their views and the Scriptures on which they base them, we would show the greatest respect for them, give them space, and graciously but candidly criticise them by what is written, which we desire they should do with all that we say. As yet it is our firm belief that their arguments are suggested by their own peculiar ideas of the Church, and not by Scripture teaching on the subject. If they can convince us otherwise, let them do it by all means. We will, we repeat, show the greatest respect for their appeals to Scripture, and prayerfully, carefully, and, we trust, without prejudice, weigh them over.

But our knowledge of the sectarian tendency of much teaching among brethren in America makes us bound to sympathise with a remark that one brother, writing to us the other day, made, *i.e.*, "I should be sorry to have put out any ecclesiastical principles which would meet with their approval in the condition they are." But still we are one with them, and they with us, as brethren, and as members of Christ; but this is true of all other believers also. May the Lord teach us how to own it according to His own will, as taught in His Word. What we need is more real separatedness of heart to Christ and holiness in every-day life, and less ecclesiastical pretension; more practical devotedness and less spiritual pride; more true grace and less conceit; more earnest desire for the edification of the *body of Christ*

and less party spirit ; more real concern about the furtherance of the joy and faith of the Lord's people generally and less complacent occupation with ourselves and our position. May our hearts be truly exercised before God concerning *these* matters.

ALONE WITH THEE.

ALONE with Thee, Lord Jesus
(O blessed solitude!),
Where this vain world's distractions
Can *never* dare intrude.

'Tis here my heart's deep longing
Is more than satisfied :
And here, my gracious Saviour,
I ever would abide.

E'en when among Thy people
My blessèd call may be,
To tell Thy love unbounded,
My heart would be with Thee.

Yea, when in daily duties,
Surrounded though I be
With godless, Christless people,
Then keep my heart with Thee.

And O, when sorrow presses,
And naught around I see
But waves and billows foaming,
Lord, keep my heart with *Thee* !

No want of occupation
Can to my heart be known,
While gazing on Thee, Saviour,
Upon Thy Father's throne.

Engaged with Thee, Lord Jesus,
Above the starry skies,
Ten thousand, thousand glories
Do pass before mine eyes.

While filled with joy and wonder,
And overpowering love,
I long, my blessèd Saviour,
To be with Thee above.

Earth's pleasures and earth's riches,
Earth's greatness or earth's fame,
By him are counted worthless
Who values Thy great Name.

Then keep me, blessèd Saviour,
Abiding close to Thee,
Until in heavenly glory
Thy blessèd face I see.

THE CHRISTIAN OUTLOOK.

“BEHOLD THE MAN.”

“Then came Jesus forth, wearing the crown of thorns, and the purple robe, and Pilate saith unto them, Behold the Man.”

WHAT a sight is here! The mighty God, the Wonderful Counsellor, the Prince of Peace, the One by whom and through whom all things exist, thus made the subject of derision and sport of degraded man. That man should be capable of such consummate wickedness, his previous history prepares us to believe; but that the Son of God should submit to such ignominy (for, but for His submission, man could have had no power at all over or against Him, though the will would still have been there) is only explained by the subsequent revelation of the heart of God. What a sight for heaven—for those holy and excellent beings above who knew Him, and were in the habit of worshipping Him! for the earth, for men who knew Him not, nor cared to know Him! But what does the sight effect on the part of man, who had thus wickedly arrayed the Son of God? Will not the hatred and revenge of his heart be satisfied now? No; the affecting sight only draws forth greater wickedness. Man, in his sin, cannot rest while the blessed Lord is going about doing good and preaching the truth—the light is too strong for him, he hates it, it manifests the darkness of his heart, so nothing will satisfy him but to extinguish it if possible. So the very next verse reads, “When the chief priests, therefore, and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, Crucify Him, crucify Him.”

This was the only response in the heart of man to the words, "Behold the Man," and we are told in Luke that their words prevailed; and in Matthew we read that when they had put Him on the cross they "sat down and watched Him there." They think all is over now—they have their own way; the light which they could not endure, they think they have put out; they can rest now, "and, *sitting down*, they watched Him there." Their wicked purpose is effected; they have been seeking His life for two or three years; long ago they held a council together how they might put Him to death, but they then failed; nevertheless, they have at last triumphed, and how they glory in it! With the greatest gratification they sat down and watched Him there.

Everything possible had happened to check them in and make them repent of their wicked purpose. Fear of the multitude, want of opportunity, further manifestations of the power and grace of Christ, His proven innocence, all combine to check man in his wicked purpose, but all to no avail; it only serves to magnify the character of his sin, to make him more persistent and deliberate in his purpose.

Such is man, and that man at his best, for it was man in his religiousness, in his *form* of godliness that did this, in combination with ungodly Gentiles, yea, that took the lead in it. In reality the professedly godly and the openly ungodly, the moral and profane, Jew and Gentile, rulers and subjects all unite in their cry against Him, "Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him, crucify Him!" This is their relentless and wicked demand, and "The voices of them and of the chief priests prevailed." "All the people" answered, "His blood be on us and on our children." And thus the Holy and the Just was condemned by vile and guilty men. Truly it was His submission that made it possible; but this again only magnifies the wickedness that took occasion of such submission.

Here, then, we have a full manifestation of what man is

in his relations to God. He had before been proven utterly rebellious against the revealed will of God in every shape and form, but now the inveterate enmity of his heart against God, as manifest in perfect goodness, comes fully out; his cruel hatred is shown in the most deliberate and obstinate manner.

Here we look, dear Christian reader, to see what *we* were; this is the horrible pit from whence *we* were digged.

But if man took occasion of the submission of our adorable Lord to cast Him out and crucify Him, God took occasion of this consummate wickedness to make His soul an offering for sin, so that we have in the same event the culmination of the sin of man and the manifestation of the love of God; in the very event in which we have the climax of sin, we have God's remedy for it. “Sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (death in its broadest sense, as including the judgment of God upon sin—not only the death of the body, but the judgment after—the second death). At the Cross the sin of man was finished in its widest and truest sense; but the blessed Lord bears the death—the judgment of it, in order that free pardon and full salvation might be offered to those who had incurred such judgment. Matchless grace! Eternal praise to our ever-blessed Lord!

We have the fullest proof of, and the most adequate atonement for, sin in that same sacrifice.

What we were by nature is clearly seen at the Cross. Nothing but rebellion, hatred, and sin filled our hearts; we could not endure the presence of infinite goodness, combined with unsullied light; our cry was, “Away with Him; crucify Him,” and this being effected, and thus our wicked desire granted, we could rest in our gratification and complacency—“And, *sitting down*, they watched Him there.” Such is man; such was the reader and writer by nature.

But by grace we have been convinced of our sin, and repented of it before God, found in that One whom we rejected a perfect Saviour, in the Cross which we gave Him a

full salvation, and by His precious blood shed there our once sinful and alienated souls are cleansed and made nigh to God.

And in what a different light do we now "Behold the Man!" With what changed feelings do we "sit down and watch Him there" on that Cross. Enmity gone, reconciliation fully effected, conscience purged, and hatred displaced by love, it is indeed with a restful heart that we can sit down and watch Him there, but with chastened spirit, with true adoration, and with deep and holy desire. For it is when meditating upon His sufferings for us that deep and real desires after holiness and devotedness to Him possess our hearts, as well as the longing desire to see Him in glory, as indeed we shall very soon.

But here it is, too, while sitting and watching Him on that Cross, that our souls are made deeply conscious of sin and failure; our hearts are melted to real contrition on account thereof, and our minds are truly humbled before our God.

Oh, let us never forget the wonders of Calvary; let us often turn our eyes to "Behold the Man" coming forth in mock array; let us often take our seats in pensive quietude to watch Him upon the Cross, but even to follow Him with adoring hearts to the throne on which He now sits in resurrection glory, in which resurrection and exaltation we have the fullest demonstration of a perfectly finished redemption work, a glorified God, and a reconciled Church.

Surely nothing is so calculated to remind us of the true character of the world through which we pass, to give us deeper desires after Him who thus loved us unto death, to inspire us with confidence in Himself, and to lead to loyalty of heart, devotedness, and faithfulness in a path of service down here, as is quiet meditation upon His sufferings—the sitting down to watch Him there. The vanity of the world in all its varied forms, the conceit of intellect, and pride of life, as well as the emptiness and hollowness of carnal

religion, are all shown up to the renewed mind that is, in pensive solitude, occupied with the sufferings of Christ, though never stopping short of the "glories that should follow."

But what about the world, the poor, poor world that crucified Him? What is it still doing? It is not only a fact that the world did reject Christ when He was here in lowly grace; it is just as much a fact that it rejects Him to-day, after having been proven to be the Son of God by power from on high in the resurrection from the dead; after having been made both Lord and Christ, and after a free pardon having been offered in His Name.

Let us not forget that we pass through a world that not only did but *does* reject Christ, our own beloved Saviour. May we, then, be kept more loyal of heart to Him.

FULL DELIVERANCE.

WE now come to (chapter vii.) the question of our deliverance in relation to the law. We have seen, from the previous part of the epistle, how sins have been put away, and the sinner not only pardoned but justified, and at peace with God. We have also seen how sin, the old man or nature, has been dealt with, so that though in us it is not charged upon us. Though the old nature is in us, we are not looked at by God as in it. It has met its judgment in the death of Christ absolutely before God, and we are delivered from its present power by the moral application of that death by faith, *i.e.*, we make practical in our daily lives what is absolutely true before God by that simple faith which always reckons with God. But what has the law to say to all this? How am I affected by it? Chapter vii. treats of this.

I get deliverance from sins, the sins I have actually committed—which are the outcome of an evil nature—by death;

I also get deliverance from sin, the old nature from whence the sins come, in death—(we have before observed that sin, in the singular, the old man, and the flesh in Romans all mean the old, sinful nature)—and I get deliverance from the law in death.

The death and resurrection of Christ leaves not, for the believer, a single question unsettled, nor a link of bondage unsnapped. It is most instructive to notice the varied aspects and applications of the death of Christ, which, however, we cannot go fully into here.

In the Epistle to Galatians we have sins dealt with in the death of Christ (chapter i. 4). The old nature, or myself as looked at in the old nature, crucified with Christ, and yet I live; but it is now the new nature, "Christ liveth in me" (chap. ii. 20)—redeemed from the curse of the law by the death of Christ (chap. iii. 13). Then in chap. ii. 19 we read: "For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God;" the following verse, which we have already referred to, shows how this is brought about.

The law addresses itself to me as a man in the flesh, prohibiting the very things that the fleshly nature is prone to, yea, bound to bring forth, and demanding those things which are impossible to the nature I possess. Thus the holy and just law shows how far away I was from God, guilty before Him, under the curse of the law, nothing, so far as the resources of man are concerned, before me but death and judgment; yet God in the riches of His grace provides means of escape, blessed be His Name! He finds a ransom, and it is in the death of Christ, the Lamb of God, that I get deliverance. I am dead; the law, therefore, has no more to say to me; it has done its work. It condemned me, it slew me; but this death and judgment have been borne by Christ my substitute, who exhausted that judgment (a thing impossible to the sinner, hence the wrath of God "abides" on the sinner) and rose again from the dead; and, as He died for me, I am now alive in Him to God. This is full deliver-

ance. The holy claims of the law have been met and magnified, and yet the condemned sinner saved. Matchless grace! Infinite wisdom! for which we shall praise our God for ever.

The argument of Romans vii. shows, then, how I get deliverance from the law, but shows it from an experimental point of view, the experience being that of a man who has life, but not liberty. He has life, for he delights in the law of God after the inward man; he has not liberty, for he is struggling, as it were, in hard bondage to keep the law, without any power to do so. It is not the experience of a delivered man, for the cry goes out for, and the experience leads to, the deliverance; that is, to the seeing the ground or way of deliverance.

There are certain opposite forces at work which cause a great struggle in the soul. There is the law or principle of sin opposed to the desire to do what is right before God, and there is the law of God opposed to that of sin. The desire of the soul is on the side of the law, but the law of sin is too strong for the soul, and hence the practice is against the law of God; and so the struggle goes on until the man gives up in despair, then the deliverance comes. "O, wretched man, that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" Then the answer came immediately: "I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." Here is the deliverance; it is found in the fact that I have two natures—one here spoken of as the mind, and the other as the flesh. With the one I myself serve God, but the flesh can only serve the law of sin, and this is what I am to reckon dead; and as to my standing before God, it is in Christ, where there is no condemnation. Most of our struggles arise from our trying to do ourselves what Another has done, or is willing to do for us, because they are impossible to us. The moment, there-

fore, we give up the struggle and look to Him, our trouble is at an end.

In pursuance of the argument of this chapter, we first have the illustration of a woman under law to her husband. She is bound by such law while he liveth, but if he dies she is thereby freed, and may be married to another man. In the application we have the converse of this. We were under law while we lived, but we have become dead to it by the body of Christ, and looked at as married to another, even Christ, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. This supposes we are raised with Him. We are delivered from the law by death, being dead to it. (See verse 6, mar.) The deliverance is really embodied in this illustration; what follows is application, and goes to show how we are brought into it experimentally.

We have now to consider the place that such experience has historically. Some look upon it as proper Christian experience. Others look upon it as an experience that the soul passes through before realising deliverance. And when the deliverance is realised the experience is at an end, and other stages of experience are entered upon.

In the first place, this is not necessarily the apostle's experience when he wrote this epistle; indeed, we think it certain that it was not, because the apprehension of the truth of chapters v., vi., and viii.—(the seventh occupies a parenthetical position)—would in our judgment be incompatible with such experience as is given here in chapter vii. In chapter vi. sin has lost its dominion, being judged before God and for faith; but in chapter vii. 15-23 faith is not in the apprehension of this blessed truth, and the dominion of sin is causing distress of soul, such sin being made more manifest and more hateful to the soul by the new life that has been received through the operation of the Spirit and the Word of God, and he now measures it by the holy law of God.

No, it could not have been the apostle's experience at that

time. The first person is only used representatively, or illustratively, a convenient mode of expression which is very common. He here relates the experience to show the presence and nature of certain forces, and the way we get deliverance from them.

For the same reason we do not believe that it is proper Christian experience. It may be the experience of many Christians—that is quite another thing. The Epistle to the Philippians gives proper Christian experience, though the end of the third and the sixth of Ephesians soars even higher than this. Yet in the former epistle we have an experience which is incompatible with Romans vii. Sixteen or seventeen times we have the word joy or rejoice in the short Epistle to Philippians; again and again we are exhorted to rejoice. Yet in Romans vii. we have quite the opposite of joy, until we come to the conclusion of the experience detailed, which, thank God, does conclude in a full deliverance. While the struggle lasted no deliverance came, but the moment the soul gives up the struggle and looks for a deliverer outside itself, that is the moment of deliverance. “O, wretched man that I am! *who* shall deliver me?” is the cry of the distressed soul, and it is immediately followed by the exultant exclamation, “I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.” Here is the Deliverer and the deliverance.

The experience does not effect the deliverance—this is a divine operation: it leads me to see the true nature of my own case, and hence my need of deliverance.

“Under divine grace the renewed man learned three things: First, he has come to the discovery that in him, that is in the flesh, there is no good thing; but, secondly, he has learned to distinguish between himself, who wills good, and sin which dwells in him; but, further, that when he wills good sin is too many for him. Having thus acquired knowledge of himself, he does not seek to be better in the flesh, but deliverance, and he has it in Christ. Power comes after. He has come to the discovery and to the confession

that he has no power. He throws himself upon another. He does not say, How can *I*? or How shall *I*? but '*Who shall deliver me?*' Now, it was when we were devoid of all strength that Christ died for the ungodly. This want of strength is discovered, and we find grace at the end, when, with regard to what we are, and to all hope of amelioration in ourselves, grace is our only resource. But, happily, when we cast ourselves upon grace, there is nothing but grace before us. Deliverance is accomplished by our not being alive in the flesh at all. We have died away from it, and from under the law, which held us in bondage and condemnation, and we are married to another, Christ raised from the dead, and as soon as the distressed soul has said, '*Who shall deliver me?*' the answer is ready, '*I thank God, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.*' The answer is not, He *will* deliver—deliverance is already accomplished—he gives thanks."

Again, the experience cannot be proper Christian experience, because the truths learned through it produce a different and more blessed experience. The effect of the lessons thus learned is abiding. The soul has discovered the presence of certain forces, but has discovered also the way of deliverance from them—not deliverance from their presence, but from their power. They are still present, but have lost their dominion. The man whose experience is given in Romans vii. is like a man wrestling with lions let loose upon him; but when deliverance comes he sees the lions all bound, and knows now that they cannot get at him unless he puts himself under their power.

True, the conflict between the Spirit and the flesh is continued, but with this great difference, that in Romans vii. the flesh has dominion, not over the Spirit (whose power is there wanting), but over the soul. Now, the soul, by the power of the Spirit through faith, has the dominion or power over sin. This is the important difference between Romans and Galatians. In the former the good that the newly-born

soul would do he cannot do, and the evil which he would not do that he does (see verse 19), while in Gal. v. 16, 17 it is the evil that I would naturally do I do not, because of the presence of the Spirit. "This I say, then, walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh, for the flesh lusteth [or desires] against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot [or in order that ye should not, which is the more correct rendering] do the things that ye would."

Romans vii. occupies a sort of parenthetical position in the construction of the epistle. The question of sins, of its two headships, and the old man—*i.e.* sin as a law, a principle, a nature—have all been considered: sins put away and the sinner justified; sin, the old man, judged; and the believer seen as in Christ risen.

This brings us really to the conclusion of chapter viii. i.: "There is therefore no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." I am no longer in the flesh, but in Christ as to my standing before God. But chapter vii. comes in in parenthetical order to show how I stand in all this with regard to the law, by which the exceeding sinfulness of sin is shown, and which it is all-important for me to know, in order that I may be fully persuaded that "in me, that is in my flesh, there is no good thing," and thus be able to assign the flesh to its true place before God, namely, death, and that under His judgment, which is true, in the death of Christ, before God and for faith, and to enter into the joy and blessedness of my new life and standing in Christ risen.

EARNESTNESS.

IF one thing should be more conspicuous than another in any Christian's life and character, and more especially the one who is called to a life of public service, it is earnestness. Earnestness amounting to enthusiasm, and

even leading to what is called eccentricity (*i.e.*, going beyond the ordinary centre around which the actions of men revolve), becometh those who have to do with things eternal and Divine, and certainly will characterise those who live in the apprehension of such things.

The measure of our earnestness will be in proportion to the measure of our real apprehension and enjoyment of Divine things. Christian earnestness finds its origin in deep conviction of great and glorious truths, in a profound sense of infinite love and boundless goodness, in the apprehension of the glorious wonders of redemption; and the deplorable fact that earnestness is more conspicuous by its absence than by its presence in our practical lives is sufficient proof of the small value that we put upon great and glorious truths, of the shallow sense we have of Divine love, and of our feeble appreciation of all the wonders that result from the death and resurrection of our blessed Lord and Saviour. Nothing is more foreign to the true spirit of Christianity than that coldness and apathy that, alas! are the general characteristics of the Church to-day.

But one strange and humiliating fact is that we sometimes find that earnestness and practical devotedness of life are most sadly wanting where considerable intelligence in Divine truth exists; and yet where such intelligence is wanting, earnestness and devotedness are conspicuously present. This shows that a mere head knowledge of the truth, without its having taken real possession of the heart and the soul, is of little practical good. The truth hangs about the avenues of the soul without really entering into it. Just a few yards from the writer at the present moment is a water-mill. The large pool just above it is brimful of water, yet the mill is quiet, not a wheel is going round—the power is there, yet it is producing no effect. Why is this? Because it is shut off from the machinery. Just lift up the sluice-board and let the water take its natural course through the mill, and the machinery will be set in motion thereby.

Just so; remove the obstruction between the head and the heart, that the truth may take its natural course, and the whole soul will be set in earnest and energetic motion.

It is the real application of the truth to the heart and the conscience that gives it its influence over the soul, and its effectual working in the life. We may, by dry and unprayerful study, acquire an intellectual knowledge of the truth, while the soul remains unmoved by it; but it is impossible to meditate upon the great and glorious truths of Christianity, in which we have the very heart of God revealed in all its activity on our behalf, with a prayerful spirit and contrite heart, without finding the soul moved to its very depths and pouring out itself in real worship to God and energetic devotedness and activity in the cause of Christ.

Oh, that our hearts may be more susceptible to the impress of the truth of God! Then it will be read in our lives. If our hearts are melted by the truth, our lives will be moulded by it. But there must be the melting before the moulding, just as the iron must be melted or the clay softened before the moulding of the same into its desired shape.

You may possess a stamp with your name, address, and profession on it; now, then, suppose you press that stamp down upon the hard, marble mantelpiece, will there be any impression? Not the slightest. There is the name, address, and profession still on the stamp, but no sign of it on the mantelpiece. Now, bring it into contact with the softly-prepared wax, and you find that just the slightest touch makes the desired impression, and there you have the name, address, and profession not only on the stamp, but also on the wax.

Just so the heart must be softened to receive the impress of the truth of God. I may know intellectually that certain things are written on the page of inspiration, may even preach them and be assured of their truth, without receiving the full impress of them on my heart in such a way as to move my soul to pure worship, to whole-hearted devotedness,

and to holy yet energetic activity, so that my whole life is characterised by real earnestness to such an extent that whatever I take in hand in the great cause of Christ I do with my might, with my whole soul, and with my whole heart.

Yes, it is the receiving of the truth of God into a contrite heart, in which condition the soul takes in the grace of God in all its magnitude, and the new or inner man is stirred and energised by Divine love; it is this, we say, that imparts such holiness to our lives, such zest to our manners, and such power to our words, or rather the Word of God upon our lips, as must have a telling effect upon others.

This earnestness that is begotten in the soul by the entrance thus of the truth of God, and fostered by the apprehension of His grace, coupled with the sense of our deep need and dependence, should characterise the child of God right through from his conversion to the end of his pilgrim journey.

For true conversion a soul must be in earnest. When one asked our gracious Lord whether few or many should be saved, His reply was, "Strive to enter in at the strait gate," or, as two different translations before us give it, "Strive with *earnestness*."

We have no need to say that this does not mean that the sinner is to strive by meritorious works, by reformation of life, &c. But be in earnest, be not careless, be not neglectful, be so in earnest about it that the soul is in agony. The same word occurs in noun form in Colossians ii. 1, where it is rendered conflict. In the deep desire of the apostle for the welfare of the Colossian saints and others who had not seen his face in the flesh, and with a sense of the dangers to which they were exposed, he had a conflict of soul in prayer to God for them. So here in Luke xiii. 24 it is the earnest desire of the soul to be in possession of the salvation of God, begotten by the entrance of the Word of God in convicting power, at

the same time imparting with the sense of guilt a sense of the love of God.

But being saved, being born again, there should be now the same earnestness about our growth in grace, our holiness in life, and our devotedness in service; indeed, one should enter into all the exercises of a child and servant of God with that earnestness which shows that our whole moral being is entirely under the power and control of the great truths we have professed to believe.

Next to conversion, the most important thing to be thoroughly in earnest about is the nourishment of one's own soul. It is most important to see to the state of our own souls. If we are careless about this we shall be of little blessing or use, spiritually, to others.

Hence the blessed Lord says, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of Man shall give you." The word "labour" here is to be taken more in a moral than a literal sense; it does not mean that a man is not to work for his daily bread, but that there is something more important; that he is not to labour in *anxiety of mind* for the bread that perisheth, but to be very anxious, very much concerned, even to *labour* in mind for that bread which endureth unto life eternal (see Luke xii. 22-31, noticing especially verse 29).

It is not the carrying out our daily occupations, the fulfilling the duties of life, and the obligations of our various relationships, that, in themselves, hinder our souls; it is the being filled with care, and labouring in mind under the weight of worry and anxiety concerning these things; it is this that checks the growth of soul. Albeit, no doubt, in John vi., "Labour not for the bread that perisheth," is directed against that exorbitant desire and exhausting effort to be rich in this world's goods, which is the real cause of so much poverty of soul and barrenness of life toward God. It is these things, then, that hinder the growth of soul. For if

the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the seed, or the word of the Gospel, in the souls of the unsaved, the same things choke the word of instruction in the souls of the saved. But let there be such labour, such deep desire, such thorough concern about the bread that endureth unto eternal life. Oh, let us earnestly attend to the nourishment, health, and growth of our own souls. Carelessness in this means present and eternal loss.

Then there is earnestness in prayer to God. If our souls are really alive to the deep, deep need of the Church, if we feel the low state of God's people, if our eyes are open to the ravishes of false doctrine, how very earnest we shall be before God in prayer, not only that we ourselves may be kept near to God, devoted in life and sound in doctrine, but that others may be kept. We have already referred to Col. ii. 1, where we find the apostle in agony before God in prayer for as many as had not seen His face in the flesh. What a holy exercise! How very much concerned was the apostle, not only for his own state of soul, but also that of others; and, furthermore, not only others whom he knew, had seen, and laboured among, but those whom he had never seen. When our hearts are near to the Lord, in sweet communion with Him, they take in all that are dear to Him, they enter into His thoughts, and partake of His care concerning them.

Elias, also, in his zeal for God's glory and the good of His people, "prayed *earnestly* that it might not rain, and it rained not on earth by the space of three years and six months." Yet we are told that he was "A man subject to like passions as we are." Truly, "The *effectual*, *fervent* prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Oh, who can tell what would be possible to us if we only had more simple faith in and real dealings with God in the earnestness of a soul thoroughly under the power of His truth, and looking at things in their relation to Himself and as His glory is affected thereby; with a heart, too, to feel for His people as does the heart of Christ, or at least to enter to some extent into those

feelings. But we, with our cold and apathetic hearts, our formalism, or, at least, our sentimentalism, looking at things for the most part in relation to ourselves, and as our poor, petty reputations are affected thereby, or, at least, in relation to our sect or party, how can we wonder at our own leanness and guilty weakness. We say "guilty weakness," meaning a weakness arising from a want of faith in God and obedience to His Word, as distinct from that weakness which arises from a sense of dependence upon God, and in which His power is therefore made manifest.

We are also exhorted to contend earnestly for the faith which was once delivered to the saints. If this exhortation was needful in the apostle's time, it is tenfold more needful in our day, for we are in the days that are foretold in Scripture as "perilous," as days in which "men will not endure sound doctrine."

The word here (in Jude), "The faith of the Gospel," embraces the whole code of Christian doctrine—in a word, it is Christianity as taught in the Scriptures; which is not that effeminate thing which lends itself to any kind of temporising policy for which unregenerate men would use it; nor is it an elastic sort of religion that can be made to embrace all or any of those erroneous theories that are the production of the alienated mind of man, which so many people take it to be. It is a manifestation of the unchangeable God; a revelation of His unalterable character; an unfolding of His gracious and sovereign will and eternal counsels concerning man, and also a manifestation of His righteous judgment against sin, whether it be as seen in the repentant sinner's Substitute on the Cross, or in the eternal woe of the unrepentant sinner.

It may not please the flesh, it may not suit the proud heart and haughty mind of man, nor, indeed, does it; nevertheless, it provides for the eternal salvation and glory of the repentant.

Men may try, and are trying, to improve upon the

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Christianity taught by Christ and His apostles, with the result of the corruption that is before our eyes in christendom to-day. Nevertheless, revealed Christianity remains the same, perfect and unalterable as God Himself, and must finally triumph. Blessed are they who cleave to it in its purity, as of and from God, and *earnestly* contend for it against all the false doctrines of men, for they shall triumph with it; while all who refuse it, and fight against it, or hypocritically attempt to adorn it with productions of their own, or in their wisdom (for such think themselves wiser than God) set themselves about improving it by eliminating certain parts of the truth and substituting theories less obnoxious to their own minds, such as make somewhat of man—these, we say, will be condemned by it.

But ye, ye children of God, redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, who have accepted the truths of Christianity which are written on the pages of inspiration as the revealed *truth of God*, may ye act as those who *really* believe such blessed and solemn facts as are there made known.

Yes, this is what we need, *i.e.*, the firm conviction in our souls that God has spoken, and the things we believe are made known by His Word, unshaken faith in the verities of God, so much so that our souls are thoroughly under their power; then we shall “earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints”; then we shall know what it is, like the apostle, to say the love of Christ constraineth me, and knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men. There are two things—the love of Christ and the terror of the Lord; the one is as true as the other, and they both acted as powerful motives in the soul of the apostle. So much in earnest was he, under the influence of these powerful motives, that people thought him beside himself.

May our conviction of the truth of God be more firm; may there be more response in our hearts to the love of God; and may our souls ever be under the power of the great and solemn truths of revelation.

THE DEITY OF CHRIST.

ONE fruitful source of error is found in the supposition that we should be able to comprehend and reconcile everything that is revealed in Holy Scripture ; and the cause—or the origin of such supposition—and the fallacy thereof, appear at one and the same time in the conceit of the human heart, that takes for granted that there is nothing in existence which cannot be comprehended by man. For if I suppose that there is nothing incomprehensible to the mind of man, I thereby assume that the mind of man is capable of comprehending everything that exists, and hence I fall into the fatal error of reducing, or attempting to reduce, infinite things to my finite comprehension, and give my interpretation accordingly ; and, though such interpretation may be against the plain wording of Scripture, I aver that such must be the meaning of the passage or passages, because the alternative or “orthodox ” meaning is illogical ; and, of course, on the premises started with, *i.e.*, that there is nothing revealed that the mind is not capable of comprehending, it would be so ; but the premises are wrong, and only find their origin in the conceit of the human heart and pride of the intellect.

The reasoning of all Unitarians of every grade and shade proceeds on this false ground : “What we cannot grasp, what cannot be reduced to our understanding, we cannot receive.” This is the position they take ; it should not therefore be surprising to find continually in their writings against the Deity of Christ such expressions as, “The idea is absurd,” “It is preposterous,” “It is illogical,” “It is unreasonable,” &c.

Infinite things are revealed to us for our belief, and proven to us by the exercise of infinite power, but not for our comprehension. For this latter we must ourselves be infinite.

“What, then,” it may be asked, “is meant by the term revelation, if we are not meant to fully understand what is

thus revealed?" Revelation means that certain things which had been hidden to view are now uncovered or made known, but certainly that does not necessarily imply that we are capable of comprehending in essence or being all that is revealed! We speak of the discovery or revelation of the law of gravity, and we now know that such a force exists, or at least a force that we call by that name; but do we comprehend it in its origin and essence? The same thing is true of electricity. This force has been revealed to us, and we know that it exists by the evidence of observation and experience; but can we fathom its depth or comprehend its essence?

Infinite space, too, and endless duration we are bound to believe in these, for if we try to imagine a boundary, the thought involuntarily occurs to the mind, What is beyond? Nevertheless, we cannot comprehend them; we cannot reduce them to our understanding; they do not lend themselves to our explanations; there is no power in man that can fully grasp either idea. If we try to understand them our poor minds become staggered and bewildered, and to preserve our mental equilibrium we have to give up the effort as hopeless.

It is because divine things are so far beyond me that I am filled with wonder, with holy awe, with adoration, and praise in the presence of the infinite and blessed God who reveals them; and to believe them as revealed by Him is at least to understand them as being worthy of His power and glory. This is spiritual understanding—the understanding of faith; it is the belief in, the acknowledgment of, infinite things, as revealed in His Word, as being capable to and worthy of Him to whom nothing is impossible. Instead of supposing that my mind is so great, or that God is so little, that I am capable of comprehending and explaining His being, I acknowledge Him to be just what He has been pleased to reveal Himself in creation and redemption, and thus take my place in my own littleness as a poor, finite creature, quite dependent on what He is pleased to reveal of

Himself, His counsels, and His works for any knowledge of the same. Such belief is reasonable and logical enough the moment I admit the true nature of divine and infinite things, my dependence upon revelation to know anything about them, and that these are proofs of such revelation.

The more thoroughly we are made conscious of our own littleness, our own nothingness, yea, our own sinfulness and guiltiness, the more capable are we of receiving and believing the revelation of our God.

The reader will observe that all Unitarians, *i.e.*, not only those of the sect thus distinguished, but all who deny the Deity of Christ, think there is some good in man, and make a great deal of his reasoning powers; they are always much taken up with intellectualism, and accordingly they invariably deny the atonement in its substitutionary aspect. The moment the substitutionary aspect of the death of Christ is admitted (and it is clearly enough taught in Scripture), the utter ruin of man cannot be denied, because it is the latter that necessitates the former. The death of Christ, as a sacrifice for sin, would not be required if the sinner could do anything to help himself, or be saved in any other way. That such sacrifice was required (and, blessed be God, provided), shows that man cannot be saved in any other way; that his case is utterly hopeless apart from that death. But this is what men naturally do not like, and will not have. Rather than own the utter ruin of man—that there is *no* good in him—that he must be born again (which truth strikes at the root of all that man is by nature)—men will deny the atonement, or explain it away. And if this cannot be done without impeaching the authority of the Scriptures, which teach both the ruin of man and the sacrifice of Christ *for sin*, then the wicked pride of man will go thus far.

But the hypocritical, and therefore the most despicable, part of man's new theology is that, while denying what the Lord Himself, and all Scripture, so plainly teaches concerning His death as a sacrifice for sin, they profess to make

much of Him as an example. This is the tendency of erroneous theology to-day, and the subtlety and deception of Satan himself appear in it. It just suits man; it is most fascinating to him, and it follows directly in the line we have been dwelling upon. The sacrifice of Christ for the sinner shows him to be in a hopeless condition without such sacrifice; whereas Christ as an example to man *without* such sacrifice takes for granted that there is some good in man, which only needs such an example to draw it out.

Truly, indeed, Christ is presented as an example, but it is an example only to those who are redeemed by His blood. The new life must be implanted in the soul before that example can be followed to any extent at all, for "man in the flesh (the old nature) *cannot* please God." It does not say that he does not, but he "cannot."

There are so many scriptures that show that the first contact of soul with Christ is as a *repentant sinner*, that it is obviously hypocrisy for any one to talk about following Him as an example before having taken that place at His feet: really, it is only claiming the patronage of Christ for our own Pharisaical righteousness. It is entering Christ's wedding feast without accepting the wedding garment provided by Himself, preferring one's own robe of righteousness. This may answer very well till the King comes in to see the guests; then it will not stand the test of His searching gaze, the soul will be found out, detected, and exposed in all its sin before those holy eyes which are as a flame of fire.

We might now examine two or three out of the many scriptures that teach the Deity of Christ. We do it for the confirmation of the faith of God's dear people; for it is most sad to find how even the Lord's own redeemed people are influenced by false doctrine when it assumes a subtle form and becomes popular. We have been truly humbled before God to find just lately how hundreds of the Lord's people have been carried away by a book which, to say the least, wrenches the life of Christ as an example from its relative

connection with His death as a sacrifice for sin, presenting the former in such a way as to exalt it *at the expense* of the latter. Nearly all error is composed from truth thus severed from its relative connection with other truths.

Let us turn now to John i.: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God." No language could possibly be found more simply to teach the eternal Deity of Christ than this. It is put so simply and clearly, so unambiguously, that, if only honesty of mind be present, men are shut up to a belief in or rejection of it. But what is so deplorable is the lack of such honesty, which is often so sadly manifest in the distortion of the passage before us. Yet, the passage so carefully guards itself against the false exegesis of men. As another has said: "The language of the Gospel is as plain as possible, and, like the sword of Paradise, turns every way, in opposition to the thoughts and reasonings of men, to defend the divinity and personality of the Son of God."

"In the beginning *was the Word.*" "The Word" is Christ. This cannot be questioned. We are then plainly told that in the beginning He was. It does not say He began to be, but He *was*. This Gospel carries us back further than Genesis: the latter gives us the history of the world in time; the former gives us the existence of the Word in eternity before the world was. Before there was anything that could be called a beginning He was, and hence did not begin to exist. "If we go back as far as is possible to the mind of man, how far soever beyond all that has had a beginning, He is. This is the most perfect idea we can form historically, if I may use such an expression, of God and of eternity."

Then, to show His distinct personality, the Holy Ghost adds, "And the Word was *with* God." Then, "Lest it may be thought that He was something which eternity implies but which the Holy Ghost comes to reveal, it is said that

He 'was God.' In His existence eternal, in His nature divine, in His person distinct, He might have been spoken of as an emanation in time, as though His personality was of time, although eternal in His nature: the Spirit therefore adds, 'In the beginning He was with God.' It is the revelation of the eternal Λόγος before all creation. This Gospel therefore really begins before Genesis."

"All things were made by Him: and without Him was not anything made that was made." Then it is thus certain that He was not made, for without Him "was not *anything made that was made*." Thus the eternal existence of our adorable Lord and Saviour is clearly made known, if there were not another passage on the subject. But it is taught all through the Scripture, both in Old and New Testaments. See Isaiah ix. 67, Prov. viii., Col. i. 14-18, Heb. i. We have not time or space here to go into these passages, but they are all most precise, positive, and conclusive on this subject of the deity of Christ; and nothing but the most obvious perversion can make them mean anything else. It is there revealed for our belief, not for our comprehension, and witnessed to by all the signs, wonders, divers miracles, and infallible proofs that surround and support the Scripture of Truth as the living Word of God.

Then the Holy Ghost, in John i., goes on to tell what was *in* Him, viz., life and light; and that the Word was made flesh. But this brings us to His manhood, a part of the subject which we must reserve till another time.

This very One who is the Λόγος, the expression of the whole mind that subsists in God, and was God, *became* man. It is most important to understand the distinction between the deity and humanity of Christ. If He became man He took the place proper to man, and was perfect in His dependence and obedience. Yet He did not cease to be God. He could say: "I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath

sent Me." He could also say: "I and My Father are one; He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." All this is perfect in its order. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."

SCRIPTURAL UNITY.

SOME years ago I awoke to the realisation that I was holding principles resulting in practices that rendered me disobedient to the command of the Lord found in 1 Cor. i. 10, "That there be no divisions among you." There were deep-rooted "principles" in my mind that actually had been all the years before superseding Scripture. I then enquired in the Word how I could correct this evil in myself. I could not put others right, but I must put myself right. I could not heal the divisions that exist, but I could cease to be a party to them. How?

I found that the idea of a "circle of fellowship" was itself division established on principle. The fellowship of the assembly of God in its central communion is that of the blood and body of Christ. "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?" (1 Cor. x. 16). This is the centre of the assemblies' communion and worship. It is the common participation together (that is, communion) in the symbols of the dead body and shed blood of Christ, representing Him as He was in death—the death to which our sins brought Him. In partaking, therefore, we declare the Lord's death for us until He come.

The question then narrowed itself down to this: Who is entitled to partake of the Lord's Supper? and my difficulty was solved. The communion of the Lord's Table is that of

those who have part in the death it declares, that is, every believer. We have no authority, then, to spread the Table of the Lord, that is, to put the Lord's Supper on a table, except for *all* believers. That is the rule—all believers. The exceptions to the rule prove it, for none but "wicked persons" in walk or doctrine—those with whom we cannot eat at our own tables—are to be excluded from the Lord's Table. If we spread the table for "*all*," and all do not come, the responsibility is theirs, and no division from true saints of God is maintained by us.

It is as obvious as possible that every one who has eaten the flesh of the Son of Man and drank His blood (John vi. 53) in the only real way (by faith), has divinely-given title to partake of the symbols of it. I have no other title myself, so, if not, I cannot partake myself. The Lord's Table or the Lord's Supper cannot be the possession of any party, sect, circle, or denomination; it belongs to "all" or to none. This the Scriptures positively teach. In 1 Cor. x. 16 we read of the common participation in the symbols of the human body and blood of the Lord Jesus in death for us. In the next verse we are told who the partakers are, and what it is that constitutes them partakers. It is not that they are members of this or that denomination, circle, sect, or party, but that they are members of the "one body" of Christ. (The "body of Christ" in verse 16 is His human body; the "one body" in verse 17 is the assembly which is His body. A symbol of the Church is not put on the table; it is a dead body that is on the table, and the Church is risen from the dead and united to Christ by the Holy Spirit.)

We read, "For we, being many, are one bread, one body." How is this shown? "For we all partake of that one bread." I take my piece of that one loaf; every other believer takes his piece of it; we all eat it; part of the one loaf is in us all; figure of the one Christ in death, of which we all partake, and which makes us one.

I found then that Scripture brings all to the true centre,

Christ in death (verse 16), and defines the true circle of fellowship (verse 17) the one body of Christ. By partaking of the one loaf I declare that I am a member of—what? This or that denomination, sect, circle, or party? No. The scriptural significance of that act is, as regards membership, that I am a member of the one body of Christ, and of nothing else. There is no assembly membership in Scripture; membership of the local assembly is unknown in Paul's epistles; membership is exclusively of the one body (1 Cor. xii. 27, &c.).

Thus we can still act upon and be obedient to the command of the apostle not to "endeavour" merely, but to give diligence to keep the "unity of the Spirit" (Eph. iv.). That unity is the unity which the Spirit of God has made, and which we have not to make, but to keep. It is the one body.

Notwithstanding all the divisions that have torn the assembly of God asunder, it is still possible to obey the scripture "that there be no divisions among you" by simply taking this scriptural attitude towards the whole assembly of God, excluding no true believer, excepting such as we cannot scripturally eat with at our own table (1 Cor. v. 11).

J. J.

P.S.—Remember that we cannot keep the Spirit's unity in the flesh. It is a spiritual, not a carnal unity, and can only be kept by being in a spiritual state.—J. J.

"THE HEAVENLY CITY,"

FROM "GOD'S PROPHETIC PLAN."

IN one of our previous lectures we remarked that from the beginning of Revelation xix. to the beginning of chapter xxi., we have a number of consecutive events—events that come in order of sequence, carrying us right on from the introduction of the Millennium, through that glorious era and on to the end of the reign of Christ, the

great white throne, and lastly, the eternal state, which latter is given at the beginning of chapter xxi. There is very little revealed in the Word of God about the eternal state. There is a good deal about eternal blessing—we may say that this is the special theme of the New Testament—but about the new heaven and the new earth we get very little as to description.

We get enough, however, to show that that state of things is in perfect accord with all that has been revealed about our eternal felicity with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Peter tells us that the present heaven and earth shall be dissolved, but that "according to His promise we look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness"; and then in Revelation we read, "And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea."

In the Millennium we are told that righteousness shall reign; in the eternal state righteousness will dwell. The difference is easily seen. In the Millennium there will be evil in existence, though it will not be allowed in outward activity; but in the eternal state evil will be entirely eradicated from the earth. The whole condition of things and people will be righteous, absolutely righteous, and holy as heaven itself.

Then we are told that there shall be no more pain, nor sorrow, nor anguish; for the former things shall have passed away; all tears shall be wiped from off all faces then. That is, I apprehend, that, once and for ever, sorrow shall be swept away. It does not mean that there will be tears there to be wiped off, but that once and for ever all sorrow is wiped away, all tears are gone, and gone for ever. Then we get the state of the unbelieving—the unsaved. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which

burneth with fire and brimstone." Mark, it does not only say the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, &c., but the fearful and unbelieving have their place with these very worst characters on the earth. There is not a greater sin known than the rejection of the Lord Jesus Christ. The fearful and unbelieving—those who remain unbelieving because of their cowardice, because they are ashamed to confess the Lord Jesus before men.

Here, then, in a certain sense, the book is finished at the end of verse 8. We get a sort of wind-up; what follows is added in postscript order. I will read verse 8 again to emphasize this fact. "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Then verse 9 not only begins another subject, but brings us back to the commencement of the Millennium. Hence we read: "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife." Now, these seven angels here referred to are those which are spoken of earlier in this book, who come forth with the bowls (vials) of God's wrath; those who are the executors of the judgment of God introductory to the Millennium. It is one of these angels that comes to John here. He is taken back from the eternal state to the beginning of the Millennium. Suppose you are writing a letter to a friend, and you have many subjects to speak of, and scenes to describe, but, after having finished your account of various matters and made a kind of wind-up to your letter, you just add a postscript giving a little more detail on one of the subjects you have been dealing with in the letter—just in that way the description of the holy city is added here.

But certain questions arise here. We are led to ask, What is this holy city? What is it intended to teach us?

What are we to learn therefrom? The imagery is indeed sublime. Such a city is unknown among men, nor could it be known here on the earth. What are we to learn from such a glowing, such an exquisite city? Speaking generally, we are undoubtedly to learn somewhat of the joys, the pleasures, and the glories of heaven for the redeemed. It is impossible for our poor, little, narrow minds, dull of understanding as we are, and slow, at the best, in receiving the things of God, it is impossible, we say, for us to take in the glories that await us there with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." It is only by the Spirit that we can learn these things. Here it has pleased God to teach us somewhat of the character and joy of our future by employing the most precious materials known to us—employing materials that we are able in some little measure to appreciate, materials to which men are able to attach immense value.

These materials and this city as a whole are intended to convey something to our minds of what the joy and glory and bliss of heaven will be. Though I would not say that this city represents *exclusively* the Church any more than I would limit the joys and glories of heaven to that ransomed company, yet I do believe that the Church gives character to the city. Does not the city itself, in its most prominent character, present the glory, the value, the preciousness, the purity, the holiness of the Church, the bride of the Lord Jesus Christ? I believe that the Church is the bride, and we here find that the bride is the city; but this does not necessarily exclude the Old Testament saints. Undoubtedly it is a figurative city. This is an important point, and the first thing to notice here. There can be no question about it, because it says in verse 9: "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither,

I will shew thee the *bride, the Lamb's wife.*" And yet in the next verse we read : " And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and *shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem.*" Here at the very outset, then, we are as good as told that it is a figure. " That city I am shewing you is the bride, the Lamb's wife."

Surely after this we need not stop to give any further proof that this holy Jerusalem is not a literal city ! Yet there are some people who have taken it to be a glowing description of the earthly Jerusalem in the Millennium. Now, the earthly city of Jerusalem in the Millennium will be a wonderful city. To it shall the nations flow ; from it shall the law of God go forth to the ends of the earth. It will be a blessed and glorious city in its character, but it will be a terrestrial city. Now, it is certain the city before us will be a celestial city—a figure of celestial bliss and glory. How could it be a terrestrial city when you think of it as a perfect cube with the dimensions that are given here in verse 16 ? Have you ever calculated the immense size of this city ? If you compare the Jewish measurements here with English, you will find it is no less than 1440 miles long, 1440 miles broad, and the same in height. Now, remember that if it is a literal city, the dimensions are literal, and it would take many countries like Palestine to form a sufficient area for its foundations, and then it would go towering up 1440 miles into the air. No, it is a celestial city ; and in its being a perfect cube we have undoubtedly the thought of divinely-imparted perfection.

In the earthly city, though the light of the sun and the moon will be greatly increased, yet they will be needed ; here there is no sun and no moon required at all. In the Millennium there will be a temple in Palestine, a great and wonderful temple ; but here in this heavenly city there is no temple. And we shall see, as we go on to dwell upon a few of the most precious points here, how every feature and the whole characteristic description here carry us away into

heaven. "Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife. And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God." Do we not in these words get the heavenly character and divine origin of the city? "Descending out of heaven"—heavenly in its character; "from God"—divine in its origin.

We shall not be able this evening to go into the precious detail—every sentence, every clause is pregnant with blessing—but I will pick out a few of the most prominent points. The first thing that presents itself to our mind is the wall.

It "had a wall, great and high"; "the wall of it was of jasper." What is jasper a figure of? A figure of the glory of God. This very chapter proves that by comparing this verse (18) with verses 11 and 23. Here in this verse that speaks of the wall we are told that it was of jasper, and in verse 11 we read that her light was like unto a jasper stone; then in verse 23 we are told that the glory of God did lighten it. Thus, in comparing these verses we find that jasper is a figure of the glory of God. Other scriptures, too, go to show this.

There are two or three ideas represented by the wall. Protection, distinction, and separation are thoughts that associated themselves with the idea of a wall. There should be a wall around God's Church now morally—not a wall of bricks and mortar, nor of sectarian creeds, but, shall I say a wall of jasper, for we are all, as the people of God and as the saints of God, to reflect the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ now? We shall do it perfectly in that day. There will be no hindrance to the blessed reflection of His glory there. But we should do so morally now; and if the Church was really up to the character of her calling, and in communion with her Lord, with nothing between, so that the light of His countenance shone upon her, there would be the reflection of that glory upon the world, and she

would be separated from the world by this wondrous wall—the glory of the blessed Lord. No conventional or ecclesiastical separation can make up for the absence of this.

In 1 John iii. 2 we read: "It doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is." If, then, I am going to be like Christ for ever, I want to be as much like Him morally now as possible. Then in verse 1 of the chapter referred to above we read: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore, the world knoweth us not, because it knew Him not." Have you ever seen the force of that? Why does not the world know the children of God? Because it did not know Christ. This verse supposes we are so much like Christ that the world does not know us for the very same reason that it knew Him not. And so the people of God should be walking in occupation of heart with our Lord Jesus Christ, and reflecting His glory upon this dark world. We know, alas! how sadly the Church has failed. Nevertheless, when we get there, the wall shall be absolutely perfect.

Let us now, just for a moment, think of that wall as a protection. What will protect the saints in heaven? It is the impenetrable glory of the blessed God. The Church will be enveloped with the glory of God; she will be seen coming down from heaven, having the glory of God. Even the wall is composed of the glory of God, that glory that shone forth on Sinai, the very reflection of which, in the face of Moses, the people could not bear, and besought Him that he would put a vail over His face because they could not look on the glory reflected there, the glory that dwelt between the cherubims in the midst of the holy place, which burst forth upon those presumptuous persons who would offer strange fire, into the presence of which glory only the high priest could enter, and that by blood. It is by that

glory, or rather by a more excellent glory (2 Cor. iii.), that the Church will be surrounded up there.

When I speak of the Church, I do not mean to say by this that the city here represents exclusively the Church. It may represent the whole of the heavenly saints—that is, the whole of the saints who have gone to heaven from the beginning. But, in any case, the Church, as we have before observed, gives character to the city, and that is the way I speak of it as such.

Then we find that the names of the twelve apostles are in the foundation. This is in perfect harmony with what I have said, that the Church gives character, for the apostles were, if I may so speak, the very first stones in that wondrous building. They were the first who were brought into this position and this relationship. When the Lord Jesus Christ was rejected on the earth by the nation of Israel His disciples were brought into new relationships altogether under the new dispensation that had just dawned.

Hitherto they had occupied the place of a remnant of that nation of which Christ came, but when the rejection was completed, they were brought out of that position into a new relationship altogether.* And other sheep which were not of the Jewish fold, but of the Gentile nations, were to be brought by the Lord, and there should be one flock (not fold) and one Shepherd. And so Ephesians carries the same truth a little further, and shows that saved Jews and Gentiles are brought into one body—of the twain one *new man* is formed. There is a great deal that is very interesting and distinct in the Scripture teaching of this new man that is very precious. It is "one *new man*," a new thing altogether, composed of believers from among Jews and Gentiles, such a thing as was not known before; indeed, it did not even exist.

But if the apostles have their names in the foundation, the twelve tribes have their names engraven on the gates. This, again, is in perfect order and harmony with every other

truth about this city, this heavenly city, which is the capital of the King, in that wondrous time when He shall take over *His vast inheritance—His glorious kingdom*, when all in heaven and all on earth shall give glory, and honour, and praise, and power unto the Lord Jesus Christ as King of kings and Lord of lords.

Now, the gate in Scripture is the place of judgment, the place of administration, where justice and judgment are administered to the people. So that when it is seen that the Lord is going to govern the whole world through the twelve tribes, then it is quite fitting that their names should be inscribed on the gates of the city, this city from whence they receive all their instructions for the rule of the nations. Here, if I may so speak, the great legislative parliament is situated—or, rather, the great legislating King dwells—in the heavenly sphere of the kingdom; but the kingdom is administered to the whole world through the twelve tribes of Israel. Hence their names are on the gates. But we must pass on.

We shall not have time to dwell upon much detail, but I want to refer you to one or two precious points. There is a great significance in every one of these stones with which the foundations of the wall are garnished; but I can do no more now than just say that they represent the varied glories of the blessed God—reflectively, of course.

We are told that there is no temple in that city. Now, whatever may be the thought, and however sweet the idea, that we may have in association with a temple, yet, after all, it shuts out man and shuts in God. But in that city there will be no temple. Then, will there be no worship? Oh, yes; for it is added immediately, "*The Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it.*" If I may so speak, the whole city is a temple, for God and the Lamb fill it with their glory and their presence. • There is no need of any building especially to shut in God and shut out the people, for the latter only to approach Him occasionally, or under

certain circumstances. No; they will always be in the presence of God and the Lamb as worshippers.

Then, moreover, we are told that there was no need of the sun or moon, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof. No need of any created light there; the Creator Himself is the source of light in that glorious city. The light of the countenance of the Lord Jesus Christ shall lighten up the whole of that place, the effulgence of His glory radiate that city, and shall fill every soul with joy and delight. And in verse 5 of the next chapter we are told not only will there be no need of the sun or the moon to shine therein, but there will be no need of lamp or candle to shine therein. Why is it, after having been told that neither the sun nor the moon will be needed—we have mention of such a thing as a candle—that they need no candle? The candle is used in Scripture sometimes as a figure of the intellect of man. There, in that glorious city, the sparks of human intellect will find no place; the light of human intellect will be entirely eclipsed, for the Lord God and the Lamb are the light thereof. We need no human light in that joyous city; we need not the candles of human intellect nor the flicker of a carnal religion—we do not even need them now, much less by-and-by, for we have the light of God's blessed Word; let us walk in that—we do not want the flickering sparks of human intellect; we do not want the candles of a mere empty and ceremonious religion. Let Rome burn them within her dark precepts if she pleases—significant enough they are of the darkness of that system—but we have the light of the blessed Word of God; let us cling to it tenaciously. May we know it as the guardian of our lives, a light to our feet, and a lamp to our path. Do not be led away, dear Christian friends, with the flickering sparks of human intellects. They are just like a will-o'-the-wisp that will only lead you into the mire and land you into the greatest difficulties, and you will surely stumble and fall over the dark mountains. Perhaps some of you have known

what it is to just wander in the labyrinth of man's intellectual productions, between this idea and that idea, amid many conflicting theories, sometimes inclining this way and sometimes that; and not unfrequently has the ground all around you appeared to be giving way, until you have been landed into the greatest perplexity and almost hopeless darkness; then you have pulled yourself up and said to yourself, "This won't do; I am going away into the darkness; I must get back to the Word of God in all its simplicity."

In spite of all the knowledge that exists in the world to-day, all is darkness as to man's relationship to God, as to revelation of Himself in Jesus Christ, and as to the testimony of the gospel regarding the eternal future of man—things of the most vital importance to mankind.

After what I have said, and to avoid misunderstanding, perhaps I ought to say that the intellect is a wonderful creation of God, and as such it is not to be despised; indeed, by it we receive communications from Himself by the aid of His Spirit, and we reflect upon His works, His grace, and His goodness. But this is very different from its independent exercise. Morally speaking, there is no innate light in man; if there is any real light at all, it is reflective. In this sense it is that Christians are shining lights, *i.e.*, by reflecting the glory of Christ.

The next point I want to call your attention to is found in the words, "There shall be no night there." What a word that is! All that clusters around that word night; all that flows into the mind as we think of night; all those melancholy thoughts, all those moments of depression; all those seasons of heaviness, with all that we call trial and trouble—indeed, all that makes the night of life or casts any darkness across our path—will be gone, and gone for ever. No more depression, no more night seasons, no more darkness, no more sorrow, no more perplexity—"There shall be no night there." "Oh," said a person to me not long since, "I am passing through a dark night of trial; all is dark

around me ; I cannot see a glimmer of light." I replied, " There shall be no night there." What a thought ! How much there is wrapped up in just that one word—" no night there ! "

Then this is followed by the word, " And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie." No defilement there. As we walk through this dirty world, our feet contract defilement, necessarily so, but the Lord has made gracious provision for the removing of such defilement ; He has provided the water and the basin and the towel to wash our feet ; that is, when we get out of communion ; when the things of this world, not to say its evils, come between our hearts and Christ, then, by the application of the water—that is, the Word—to the conscience, by His intercessory work up there we are led to self-judgment, and thus communion is restored, and we are made quite happy in His presence again.

We cannot help getting defiled as we pass through this scene. Have you not known it and felt it in your daily business as you have been brought into contact with the world and people round about you ? Has not your soul felt something like a sweep, if I may so speak, as you have retired from public to private life in the quiet of the evening ? Have you not been glad to use the laver of the Word to wash your feet, that you might enter into the holiest, into His presence for the enjoyment of His own love and the heavenly blessing that belongs to you in Christ Jesus ? No defilement shall be known up there, on those golden streets which are as transparent glass. Gold is a figure of divine righteousness ; glass, " transparent " or clear glass, is holiness. Here you have righteousness and holiness as the pavement of the very streets on which we shall walk. Oh ! who can tell the bliss, the joy, the glory that await us there ? And who knows how soon we may be there, the whole company of the redeemed ? Wondrous thought ! yet it is true.

We are not talking fables; we are dwelling on the verities of the blessed God—eternal realities as made known in His Word.

Thousands of people walking about the dirty streets of our towns and cities shall very soon walk the golden streets of that heavenly Jerusalem, shall bask there in the light and glory of God and the Lamb. What, indeed, are the sufferings of this little while? Shall we take account of them? Are they worthy to be compared with the glory that shall follow? When we find ourselves in the midst of sufferings, we often say, "Well, well, it is not much compared with the glory that shall follow." But the Scripture tells us it is not to be compared at all with the glory that shall follow. It is not worthy of mention in the presence of eternal glory. And not only so, all the gloomy circumstances that surround us in this world are used in blessing to our souls, so that we are gainers every way. That trial you were in the other day was meant to teach you some very precious lesson that will be a blessing to your soul. Have you learnt it? Too often the first thing that occurs to our hearts when we get into trial is, how can we get out of it? It should not be the first thing. That trial is commissioned of God to teach you a lesson. If you do not learn the lesson by that small trial that has come upon you, it will retire in favour of another, and thus a greater trial will come upon you. If you do not learn the lesson from the greater trial, that will retire to make room for a still greater one, and so on. And how blessed it is to be exercised before God concerning every circumstance of our daily life! If we are so near to God, if redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, if He has numbered the very hairs of our head, if He takes such an interest in us and our matters, is He not concerned about every detail of our daily life? Surely, then, we may respond to the exhortation of the text, "Casting all your care upon Him, for He careth for you." How pregnant with comfort and blessing is that word, "He careth for you"! Yes, blessed be

God, it is true. He, the almighty, all-gracious God, cares for us; all His power and grace are engaged on our behalf.

Pass on now to chapter xxii.: "And He shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb." Here we find the throne of God, which in chapter iv. of this book is set for judgment, and from which proceed lightnings and thunderings and an earthquake. Here, in this heavenly scene, we find that throne is the centre and source of all true blessings to the inheritors of that golden and glorious city. Thus we see the water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. "Water of life, clear as crystal"—what does it mean? It means that our joy shall be unmingled, shall be unalloyed.

Next we read: "In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Now, there is a precious line of thought opened up by the mention here of the tree of life. The first time the tree of life appears is in the garden of Eden, side by side with the tree of responsibility. For the tree of knowledge represents man's responsibility to God. In this man failed. He partook of the forbidden fruit, and became a fallen creature. The tree of life as yet had not been touched, and God said: 'Lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat and live for ever' (thus perpetuating his sinful condition). "Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden." "He drove out the man, and He 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." Thus the sword was fixed to keep the tree of life, and there it remained up till the time of the Cross.

The law came offering a way back to the tree of life, if I may so speak, saying, Do this and live, thus holding out life to man on certain conditions. But man could not get to the

tree of life that way. The law showed the only way back to it, but at the same time man's inability to take that way, and hence made the flaming sword more manifest. Then the Lord Jesus humbled Himself, and became a man, and as a man was obedient, even to the death of the Cross. He became, if we may so speak, the tree of responsibility, and there, at Calvary's Cross, He bore the mighty judgment which we by our sin had incurred. Having fully met the responsibility of man to God, He now comes forth in resurrection as the tree of life, but no flaming sword is there. That is removed. It has been sheathed in His side.

Now, as the risen One—the tree of life—all are welcome to come and partake of Him, to come to Him for life, which is to be found nowhere else. "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." For more than 1800 years now the message of life has been proclaimed to the world, taking the form of a gracious invitation bidding man come and partake of the tree of life.

The risen Christ is the tree of life now, and here we find that tree of life in the midst of the paradise of God—in the midst of that glorious city. So that you see we have it in the beginning of the Book of God, and we have it in the very last chapter of the same, and the principle of it runs right through the whole Scripture.

Then we find this tree of life yields twelve manner of fruits, and yields that fruit every month. What are we to learn from this? Christ is the tree of life, bearing such variety of fruits.

Twelve is a number figurative of administrative completeness. There are twelve apostles, and there are twelve tribes. So here, twelve manner of fruits. Are we not taught here that there will be a continual unfolding of the varied glories of the Lord Jesus Christ, on which our souls shall feed through the countless ages of eternity?

There will be no such thing as monotony in heaven. When you have been in heaven a hundred million years,

you will be no more tired of that holy and happy place than when you have only been there a few days. We shall there be kept engaged by a continual unfolding of the varied glories of Christ, calling forth fresh bursts of praise and adoration from His redeemed people.

The angels who have been there in the presence of the blessed God for countless ages are still learning something fresh about God and His infinite wisdom. We are told in Ephesians "that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God." Thus in the wondrous and gracious work that God is now doing. They are learning something fresh about God Himself. They knew something about the wisdom of God before, but they never before saw it taking the shape it is now taking in the Church. Those holy and excellent beings are filled with wonder as they behold the grace of God taking up poor, hell-deserving sinners, and bringing them into the highest and most holy associations and the most intimate relationships with Himself. The displays of His wisdom and glory are manifold, and there will be a continual unfolding of the glories of the Lord Jesus Christ before our eyes for ever.

But we are reminded again of the Millennial connection of this city with the earth—the nations—by the words, "The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations." Of course, though we have this city given us here, as I have said, more particularly from a Millennial point of view, yet the joys and glories, in their heavenly character, that are here portrayed, will be continued right on through eternity. The fact that we have it here in its Millennial connection is proven by a word in chapter xxi.: "And the nations of them which are saved shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it." We do not read about nations in the eternal state. We are not told there will be any more nations. We are told there will be no more sea, and the tabernacle of God is with men; and

that they shall be His people, and He their God. I believe the division of men into nations was the result of sin, and it would appear that they would have been one people but for the sin of Babel. But in the eternal state there will be no such thing as nations.

In the Millennium the nations of the earth will be healed—as we are told in other scriptures—but they will be nations still.

Finally, we read concerning His people: "And they shall see His face." Wondrous thought, blessed prospect! Yes, I shall see the face of my Redeemer. I shall gaze upon that visage, once marred more than any man's, and His form more than the sons of men. I shall behold that face refulgent with the Father's glory; I shall see Him as He is. I shall gaze upon Him there in all His glory, and shall not be afraid. "They shall see His face." Think of it. Ponder over it. Are we able to lay hold of the reality of it all? Let us repeat the felicitous fact until it is indelibly engraven on our hearts. "They shall see His face." We are going to gaze upon our blessed Lord there for ever in intimate nearness to Himself, in holy relationship, in every way suited to the light and the joy of His own blessed presence.

May we gaze more by faith upon that face now, that it may become more familiar to us, that when we enter His presence, if I may so speak, it is only to see One with whom we are intimately acquainted. Oh, to know Him better now, and then we shall all the more rejoice in the blissful declaration—"*And they shall see His face.*"

THE SURE WORD.

(2 Peter i. 19.)

CLEAR as the sun, God's Word remains,
Undimmed by age, all free from stains;
His witness still it doth abide,
Condemning unbelief and pride.

Firm as a rock, from age to age,
In majesty, the sacred page
Defies the raging tempests' blast,
And shall endure when earth is past.

The lamp of prophecy so bright
Shines still amid the world's dark night ;
With growing brightness lights the way
That leads to everlasting day.

When darkness gathers round our head,
And tremblingly our way we tread,
Then whispering through the gloom we hear,
" Fear not, for I, thy God, am near."

How dark and hopeless should we be,
While sailing o'er Life's troubled sea,
Had we no heavenly light to shine—
No Guide, no Chart, no Word divine.

Thou priceless volume, O how dear !
Thy cheering words we still would hear ;
The mists of doubt all flee apace
Before thy radiant streams of grace.

Barrow-in-Furness.

T. R.

LAST ISSUE.

IT is with some measure of reluctance that we announce the discontinuance of this *Quarterly* with the present issue. It is not without much exercise and prayer that we have been brought to such a decision.

We say with some measure of reluctance, because we are more than ever convinced of the deep, yea, pressing, need of such a magazine, conducted (as we have at least sought to conduct it) on purely unsectarian lines, without partiality to either person or party, but seeking to maintain the truth, on the one hand, against pretentious ecclesiasticism, and, on

the other, against the false doctrines that so abound on every hand, while giving some solid exposition and practical exhortations from the infallible Word of the Living God. To produce and conduct such a paper has been our desire and our aim, though, no doubt, with much shortcoming; and we are not now giving it up because there is no need of it, but because there is very little demand for it. The popular taste, even of Christians, runs on other lines. There is really little desire for the solid study of the pure Word of God; but this, to our mind, only proves the deep need to which we have referred. If the Lord's people had a deeper interest in and a more keen appetite for the pure Word of God, such as would lead them to the study of it, there would be less need of a magazine the endeavour of which is to awaken such an interest and foster such an appetite.

Our readers will doubtless ask, Why then, with such conviction, give up? And we feel they have a right to know our reasons for doing so. We can hardly say that it is not because we have not been happy and encouraged in the work; indeed, even since we have decided to give it up we have received letters testifying to blessing from our last issue, nor have we issued a number without receiving such encouragement.

One reason why we give it up is that we have so much other work pressing upon us. But this is by no means the main reason, which, however, is found in the fact that the circulation of the Magazine is too small to meet the expense incurred by it, even with the help that one or two of the Lord's people have given. It is this way, the weight of the financial responsibility, and not the actual and happy work it entails, that is calculated to hinder one in other, and perhaps more important, work.

When anything is likely to become at all entangling to a servant of God it is time for him to give it up, and the fact that such is the case may indicate that it is God's will he should give it up. However, under these circumstances we

have been brought to believe that it is the Lord's will that we should discontinue "The Christian Outlook," trusting that even yet, if He would have it continued, He will by some unmistakable means make this clear to us.

Some of our readers have written and others have spoken to us on the subject of making it a Monthly, and devoting half its pages to a sort of universal Bible class. Though we believe such would be a very helpful paper, and the conducting it a very wholesome and happy work, yet we are not free to take it up, for the preceding reasons. The work of such a Monthly would, indeed, be a delight to the Editor of this Quarterly, but the financial responsibility would be too great. One's *mind* must be kept free as the Lord's servant labouring among His people and in the Gospel.

We find comfort in the fact that the Lord is more concerned about the need of His people than ever we can be, and that whatever He wills that we should do He supplies strength, grace, and whatever other means may be required for it.

We wish here to thank all those among our subscribers who have helped and encouraged us in any way, and would still solicit their help in the circulation of the volumes, of which we have some of each year left, though only a few of the first and second—1896 and 1897—but more of 1898; and this year's will be ready in a few weeks, if the Lord will.

We would also say that we hope to finish our notes on Romans, given in the continuous article under the title "Full Deliverance," which will make a volume worth about 1s. 6d. We shall be glad if any of our readers who would like to have this will give in their orders early, not that it will be ready just yet, but because we desire to form some idea if there is likely to be a ready sale for the volume, and a few hundred orders would greatly facilitate its publication.

A PARTING WORD TO THE READER.

DEAR READER,—We have no doubt arrived at the last and perilous times predicted in Scripture when men will not endure sound doctrine—when a form of godliness without the power thereof very largely obtains. Rationalism and Ritualism are greatly on the increase, and even the Lord's people are for the most part lukewarm.

In the face of such a state of things, let us cease to strive about party and empty ecclesiasticisms, and be greatly concerned about more real separateness of heart, and holy zeal, energy, and devotedness in His cause.

Let us not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, and that with due regard to real, simple, and scriptural order; but, O, may our hearts be enlarged toward all the Lord's dear people. May we seek to use whatever the gracious Lord has given us of His truth to the edification of His people, that they be not tossed about by the many winds of false doctrine that blow from almost every quarter.

May we be more concerned about helping those who may be in a wrong position than the vindication of ourselves and our own position. We have for some time been convinced that that character of ministry which is more concerned about the vindication of our own ecclesiastical position than about the state of the Lord's people generally is not of God. It is miserable work to be always endeavouring to show that we are right and everybody else wrong. O for more real concern about the state of the whole Church of God, and more real Godly care for individual saints.

We need, indeed, to be concerned about the state of our own soul. Carelessness as to this will soon prove fatal to our own happiness and testimony, and leave us exposed to the baneful influences of false doctrine; but this is by no means brought about, nor is it evidenced, by a vindictive

demeanour ; it is ensured only by habitual self-judgment in the presence of God, and real dealing with Him in secret about everything with which I have to do.

May our gracious Lord preserve us from carelessness as to our own state of soul. Let us allow nothing—relationships, business, pleasures, or trials—to exert a pernicious influence upon our souls, but seek to use all these as occasions for real dealing with God. “Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put away from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left. Remove thy foot from evil.”

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