

“SOUND WORDS.”

2 Tim. i., 13.

A MONTHLY PERIODICAL,

FOR THE SPREAD OF THE GOSPEL AND FEEDING
“THE CHURCH OF GOD.”

*“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all
wisdom.”—COL. III., 16.*

V O L . I .

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"SOUND WORDS."

PREFATORY REMARKS.

THE aim of this little magazine, which, if the Lord permit, shall appear monthly, will be to present to believers in the Lord Jesus in America the whole truth of God, as revealed in "the holy scriptures of truth," for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and the blessing of those who believe in him. While the entire range of what is thus revealed will find ample space in its pages, as the Lord shall give and lead, very special attention will be given to present the personal acceptance and standing of the believer before God now in righteousness, together with the place which saints, while on earth, hold corporately as the "body of Christ," the "church of the living God." It will contain original papers and reprints of the writings of those only well known, and "approved unto God," as "rightly dividing the word of truth." It is solemnly felt how very busy Satan is everywhere, and especially in this country, in deluding souls by perverted and imperfect presentations of the truth; consequently, grace will be earnestly sought of the Lord to prevent anything entering these pages of an uncertain sound, or not calculated to directly minister godly edifying, our only object being to spread the truth, and help to "build one another up in our most holy faith, holding fast the *form of sound words*—in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus." To help in edification, a sufficient space will be reserved for answers to correspondents; but the elimination of truth, and truth alone, being what is desired, no questions not calculated to positively benefit souls will be entertained, for we may not "strive about words to no profit."

Those on whom, more especially, the responsibility of this effort to bless souls rests, desire to take up the work in entire dependence upon God for the grace and wisdom it requires, continuing it only so long as the Lord shall will. They feel that God's strength is made perfect only in their weakness, and in the sense of their unwisdom, they count alone upon Him of whom it is written: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth not."

Greatly desiring that the truth sent forth may be winged and pointed by prayer, they affectionately ask the intercession of all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth, that they may open their mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel as they ought to speak it, "that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion forever and ever."

RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT WORKS.

PSALM XXXII.

1. **BLESSED** is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered.
2. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile.
3. When I kept silence, my bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long.
4. For day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer. Selah.
5. I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin. Selah.
6. For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found; surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him.
7. Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.
8. I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.
9. Be not as the horse, or as the mule, which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle, lest they come near unto thee.
10. Many sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the Lord, mercy shall compass him about.
11. Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous; and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.

I BELIEVE it will be found that the first and simplest truths of the gospel become of growing value to our souls as we advance onward along the narrow road which leadeth unto life. Truths which are at first received authoritatively, on the evidence of Scripture, become commended to us by their own beauty, and what we received at first, as it were by force of our own necessity, becomes, in our progress, that which manifests the glory of Christ—so that we are able, in measure, to contemplate it apart from selfishness, and to see it in the light in which God himself sees it. I think I discern this feature in apostolical teachings; while they unfold mysteries, or develop practical truth, they also (designedly) connect all with the primary truths of the gospel—thus bringing them into constant prominence. And this marks the teaching of the Holy Ghost. It is human to handle a particular truth as a subject; but the object of the Holy Ghost is to hold up prominently to view the *Person and Work of the Lord Jesus Christ*. The soul becomes unsettled from its steadfastness, when the *mind*

takes the lead in learning even the truth of God. The Spirit, who leads into all truth, connects everything in his teaching with those great primary truths, the *person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ*. The mind may get hold of something new, and be interested in it, as if it were more wonderful than the truth already received. I do not wonder at the apostle saying, "so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God," for in the gospel of the grace of God the apostle saw the deepest truth. Or, in after-times saying to Timothy: "Do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry; for I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand." It is an unhealthy symptom, when the simple gospel is not relished. It shows that the *mind* is at work rather than the *conscience* exercised before God, or the affections engaged with Christ. There are indeed wonderful discoveries made to us in the Scriptures, of the grace and purpose of God to the Church; yet when all the councils of God are manifested, and glory enjoyed without hindrance, then, the primary truths of the gospel will be seen in all their brilliancy, even the *person and work of Jesus Christ*, the Son of the living God, the object of adoration, admiration, and praise throughout eternity. It is with these thoughts I now turn to the great fundamental truth of the gospel—"righteousness without works"—a doctrine which has not only been controverted by Christians, and contemned by the wisdom of this world, but on which even many of the children of God have only become settled, after much bitter experience of themselves. It is indeed needful for all to learn it in this school of experience. We may also learn it by looking forward to that day, when the righteousness of the one Man, as the fountain of all blessedness to the redeemed, shall be as illustriously displayed in heaven and in earth, as the sin of the one man, as the source of all misery, has been sorrowfully displayed in the history of this world. But there is another light in which the doctrine of "righteousness without works" may be regarded, namely, as leading us into *present intercourse with God, and enabling us to walk in his presence*. It is the bearing of this great truth as a present influential principle, which the Spirit of God himself has carried out in the thirty-second psalm. And the blessedness predicated of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works, is a blessedness, not confined to the wondrous truths of "transgression forgiven, sin covered, and iniquity not imputed;"

but this blessedness is carried on into the exercises of soul, which result from being freely and fully justified. I would now turn to the psalm itself.

First, the great oracular declaration—"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." On this statement, the Holy Ghost himself, by the Apostle Paul, has thus commented: "Even as David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works." "The blessedness"—we almost need to have this English word translated to us; so slow of heart are we to believe his goodness, when God himself proclaims it to us. Happiness, "our being's end and aim," is proclaimed by this oracle; and yet men are deaf to it. "Happy is he whose transgression is forgiven!" This is happiness—the alone happiness of which man as a sinner is capable; because nothing but this can bring a sinner to God, in whose presence there is fullness of joy. There is indeed a happiness proclaimed in the first psalm: "Blessed is the man who hath not walked in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful." But where is such a man to be found? This blessedness only attached to the Holy One of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, the righteous One—a righteousness because He is what He is. But as for us, it is not anything that we can do which can make us happy, but that which God does for us. It is man's impossibility to make himself happy; it is God's possibility to make a sinner happy. And this oracle is the declaration of a sinner's happiness, by means of the work of God himself.

The distinction between *transgression* and *sin* is made sufficiently clear by the statements of the apostle in the fifth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans: "Nevertheless, death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." Adam sinned by transgressing a positive commandment of God, and thereby incurred the penalty of death. Others were liable to the same penalty who had never sinned by transgressing a positive commandment of God; therefore, there may be *sin* where there is not *transgression*. And the Holy Ghost announces this oracle, according to the usual way in which conscience is awakened. In most cases, it is awakened to a sense of positive acts of sin against the known commandments of God. And so the apostle, in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, adduces proof of the practical ungodliness and

immorality of both Gentile and Jew, before he opens the source from whence it all proceeds—*original and indwelling sin*. Man may draw out a theory of Christian doctrine ; but the divine way is, not to teach a theory, but to grapple with the conscience, to make man sensible of his wretched condition as in the presence of God, and show that nothing short of God's own provision of Christ can meet his necessity. "Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father cometh to me," says Christ. The oracle before us regards man as he is, "an enemy to God in his mind by wicked works." Repentance and remission of sins were to be preached in the name of Christ among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. "Beginning at Jerusalem" shows the character of transgression which the divine remedy can reach. In Jerusalem was acted out "the great transgression." The testimony against the Jews was, that they had denied the Holy and Just One, and had killed the Prince of Life. Yet, in the name of Jesus, whom they had crucified, whom God had raised up, there was forgiveness even for this great transgression. Who need despair of finding forgiveness in the same name, in which alone there is salvation? If we turn to a different and more frequent character of transgression, we find it written : "Be not deceived ; neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And *such were* some of you ; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." It is to man, therefore, as a proved and convicted transgressor before God, as already condemned by the righteous judgment of God, and, when awakened by the quickening power of God, condemned in his own conscience, that forgiveness of transgression in the name of Jesus is proclaimed by God himself. And blessed, by God's own testimony, is the man who has an ear to hear it.

I much question if the bare idea of forgiveness of transgression, apart from the solid groundwork on which it rests, viz., the infinite atonement of Christ—"forgiveness in his name"—would ever satisfy the conscience. The groveling thought of escape is, indeed, the careless thought of the unbelieving mass, without one just thought, either of the character of God, or of the evil of sin. But if such a manner of forgiveness were possible, it would leave the recipient of it in that state of uneasiness which a man feels who finds himself in the presence of one whom he had injured, yet who had for-

given him. He would be under the conscious sense of degradation. Such a condition would be the very opposite of being "blessed." It is the mode of the forgiveness, bringing the person forgiven to stand *at ease in the presence of God*, who is declared to be just, while he is the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus, which constitutes the blessedness. The atonement of Christ is indeed the remedy, the only remedy, the divine remedy for the forgiveness of transgression; but it is more, it is the great medium of the display of the moral glory of God. "Angels look into these things," and learn the glory of their God by means of his dealing with sinners. And it is a wondrous thought, that man's necessity as a sinner and the manifestation of the divine glory, find their one and only meeting point in the cross of Christ. Yea, blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven; and so forgiven as that God is glorified. Oh, what riddance of anxiety to the soul, when its salvation is thus taken from off its own responsibility, and it is no longer the question, Shall I be saved? but, Shall God be glorified? Blessed peace, indeed! surpassing all understanding, *when God and the conscience are alike satisfied*

"Blessed is the man whose sin is covered." It is not the manner of the Holy Ghost to use redundant expressions. We often use many words where few would suffice. But "the words of the Lord are pure words; as silver tried in a furnace of earth purified seven times." And man "liveth by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Now, I believe as the conscience becomes alive to God, and exercised before God, it necessarily draws the distinction between transgression and sin. Outward reformation is seen by others, but the soul itself can not rest on this. There is a very wide difference between reformation of character and conversion to God. Reformation of character will necessarily follow conversion to God; but for a soul "to believe and turn to the Lord" is something far more deep than outward reformation of character; it brings us to Him with whom we have to do, before whom all is open and naked. And there it is that we learn the difference between transgression and sin. In human thought, *sin* is an *act*; in divine judgment, it is a *principle*. And this discovery is so appalling, that *transgressions* appear thrown into the shade by the discovery of what *sin* really is, viz., a settled principle of insubjection to God; a desire to do what God has forbidden *because* HE has forbidden it, even when there is no positive act of disobedience; a reluctance to do what God has commanded, *because* HE has commanded it.

Yes—we have a will contrary to the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God ; and this is very experimentally known after we are made willing, by the grace of God, to come to Christ ; so that to do the will of God is more or less connected with denying self.

“Whose sin is covered.” Who would not faint under the struggle, if it were not so? God himself has covered *sin* up, out of his own sight, and this is what we need. How man tries to cover the evil of his heart from his fellow-man ; yet, even human sagacity can often pierce through the hollow covering, and man himself is ill satisfied with it ; witness his round of religious duties to try to cover it, and his natural proneness to superstition. But it is the atonement of Christ which covers *sin* before God. It is God himself who has set forth Christ as a propitiation through faith in his blood. Here, when we discover *sin*, we can yet meet God, not in anger, but in mercy ; for the *sin* which we have discovered is covered up before him. I do not believe that there can be settled peace in the soul, till, taught of the Spirit, it knows the emphatic meaning of such texts as these : “Our old man has been crucified with him”—“God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for *sin* condemned *sin* in the flesh”—God “hath made him to be *sin* for us who knew no *sin*, that we might be made the *righteousness* of God in him.” The mighty moral necessity of the Son of God becoming the substitute for a sinner, alone meets the case of the conscience alive to what *sin* is. And how do we see the wisdom of divine teaching, as well as the infinite grace, that it is after showing *sin* in the shape of transgression, *sin* in connection with death, *sin* as dwelling in us, that the announcement follows : “There is therefore *now* no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.” Let the conscience be ever so alive to what *sin* is in its various phases, the moment Christ is regarded as the object held out by God himself to faith—“No condemnation,” is the answer.

This distinction between *transgression* and *sin* helps to solve a phenomenon not unfrequently brought under the notice of those who are watching for souls. The deepest sense of *sin* is by no means always found where there has been the greatest amount of *transgression*. The transition from a state almost of remorse, on account of transgression, to peace with God through faith in Christ, may well lead the soul to put its Amen to the apostolic declaration : “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ

Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am chief." Now, when such are led on in exercise of conscience before God, to know sin as a principle, they find that the outward conduct has but too faithfully represented the inward principle. They find, too, the need of not trusting in the outward reformation ; and that the heart, from whence all evil proceeds, has to be diligently watched. But when persons, who have been happily kept free from gross vice, gentle, kind, and amiable, are awakened by the Spirit of God to a sense of sin, the judgment they form of sin is not so much by its injuriousness to themselves and others—which may, even apart from the quickening power of the Spirit of God, affect the conscience—but they measure *sin by its contrariety to God* ; and instead of being able to rest complacently in the blamelessness or innocence of their lives, or in the praise bestowed on them by others, their very lives appear to them as one act of hypocrisy, the motives of action and conduct being now judged in the light of God's presence. And the result often is such self-loathing as betokens deep and steadfast conviction of *sin*, and needs the fullest application of all that Christ is to the conscience. There may be a measure of loathing oneself on account of transgression committed, even from a generous impulse of nature ; but to loathe *self* because we have discovered what it is before God, marks the quickening power of the Holy Spirit, and will be found a deepening work as we go on.

"Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." How needed is this clause for the peace of an awakened soul ! There is the consciousness of iniquity ; and the announcement is, that although the Lord knows iniquity to be there, he does not impute it. And wherefore. Surely, because God hath imputed it to Jesus. "He hath laid on him the iniquity of us all" God hath seen sin there, and he has judged it there. "The chastisement of our peace was upon Jesus, and by his stripes we are healed." It is the greater wonder that God should have *imputed iniquity where he only saw righteousness*, than that he should *not impute iniquity where he sees iniquity*. And I repeat again, that nothing short of the truth of the actual *substitution* of Christ for the sinner, gives full relief to an awakened conscience. The cross of Christ is to us the marked expression of the love of God toward sinners. "God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."

The cross, further, is the declaration to us of the righteousness of God. "Whom God hath set forth as a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness"

Again, it shows the infinite hatefulnes of sin in the judgment of God. The cup could not pass away from Jesus. He bowed his head, and drank it. And God hid his face from him, and made him to know on the cross, in bitterest experience, what sin was—"God made him to be sin for us."

The cross is both the way for God to come nigh to man as a sinner without destroying him by his presence—"And having made peace by the blood of the cross, by him to reconcile all things to himself,"—and the cross is also the way for man as a sinner to come near to God—"You that were sometime far off are made nigh by the blood of the cross."

All these several aspects of the cross, deeply important and interesting as they are, would fail of giving settled peace to the soul, if the truth of the *actual substitution of Christ for the sinner* were kept out of sight. "He loved me and gave himself for me." Here we find solid ground on which to rest our souls—the wonder of the Holy One of God being made sin on the cross, is far greater than the wonder that any measure of guilt should by it be answered to God.

But there is more than this. The idea of simple pardon is at the best negative—blessed indeed, even in that view, that iniquity, although committed, is not imputed. Speaking humanly, we have the idea of a free pardon emanating from the grace of the sovereign; we have the idea also of an *amnesty*; but we can not get the idea of *justification*. It is the idea which God alone can present, because he alone can *justify the ungodly*; and this is the new and blessed idea here presented. David describeth the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord imputeth righteousness without works, saying: "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity." Now in these words we have not the actual statement of the imputation of righteousness. It could not be clearly and fully announced (although it was the only principle on which God had acted from the beginning), because the great groundwork, *The Cross*, was not an accomplished fact. However, it may have been anticipated by faith, still there was all the difference, as to perception, between a promise made, and a promise accomplished. Everything was suspended on the death and

resurrection of Christ. "We," says the apostle, speaking to the natural heirs of promise and natural children of the Kingdom, "we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made to the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same to us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again." The *proper person of the Lord Jesus Christ, and his death and resurrection*, is the key by which we are able to unlock all Scripture. The Holy Ghost, himself the inditer of all Scripture, the Spirit which moved the prophets, "the Spirit of Truth," is especially known to us as the glorifier of Jesus. This great testimony of the Holy Ghost is, to the sufferings of Christ, and the glories to follow. And as soon as the death and resurrection of Jesus became a matter of fact, the Holy Ghost brought it to bear on his own previous Scriptures; and in this light, we clearly discern, that *iniquity not imputed is righteousness imputed*. "God hath made him to be sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." There is nothing simply negative in the gospel. It is not a prohibitory system. It is a gracious system of conferring positive blessing. To forgive sin may be negative; but to give righteousness, is a positive and inalienable blessing. This marks the genius of the gospel. "Whosoever believeth in him [Jesus] shall not perish;" it stops not here, but "shall have everlasting life." "That they may receive forgiveness of sins,"—but it goes on, "and an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith which is in me." If we are "delivered from the power of darkness," it is by "translation into the kingdom of God's dear Son." Alas, our narrow minds and dull hearts deprive the gospel of its glory. "It is the glorious gospel of the blessed God;" it represents God in the gracious place of the giver, and sets man in his only place of possible blessing, that of *simple recipient*. By faith we receive Christ (John i., 13); receiving him we receive from him power to become the sons of God; we receive forgiveness of sins, abundance of grace, and the gift of righteousness. We receive eternal life. Christian action follows on this reception of Christ. The teaching of the Holy Ghost unfolds to us what we have received in having received Christ. It is well to keep this principle constantly before the soul; it is not that which we *renounce*, any more than that which we *do*, which makes us Christians, but it is that which we *receive*. And this principle runs through the Christian life; it is a life which has its affections, its sensibilities, its energies, and its activities. Our Christian life is not a system of negation any more than is our natural

life. This marks it so forcibly from the common notion of religion. It is said: "Cease to do evil"—it is added "Learn to do well." "Abhor that which is evil"—"Cleave to that which is good." "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him work with his own hands that which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying." Hence arises the danger to Christians from misusing even the good, holy, and righteous law of God. It "is not for the righteous." Their need is, to have the life already received, nurtured, by the ministry of Christ, the true and living Head, in order that the energies of that life may be called forth in its varied and appropriate activities. We have Christ himself for our standard, and the righteousness which we have in him, as our standing before God, presented to us as our highest but certain final attainment. "Not as although I had already attained, either were already perfect, but I follow after; if that I may apprehend that for which I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." Hence it is, that the one hope of our calling, which is so certain, because according to the purpose of God, becomes so formative of the Christian character. To be conformed to the image of God's Son, as the first-born among many brethren, is the blessed destiny of those whom God has *already justified*. It is upon the certainty of this, that the Holy Ghost acts on our conscience and affections, not making what we shall be to depend on what we practically are, I mean as Christians; but, taking the divine certainty of what we *shall be*, as the mighty moral lever, *now* to elevate our affections; and even now, "beholding us in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

"Beloved, now are we sons of God, and 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; and every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."

This hope grounded on Christ is the great power of present purification. "Desiring to be teachers of the law," was, in the apostle's judgment the result of ignorance in those who undoubtedly thought to promote holiness thereby. And so there is even a way of pressing *conduct and service*, which, instead of strengthening the life of Christ in the saint, turns him back on the question of his own salvation. Such is not the way in which the Spirit leads. He glorifies Christ, and takes great

care to *establish the soul in Him*, when leading it on into practical holiness. Such is the order of instruction for the most part in the Epistles. And I believe the wondrous truth of "righteousness without works" to be the very ground-work of righteousness and true holiness. It is the positive blessing received, recognized, and enjoyed—"God delivered Christ for our sins and raised him for our justification"—which calls the Christian life into activity.

Secondly, "And in whose spirit there is no guile." It is written of Jesus "he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth." Of all others the description is but too true—"with their tongues they have used deceit." This is indeed a humbling condition of being—to dissemble what we are, to pretend to be what we are not—to use the tongue, or to put on an outward demeanor, to conceal the thoughts of the heart—and at the same time, on every moment of serious reflection, to be conscious that we are not before God what we seem to be, or profess to be before others, this is a condition which makes the thought of God insupportable. It is too much of restraint for man always to be acting a character, and "the idle" off-hand word betrays the condition of the heart, which perhaps more studied speech had concealed. It was by the idle word—"This man casteth out devils by Beelzebub the Prince of the Devils"—that He, "who knew what was in man," made manifest from his very words what was in their hearts. Whence then the remedy for so evil a condition—whence the blessedness of having no guile in the spirit? It is alone the result, the first and blessed result of the great truth of "righteousness without works." It at once cuts off all effort at concealment, and all pretensions to be what we are not. The very ground-work of the doctrine is that the very God before whom all things are naked and open, who knows us thoroughly, and has taught us to see ourselves in measure as he sees us, is the one who has covered up our sin—yea, he has covered up all the sin which his omniscience knoweth to be in us; for he has not acted toward us on our estimate of sin, but on his own. None can condemn—since God himself justifieth. God has not put us in the place of justifying ourselves; he does that himself. And he takes our part much more effectually than we could take our own. Hence there is no guile in the spirit, so to speak, it is not needed. All anxiety about making out a case for ourselves is removed, since God himself declares his righteousness in covering our sin, and making us righteous.

If we search ever so deeply (and it is well to do so), as to what sin is, God knows it more deeply, and has dealt with it in judgment on the cross of Christ according to his own estimate of it. There is no guile in the spirit, where there truly is faith; because the truthfulness of our own character, and the truthfulness of the character of God, are alike maintained by the marvelous mode of God's dealing with us, in and through Christ.

There is no guile in the spirit of him who at one and the same time takes his place as the chief of sinners, and yet also as perfectly righteous in Christ. There is no guile in the spirit of him whose object is to glorify Christ and not himself. Hence it follows that when self-vindication becomes needful for a saint, which is but rarely, he is placed in the most humiliating position, because he has to speak of himself instead of Christ. The apostle was thus compelled to speak "as a fool." But, as a general rule, *confession*, and not *self-vindication*, is the path of a saint.

(To be continued.)

THE THIEF ON THE CROSS.

LUKE XXIII., 32-46

It has been said by some one, referring to this scene, "There is but *one* case of death-bed repentance in the Bible, that man may not despair; but there is *only one*, that man may not presume." But how much the savor of the self-righteous human heart betrays itself in these words. The latent self-righteousness of the human heart, which would like to add some little atom of its own wretched "*doings*," to the perfect work of Christ for the soul. And yet, when we come to examine this wondrous scene, we find that *all must* be saved as was this thief! I speak not now of the period at which such a work is wrought in the soul, but of the fact that all must be saved just as he. And if this be the case, why not, my reader, now? Why not believe, and know the joy and blessedness of an interest in the saving work of Christ, before another day is past, that your soul may be filled with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost?

There is an absolute necessity for an entire and total change

in the sinner, before he can even see the kingdom of God. A man may be at the pinnacle of a religious reputation in the world ; his name may grace the lists of benevolence—may be held up as a model for the imitation of others ; and yet never have undergone this mighty change. It is a sad and humiliating fact, that possess as he may, piety, or rather that which looks like it, before his fellows ; and the deepest learning, an amiable nature, a benevolent mind, all these qualities, and many more besides ; and yet he may never even have *seen* the kingdom of God. This is a hard saying, who can bear it ? Still, it is an absolute necessity that a man must be born again. He must be renewed from the very sources of his nature, thoughts, affections, feelings, heart, conscience, actions. He must be what the Lord Jesus told the man of the Pharisees—the teacher in Israel—the ruler of the Jews—Nicodemus ; he “ *must be born again.*” In this man’s case, the lesson was but slowly learned. He had much to surrender. It was painful for him to be told that his whole life was wrong ; his efforts and energies, sincere, as doubtless they were, had sprung from a wrong basis ; and that the whole man must be changed from the very roots, before he could enter into the kingdom which God was setting up. Painful, it must have been, to think of what gave him weight and authority, and for which he was held in esteem by his fellows, only came under the sweeping sentence from the divine Searcher of hearts : “ Except a man be born again, he can not see the kingdom of God.” (John iii., 3.) Painful for him to learn, that, if he would enter God’s kingdom, he must consent to do so, as the vilest sinner, stript of all that would put him in advance of others, and give him a precedence there. And yet, this entire, complete, and total change is absolutely necessary to enter into the kingdom of God ; necessary for the vilest, necessary for all. It levels all distinctions ; puts men, in the light of its solemn truth, on an even ground before God, so that no flesh may glory in his presence. Have you, my reader, experienced or undergone this mighty change ? Or do you occupy the same platform on which you were introduced amongst the sinners of this world ? Important question ! May the Lord enable you to answer it honestly in his presence.

The case of the thief is a remarkably beautiful illustration of this mighty work in a soul—this total change in the man. And besides this, we have in this scene the mighty work of Christ for him, which enabled him to take his place *with* Christ *that very day* within the veil. The work which fits *all* who

believe it to take their place, by faith, with Jesus, the *same* moment, in God's presence, within the veil.

The case of the comrade thief, too, is truly and deeply solemn. A soul passing away from this world into another ; approaching the portals of an eternity, from which there is no return, with a scoff on his lip, and the taunt for the Blessed One in his mouth : " If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us." Deeply solemn is such a closing hour of a man's shadowy life here ; Christless, faithless, sinning against his own soul. Well is it said of the wicked : " There are no bands in their death ; but their strength is firm. They are not in trouble as other men." (Ps. lxxiii., 4, 5.)

Let us look at the same hour in the other's life—the brightest it had ever known. " But the other answering, rebuked him, saying : ' Dost thou not fear God ? ' "—grand illustration of the work of God in a soul. It began with but a little word, but a word by which one reads a heart which had been taught in wisdom's ways. For " the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Prov. i., 7.) We have in this little word a precious work of God in his soul. It is said of the wicked, " There is no fear of God before their eyes." (Rom. iii., 18.) God is not in all their thoughts. " Dost thou not fear God ? " Here was the root of this mighty change in this man ; the holy fear of God. God had his proper place in his thoughts, although he did not know him yet as a Savior. It was Abraham's word of the men of Gerar : " Surely the fear of God is not in this place ; and they will slay me for my wife's sake." It was the fear of God which guarded Joseph's heart, when in the land of his exile—" How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God." It is that which guards the heart in a world of sin. Its absence leaves room for the workings of man's corrupt and wicked will. It is the beginning of wisdom.

How is it with you, my reader ? Can you say that this holy fear of God has been the guide and fashioner of all the thoughts and intents of your heart, the actions of your life, and the motives which have governed your ways ? Have all these been governed by the fear of the Lord ! Has God had his proper place in your heart ; and has his fear restrained your will ? Job was a man who " feared God, and eschewed evil ; " Cornelius—one who " feared God, with all his house." " They that feared the Lord spake often one to another ; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought on his name." (Mal. iii.) It was the proof of Abraham's

faith : " Now I know that thou fearest God." (Gen. xxii.) Now fear " fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death." (Prov. xiv., 27.) It "tendeth unto life," (Prov. xix., 23); and we see this so remarkably in this man. It led him to take his true place before God. "Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? *And we indeed justly.*" Can you with him say : "We indeed justly?" Can you, as he did, take the just and righteous sentence of death, to your own soul; and own, in full honesty of heart, the rightness of your sentence? "We indeed justly; for we receive the due reward for our deeds." Do you own the justness of your sentence; yea, have you passed it upon your own self, as the due reward for your sins? Blessed place; to own in full your true and proper condition before God, and thus take the sentence of death home to your own soul, as he! How the work of God grew brighter and brighter, till he was with Christ in Paradise! *God* had his true place in his soul, and *he* was in his true place before God! The rightness of his sentence pronounced by his own lips; no excusing of himself, as I dare say, you have often done; pleading circumstances—an evil nature, to palliate your sins. A convicted sinner was there making no excuses for his sins and his sentence, but owning that God was true. Justifying God, and condemning himself, as one of Wisdom's children. "I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight; that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest."

So much for the work in this man's soul.

Now we must look at another thing—at the work *for* him—for all, on the cross beside him.

There hung beside him the Lord of glory; and out of the mouth of Wisdom's child, as the light grew brighter in his soul, we have a testimony of two things—the *spotlessness* and the *Lordship* of Christ. "This man hath done nothing amiss." And the spotless Christ, and the self-condemned sinner, were side by side! Grand and solemn scene, the like of which eternity will never behold again! Beautiful testimony of that dying man, which led him to take his place with Jesus there, at a moment and amid the turmoil of a scene such as that which surrounded the cross. A time when the world was united against a man who had "done nothing amiss." When even those who had loved him, and leaned upon him during his life, deserted him at the hour of his greatest sorrow. And

yet the soul of that man was absorbed with Christ, who hung there. His whole soul's vision was filled with Jesus; and he forgot himself. A complete and total change had taken place in the man; and, forgetting his agony, all his thought was: "Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy kingdom." How would it be with you, my reader, if you were dying on your comfortable bed, surrounded with your sorrowing friends? Or how is it with you now? Would Christ be so precious to your soul then? Is he so precious to you now, as to absorb all your thoughts, and fill your soul with himself? The terrible suffering of that moment had no power to disengage his heart from Christ. And his only request was: "Lord, remember me!"

But what was the reply? The light in his soul ended otherwise than he thought. Instead of being remembered when Jesus returned in his kingdom, he got a place *that very day* in Paradise with Christ! The work was done by Jesus there which enabled this man to have a place with him that very same day; even as it fits every soul who believes in it, to take his place that moment with Jesus, within the veil!

Dear reader, have you gazed with a believing, adoring heart, upon that work of Christ, as that which has delivered you from the wrath to come? And believing, have you *taken* your place, in virtue of it, within the veil? Where are you, if you have not done so? What are you? Outside the veil, an unbeliever, still in your sins! Solemn place, solemn condition. Rest not a moment, then. The same blow which rent the veil, exposed the wickedness of *man's* heart, in the death of Christ; and revealed the love of *God's* heart, in sparing not his Son; and has put away forever the sins of his believing people. Rest not a moment, then, till you take your place, by faith, inside the veil. Let no false reasoning of the enemy, or unbelief of your own heart, deprive you of this joy. Happy, indeed, if you have, as the saved thief, the fear of God in your heart; happier still, if you have owned your true state and condition before God,—taken the sentence of death home to your own soul; and happiest, if you have forgotten yourself altogether as he, and that your soul's vision is absorbed with him who was there consummating his love in doing a work which gives you a cloudless title to take your place this moment within the veil with Jesus! This day . . . with me, in Paradise!

"The preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness: but unto us who are saved it is the power of God."

BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

(I JOHN IV.)

We see two things in this chapter which give the soul immense delight. Verse 9 shows us the way God makes his love known. "In this was *manifested* the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might *live through him*." In verse 17 we see how his love is *made perfect*. "Herein is love with us *made perfect*, that we may have *boldness in the day of judgment*; because *as he is, so are we in this world*." In verse 9, God sends his only begotten Son into the world, that we may have life through him. That we may have life who were dead, that we may be partakers of a life that flows from the manifestation of God's love—a life separated altogether from nature's affections and pleasures. It can not be hinged in with selfishness. And what is my nature; is it not mere selfishness? If I look at my motives from day to day, what shall I find them? Are they not self? Take business (we are not speaking of the rightness of the thing), what is the motive? Is it not self? We have no idea how we are under the influence of self. Is it not true that the trifles of dress more occupy the thoughts of many, than *all God has done* in sending down his Son from heaven to save sinners? It is a positive fact, and it is no use to try to hide it from ourselves, we can not hide it from God. On the other hand, the more I look at *this* love, the more I see of its *perfectness*. It is said: "For a good man some will even dare to die." But when there was *not a single good thing* in us, God commended his love to us. It was purely grace. We were just sinners, and nothing but sinners, when Christ *died* to save us. And I can never understand what God's love really is, until I can say that I am *merely* a sinner. If you do not know what God's love is, it is because you have not *learned* that great truth—"you are a sinner." What is it that God has given to save sinners? The very nearest thing to his heart—the most precious boon he had to bestow—His own beloved and only begotten Son. There is no accounting for his love. There is no estimating it. The thing most of all dear to him was the Son of his bosom; and him he gave. There is no limit to his love. He has given me Christ, and there is no end to what I have in him. The Son of God was given for *my sins*. He goes down into these *depths* and brings up life. "Herein is love, *not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins*." How

can I *know* that God loves me? By *looking* at the perfect object of *his love*, and this gives me rest. Why? Because in him I see how wondrous is the love that sent down his Son to give *me* eternal life, and be a propitiation for *my* sins. If I have not rest, what I want is a deeper *sense* of sin. I must learn what sin is at the *cross*, and then I shall see the love that has met it, and suffered for it, and thus my soul gets *rest*. Christ's love was not the theory of one who comes and merely tells what God is, but the practical exhibition of him. He shows *out God* in all the *variety* of his *unreserved* and *immeasurable* love. Compare verse 12 with verse 8 of John i., "No man," etc. Nobody hath seen—He who hath been in the bosom of the Father *must* declare him. The Son must tell *what* can be known of the Father—On Christ *HANGS* everything; all hindrances are gone for the believer through him; all sin is put away by him. I here get a place of intimate nearness to God in *HIM*. I have learned at the cross what God was to me as a *sinner*; and now I have to learn how he meets my wants as a *saint*, by feeling my need and bringing it to him. To be hungry is not enough; I must be really starving to know what is in *his* heart toward me. So in the gospel, when the prodigal was *hungry*, he went to feed upon husks; but when he was *starving*, he turned to his father's house, and then learned the love of *the father's* heart. Observe, in verse 15, how low God comes, "whosoever will confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." How he steps down to meet us, so that every one shall be left without excuse. "Whosoever shall confess," etc. The babe, who can just confess Christ, has eternal life as truly as the strong man in Christ. It is not a question of what *I am*, but of what *Christ is*. I am lost sight of; *all hangs* on what *God is*. How can I know this love? Must I wait for its full and open display? No; he *has* shed abroad his love in my heart by the spirit he has given me. Verse 16: "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him." If I am dwelling in God, I am dwelling in love, and should be *showing out* love by *looking* at *him* and not at myself and others. Verse 17, this is a wonderful thing to say, "as *he is*, so are *we* in this world." Christ has taken his seat at God's right hand, and brings me there. We are now before God in the *righteousness of Christ*. He is my life, and I can not be really, not ought to appear, in anything separated from him. "Herein is love with us made perfect, that we may have BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT." Does the heart get exercised about judgment? Does

the thought of standing before it distress you? Why should it be so? Is not MY RIGHTEOUSNESS my judge? Has he not perfectly put away my sin and purged my conscience from all guilt, so that I rest in God without fear; having no longer any painful uncertainty; but calmly looking forward, in the full assurance that Christ has been judged in my stead, and brought me into blessed fellowship with *that love*, which gives me BOLDNESS IN THE DAY OF JUDGMENT." "As he is, so are we in the world," and we *know* this *now* by faith. "There is no fear in love." If there is the smallest doubt or distrust in the heart toward God, you are not made perfect in love; for perfect love casteth out fear. There are things to fear, it is true; we may well fear sin and the influence of our own selfish interests. But the *practical* effect of *resting* on God is to cast out *all* fear, and make the heart perfect in love. *His love* is perfect; we have but to own it, bow to it, accept it as ours in Christ, and bless him for it. This is to be made perfect in love.

"We love him because he first loved us."

"FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP."

My dear Brother :—When our Master had fed the multitudes, he said to his disciples: "Gather up the fragments, that remain, that nothing be lost." (John vi., 12.) And they gathered together and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which remained over and above unto the five thousand that had eaten!

I think I have the mind of the Lord, both in endeavoring to gather up the waste scraps of present teachings by the Spirit, whether in conversation, reading, musings, etc., and in offering them under the above title. The fragmentary character of the offering may encourage some to cast in their widow's mite to the general stock, and help others to remember, that "he that gathered much had nothing over, as he that gathered little had no lack." When God orders the measure, or gives the increase, the results proclaim his praise as well as refresh the people of his love and choice.

Yours,

G. W.

"One thing is evident; God is now working in the last days. Dissolution is, on all sides, not only going on, but *fast* to be going on. If we are faithful, and have sufficient power to blend large-heartedness with faithfulness, we shall be great blessings in this state of things; otherwise, except for a certain individual blessing and faithfulness (which is always something) we shall be naught. But we ought to love the Church (the beloved Bride of Christ), and seek its good; surely more than a David, or godly Israelite, or Jew, could, or did, that of Jerusalem, and seek its good for Christ's sake."

Hallelujah! We are hasting
 To our Father's house above;
 By the way our souls are tasting
 Rich and everlasting love;
 In Thee, O God, is all our boast,
 Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT WORKS.

(Continued from page 13.)

Thirdly, "When I kept silence, my bones waxed old, through my roaring all day long; for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me; my moisture is turned into the drought of summer."

Where can a guilty conscience find relief? The very effort at concealment only aggravates the burden. How many broken hearts are there, how many heavy spirits, who dare not tell their sorrow to another! How many who have found bitter disappointments in every thing, and in themselves also, who are ignorant of the real cause, because they are ignorant of their real condition as lost, and think their own case peculiar! They know not that God has thought upon their case, and considered it, and provided the remedy. They think not of telling their case to God any more than to their fellows. God, they think would spurn them for their unworthiness, and man would ridicule them for their singularity; they keep their sorrow to themselves; they keep silence, although it be only to aggravate the raging fever within, by being thus thrown on themselves; they know not that they are only realizing what the constitution of man as a moral creature is. Man is insufficient for his own happiness; and the creature is insufficient to make him happy. This may not in the ordinary acceptation be felt as though it were sin; yet, it is the deepest principle of sin, because it is in fact "worshiping and serving the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen." How many aching hearts are there, how many sensible of a void which refuses to be filled, where there is no conviction, properly speaking, of sin; nothing which makes manifest the need of an all-sufficient atonement; they think not of the gospel as the remedy for them; they know not that Jesus, heart-sick in a weary world, and rejected by the world, in the conscious possession of everything man needed either as a creature or a sinner, turned to such and said: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." How has the gospel been degraded in being regarded merely as a remedy for sin; a remedy it assuredly is,—but it is far more; it is the manifestation of God himself in such a way, to man as a sinner, as to make him happy in God; whilst God is glorified in thus making him supremely happy. The state above described is that which knows not God as the blessed One; and knows not the blessedness announced by the oracle of God:

"Blessed is he," etc. And herein is the crying evil of the professed Christianity of the world—which is a mere system of ordinances, nullifying the necessity of the gospel. These poor broken-hearted ones are hindered from seeing there is a remedy of God's own providing for their misery. They want the gospel in its simplest form; but they hear it not. They attempt to act out Christian duties, or even to assume Christian privileges, without knowing its first principle—free intercourse with God, on the ground of the propitiation of Christ.

There is no relief till the soul can tell out its sorrow to God. Even the very hand of God may be felt and acknowledged, and yet God himself is regarded as inaccessible. The soul goes on bearing its own burden because it dare not cast it upon God. The whole spirit is gone, just as the natural moisture is dried up under a raging fever. In such a case it is sometimes found that the hand of God (acknowledged and felt, because it has touched some idol or other in which the soul was seeking rest or at least diversion from its misery), instead of graciously subduing the soul, produces fretfulness against God. God is regarded as an enemy, as having gone forth against the sufferer, at the very time he may only be removing the obstacles in the way of the desired relief. He "waits to be gracious"—he "will be exalted to show mercy." Much of the controversy between God and man is, whether the remedy for man's misery is to be found in man or in God. The first thing under all circumstances of misery is the acknowledgment of God. Man finds out many ways of accounting for his misery, and applies his various remedies; but until he acknowledges God, he always accounts for it on wrong ground, and never discovers the real remedy.

There are certain principles which apply with equal truth to man, whether in his natural state, or when born of God. This is one—"When I kept silence," etc. It is a condition of exquisite misery to the natural man, because he is ignorant of the revealed character of God, and knows not the relief it would be to tell everything to God; and to the saint also, because, though knowing God in grace, he does not use the truth aright to deepen himself in self-knowledge. He has so far forgotten his standing, as to have guile in his spirit, by not being open with God. The statements of the apostle are generally applicable: "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us; if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to

cleanse us from all unrighteousness" "If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us." When God is really known as the One who imputeth righteousness without works, any concealment from him must necessarily produce heaviness of spirit. We can not come near him by reason of the concealment; and then comes on coldness. And how often in such a state of uneasiness of soul do we find the fault laid anywhere, even on God himself, rather than on ourselves for keeping silence. When we have been restless in spirit, downcast and unhappy, have we not often been able to solve the difficulty? Frequently it arises from mortified pride; our self-esteem has been lowered on discovering some unsuspected sin, as if our blessedness consisted in our *character*, instead of our having righteousness imputed without works. God will not allow us to have confidence in our character, or in our faithfulness to him, but in his own revealed character, and his faithfulness to us. This tendency in the saint to self-righteousness accounts, in very great measure, for the misery so often found in Christians; if self-righteousness in any degree or form, however subtle, be entertained, the Christian has departed from the real and only ground of his blessedness. If there be sin unconfessed, or made light of in confession, or only generally and not specially confessed, it must induce misery; if God has told out to us all his grace in forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin, it is that in the knowledge of this we may have no concealments, or rather attempts at concealment, from him. He would have us look at ourselves as we really are, and justify him in so dealing with us as he has done in the gospel of his Son.

Fourthly, "I acknowledged my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid: I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord, and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin."

What relief is here—full immediate relief; the sense of forgiveness accompanying the very act of confession! Silence was broken by confession—no longer is effort made at concealment. The very One whose hand was felt to be so heavy, is the One to whom the heart is opened and poured out: "I acknowledged my sin unto thee. I said, I will confess my transgressions unto the Lord." There is no "creature that is not manifest in his sight; but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." It is a solemn thought that we have to do with God; and when once this truth gets fast hold on the conscience, the effort at concealment from him produces the exquisite misery described in

the two preceding verses. Confession gives relief, because it at once puts us in the actual place of having to do with God. It practically acknowledges that all things are naked and opened unto his eye; that he is the rightful and truthful Judge, that what his word says of the evil of our hearts is true. Then is God justified by confession. This is true if God were regarded only in the character of a Judge, but how much more is God justified when confession is made under the sense of his love as known in the gospel of his grace; then will it be deepest, and fullest, and most truthful; then the forgiveness of the iniquity of transgression will lead the same heart and lips which have confessed unto sin to make confession unto salvation. And in this we find the deepest elements of the character of the saint. He had before but one subject of thought and study; that was himself, he has now another,—the Christ of God. Has he to speak of the first? It is in the language of confession, ever deepening as he advances in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. But is he in his proper and happier element? Has he to speak of Christ? It is to confess him as all his salvation and all his desire. How happily do confession and praise unite; happily, because truthfully; no language is sufficient to express the real degradation of a sinner, no language is sufficient to tell out the grace and glories of the Savior. And when confession and praise are so united, what fervency they give to prayer and intercession.

Now, I doubt not that a great deal of the trial of spirit to which saints are subject, arises from their not exercising themselves in self-judgment and confession, under shelter of the blessed truth of "righteousness without works." It is the right apprehension of this blessed truth which puts us in the place of self-judgment—a place exceedingly high and wonderful. If God, the Judge of all, has become the justifier of those who believe in Jesus, is it that they shall make light of sin? Far from it; it is that they may judge themselves. The blood of Jesus gives us access into "The Holiest;" there we are in the light; there we are in the privileged place where Israel's High-Priest could only enter once in the year, but which is ever open to us by Jesus, our great High-Priest. Entering into the very presence of God, with unshod feet consciously touching the sand of the desert—there it is we address ourselves to one part of our priestly ministry, self-judgment; separating between the precious and vile, judging between things which differ. We are then in the light, and

the light in which we are detects that which is inconsistent with light; and we could not stand there, unless under the shelter of that very blood which introduced us there; and when there, we learn more of our need of that blood than we had ever before known. We have found in it remission of sins—it has washed us, and still keeps us clean. Now, I believe “the uprightness of heart” mentioned in the last verse of this psalm, to be very intimately connected with self-judgment; for self-judgment eventually turns us back on the blessedness announced in the psalm, that the very evil which we have only now detected, God doth not impute to us—God has covered it. It is thus that the heart is kept humble, and the conscience tender and lively. I believe the uprightness and honesty of confession which may have been manifested at conversion, is frequently impaired from neglect of self-judgment before God. A saint may become too solicitous about his own character in the eyes of his fellow-saints, or of the world, and thus unconsciously be led to act a part, instead of getting his life strengthened from the spring and source of life. There was a truthfulness in the exercise of heart which led first to Christ, but this is impaired when the maintenance of our character becomes our object, instead of Christ. Now, by self-judgment, truthfulness is maintained, and our need of Christ in new and various ways becomes manifest. Let the exercise of soul be ever so personally humbling, yet if it leads to Christ, it leads to a larger apprehension of the blessedness declared in this psalm; we really are strengthened. At times I marvel at the grace of God in permitting us to judge ourselves. He can never give up his title as “Judge of all;” we have come to him as such, but so completely has he, by his grace, justified us through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, that he would have us arraign ourselves before the judgment-seat, and be the judges of our own selves. The right apprehension of standing in complete righteousness before God in Christ can alone qualify us for this. Self-judgment may have been carried on by us in our ignorance on a different principle, viz., seeking to find some ground in ourselves for acceptance with God; but now it is to search and see how just and holy is the way of God in dealing with us, so as to make us debtors alone to grace; and yet this very grace reigns through righteousness by Jesus Christ, since redemption displays the holiness, justice, and truth of God in strict accordance with his mercy.

(To be continued.)

THE CROSS.

THERE is nothing which teaches either "what sin is," or "what is sin," like the cross of the Son of God.

If you have discovered a sin, where can you learn its true character, how ascertain its full enormity, save by the cross of the Son of God? The cross is God's estimate of sin and of sins, and it is the only full measure of every sin.

If you have discovered a sin (say only a sin of omission,—a sin of which no one could take notice, save God and yourself; as, for instance, the having had a wrong *motive* for doing a right action), where can you measure its length, and breadth, and depth? Will you ponder over it till the Lord comes, setting it in the light of contrast with all his mercies? What a poor measure of the baseness and abominableness of it will you be enabled to form of it thus? For, even if you could place it in this light,—the light of all God's blessings and love to you,—still, the measure is formed by *yourself* and your own conscience.

Will you look into hell (as it shall be, where the lake of fire and brimstone shall be; where their worm dieth not, and where their fire is not quenched), to see the dangerous character and tendency of it? Be it so; but remember sin is there judged by God on man. And you will see there only the moral results and penal judgment,—judgment of sin upon creatures.

Look to the Son of God upon the cross, if you would see what sin *really* is. That Son of the Father, the second person in the blessed Trinity, appeared once in the presence of God his Father, bearing sin, sin or sins of his own, he had none; but was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners;" but he was taken as a lamb, garlanded and wreathed with our sins, as laid by imputation upon him. He, the power of God, and he, the wisdom of God, appeared once before God upon this subject of sin, but he knew not how to stand there. God could hold no intercourse with his Son then; and he could not bear up under the burden, but cried out: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" Observe, too, I pray you, how every circumstance, then around Jesus, made an appeal to God for sympathy. He was his beloved Son, in whom he was well pleased; his obedient servant; a perfect, righteous man; and being rejected and despised by every one. And yet there was no sympathy shown to him, when he bore the sin. This was *God's measure of sin*, and it is infinite.

The bitter fruit and **ETERNAL** judgment of sin in hell upon myriads of finite enemies of God, would not tell out God's mind about sin or its real character, as the effect of his holiness and justice against his infinite Son, when that Son stood in the sinner's place. That veiling of the face of God from Christ Jesus ; that agony of the Son *then*, is alone the perfect, the divine measure of what **SIN** is. And this measure is infinite. It tells of the infinite hatred and intolerance of God against sin.

And with what humble composedness of soul may the poor sinner here study what sin is ! For this, the divine measure of it, is also the very thing in which the power of it is forever put away from him that knows this measure. For the Son became the measure in bearing the judgment of our sins upon the tree. In whatever other connection you study sin, you find that which terrifies and inclines you to hide the sin you have committed ; but here you may study sin, without any desire to throw a veil over any action you have committed ; for all the judgment has been borne, and borne away forever. It gives, too, present access to God ; for it proves the only obstacle, *sin*, to have been put out of the way. How foolish are the thoughts of those, who, instead of drawing nigh upon this ground (the work of Jesus, finished 1,800 years ago on Calvary), are waiting for something in themselves wrought by the Spirit. Do they hope, then, that the regeneration which is alone, wrought in man by the knowledge of the cross (John iii., 14, 15), can be wrought in any other way than by faith in the blood of the Lamb ? And if it could, will it ever make man more able to stand in the presence of God, to converse about the sin they deplore, than Jesus was ? Surely, if God could not converse with even his eternal Son, when sin was only imputed to him, but hid his face from him, he will never be able to converse with any regenerate man about it unatoned for. And let regeneration be accomplished, and each one, through faith, stand before God with Jesus' name upon the forehead, what *satisfaction* for sin would that furnish ? No ; there is but one *satisfaction* for sin ; one work, which either God in heaven, or man, led by the Spirit of God, can ever recognize as *satisfaction* for sin ; and that is God's judgment upon his Son for sin at the cross. And this judgment was both for our sins, and for the root of them in us, *sin* ; the principle whence they come. Let us look at this : there is nothing which teaches us "like the cross of Jesus." When you come to see the perfection which was in Jesus when nailed

there, and how still, even in the divine glory to which he is gone, he bears the form of the Lamb that was slain, do you not see the full expression of entire subjection of heart, and mind, and body to God? Well there, then, you see, both what is not sin, and, by contrast, what is sin. The black idol, self, in any form of it, is sin; for it was not found in Jesus, and is not found in Jesus. And it is not only for our sins of commission and omission that Jesus died, but also for the root of all these in us,—the principle of sin.

THE GLORY.

If the cross alone teaches us how God deals with a sinner in his sins, and what his estimate of sin is, as calling out all his wrath and judgment upon Christ when bearing sins and taking the sinner's place, the GLORY at God's right hand in heaven alone can exhibit to us what his estimate of righteousness is, and what the acceptance of him in whom it is found. If our sins put on Christ brought him the cross as a sin-bearer, His own righteousness as obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, brought him glory. (Phil. ii., 9.) By His absolute obedience at the cross, the one act of righteousness of Rom. v., 18, God was fully glorified on earth by man, as is distinctly stated by the Lord himself in John xiii., 31: "Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in him;" adding as the result of this to himself: "If God be glorified in him, God shall glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him," that is, without waiting for the day of his kingdom glory, referred to in the previous chapter, where the Greeks desire to see Jesus; but which shall most surely follow in its season, ushering in the millennium, when every eye shall see him. In virtue of his work upon the cross, God calls Christ *at once* to his right hand, and the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven, according to John vii., 39, to testify to this glory of Christ, and in connection with his place there, to "convince the world of righteousness," because, as he himself says, "I go to the Father." It is this wondrous scene of glory that is unveiled to us in Acts vii., where Stephen, filled with the Holy Ghost, and looking up "steadfastly into heaven, saw the glory of God and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said: 'Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the SON OF MAN standing on the right hand of God.'" Here Saul

of Tarsus found him ; the brightness of God's glory, who, " when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. i., 3) ; and how vividly above all the darkness and confusion of earth he shone before his soul *there*, he tells us in the 9th verse of the next chapter : " We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor." It is here, too, as saints, we are called to behold him : " Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God."

The award of righteousness to Christ is the glory. The judgment of sin was the cross. It is after sin has been judged and put away, and Christ has taken his place in glory, and in consequence of both these blessed facts, that the Holy Spirit comes down to earth to bear testimony to redemption and glory for man. The present dispensation of the Spirit thus exhibits man *righteously* in heaven, with God in glory, and God *righteously* on earth, with man in grace, justifying the ungodly, the just, and yet " the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." God's *righteousness* was displayed in judging sin at the cross. God's *righteousness* is now displayed in justifying the sinner, and giving him a place in *glory*. " Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God has set forth a propitiation through faith in his *blood* to declare his *righteousness* for the remission of sins," and then " whom he justified, them he also *glorified*." Thus grace reigns through *righteousness*, and the believer is made the *righteousness* of God in Christ. Grace bestows righteousness, and glory manifests the righteousness that has already been bestowed. The wages of sin is judgment. The gift of righteousness *entitles* to glory. In both cases the result is a *necessary* consequence, involving God's own name and character as *righteous* in all his actings.

We come into the possession and enjoyment of righteousness by faith ; " being justified by faith, we have peace with God." The heart and conscience at rest in God's presence because of known righteousness, founded upon the atonement, we enjoy the grace wherein we stand, and " rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Christ, who is my righteousness and my standing before God, is already in the glory ; I see him there as mine, and " press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." There may be tribulation by the way ; but the " love of God shed abroad in the heart

by the Holy Spirit, which is given to us," is the answer to everything. We rejoice in hope of the glory; but we already "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the *reconciliation*." The glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ shines down upon us, because we are justified, and instead of terrifying us and producing the sense of sinnership, as it did with Israel under law, so that they begged Moses to put a veil over his face, it attracts us as our congenial home, we have *liberty*, and beholding with open face the "glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Lord the Spirit." It lights up our hearts and consciences, and we become morally like Christ as Stephen did. Soon, too, our bodies shall participate in this wondrous transforming power of the glory, "for we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus, who shall change our vile body into the likeness of his own body of glory, by the power whereby he is able to subdue all things unto himself." The *cross* gives us peace, but it is from the *glory* we receive life and righteousness. Thence, too, we draw all the strength and joy for the path of trial and conflict, through the wilderness. According to his riches in *glory*, God strengthens us with might by his Spirit in the inner man, "that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith." By the power of his *glory* we are strengthened "to all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness." While if we are reproached for the name of Christ, it is because "the Spirit of *glory* and of God resteth upon us," and we are called to rejoice, "inasmuch as we are partakers of Christ's *sufferings*, that when his *glory* shall be revealed we may be glad also with exceeding joy." As saints, we *belong to glory*, and *glory* belongs to us, being fitted for it, and "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." It is *characteristic* of us as being *out* of Adam and *in* Christ, that new creation where all things are of God. The blessed Lord lift all our hearts and eyes up to Himself in glory, and keep them there in the sweet enjoyment of Himself.

THE CHURCH OF GOD.

IF we take the Old Testament merely as our guide it is plain we shall find nothing about a gathering of saints together, as "living stones" built into a "spiritual house" which God could occupy as his own. A "house of God" there was, and

that among Israel, but Israel were not it; nay, were shut out from the presence of him that dwelt there, altogether. Of this the veil that hung before him was the proof: "the Holy Ghost by this signifying that the way into the holiest of all was *not yet made manifest*." (Heb. ix., 8.) To this Christianity gives the perfect contrast: "for the law made nothing perfect; but the bringing in of a better hope" is that "by the which we draw nigh to God," (ch. vii., 19); "having boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he has consecrated for us through the veil, that is to say, his flesh" (ch. x., 19, 20). Thus, even as individuals, our testimony is the opposite even of that borne by the saints of old, for while to *them* the word was uttered by Solomon at the very time their magnificent temple was upreared among them: "The Lord hath said that he would dwell in the *thick darkness*" (1 Kings viii., 12); "*we*," by the witness of the apostle (John i., 7), "walk in the light as *he is in the light*."

But not only so. For the work of Christ being finished, and the state of man at once *exposed* and *met* by the blood of the cross, God's good pleasure in men, and his delight in that which had glorified him, could freely be shown forth. The Holy Ghost could come forth, the witness of the glorification of Christ (John vii., 39), and by his presence and power believers be "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Eph. ii., 22.) Thus we read now of "the house of God, which is the Church of the living God." (1 Tim. iii., 15.) Israel had One who dwelt *among* them, out of whose presence they were shut. We are not only brought nigh, but built up into a dwelling-place for him, of which that in Israel was but a figure.

Wonderful as this is, it is not all. We are not only by the Spirit the habitation of God. We are by the same Spirit "baptized into one body," (1 Cor. xii., 13), and that body is the body of Christ: "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph. v., 30.) God "hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all." (Eph. i., 22, 23.)

Notice, that it is as man, risen from the dead and set at God's right hand in the heavenly places, that he is given to be head, and that it is by the baptism of the Spirit we are set in the body. These two things alone are abundant proof that there was no "church which is his body" before Pentecost;

as the words of our Lord in Matt. xvi., 18, "upon this rock I will build my Church," tell us there was no "building of God" (1 Cor. iii., 9,) as yet, even in the days of his earth-sojourn. Doubtless Israel was "the congregation (the assembly or church, if you will,) of the Lord." But plainly they were not the "house of God, the church of the living God," still less the "church which is his body." Nay, if you will look but a little carefully at Rom. ix., 3-5, you will find how to a nation in the flesh, the mass of them unbelievers in Paul's days, belonged (according to Judaism) "adoption, glory, covenants, giving of law, the service of God (or worship), and the promises." "I am a father to *Israel*," God was saying; and it was in virtue of that, not as new-born by the Spirit, that any could call God father. The doing away of this (for Christianity) is what John i., 11-13, declares; for "he came to his own (to *Israel*) and his own received him not;" and then the rule of manifested relationship was altered. Now, "to as many as received him" (for all turned on that), "to them gave he *right* (margin) to become *sons of God*, even to those which believe in his name; which were *born*, not of blood (as Jews were), nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of *God*."

Thus the assembly of God is now of believers, manifested sons; and as gathered by the Holy Ghost *they* are the habitation of God,—not *Israel's* temple—and the body of the risen head, Christ Jesus.

What are the thoughts specially connected with these two aspects of what the Church is? With the body, *unity and subjection to the Head*. With the house, *holiness*. "There is *one* body." "As the body is *one* and hath many members." "By *one* Spirit are we all baptized into *one* body." "And not holding the head, from which all by joints and bands having nourishment ministered," etc. "The temple of God is *holy*, which temple ye are." "*Holiness* becometh thy house."

It is solemn in view of these Scriptures to look around. The responsibility of maintaining these principles has been laid upon us. How have we answered to it? Among the *many* bodies of Christendom, where is the testimony to the "one body," the Church? Alas, other bonds of union have been devised than that of the uniting Spirit, and we have become members of churches, instead of simply members of Christ. Differences of creed have become the partition-walls to divide the children of God from one another. And the most pretentious claim that the different sects can make, that

they are but divisions of the one Church of Christ, is but the sad evidence of how utterly the practical character of the one body is denied. That "there should be no schism (division) in the body" is what the apostle (1 Cor. xii, 12) enjoins. And he tells us particularly that we can not assert that practical independence of each other which it is the essence of denominationalism to maintain. "The eye can not say to the hand: I have no need of thee." "If one member suffered, *all* the members suffered with it." "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." How plain that that was neither a denomination nor an "invisible Church." And be it invisible now or not, it is the only Church of the New Testament Scriptures, and the only thing which God recognizes or owns at any time.

It is plain, too, how this links itself with the practical acknowledgment of Christ's headship. For if I start a church of my own, I may of course decide who shall be its members, and make rules for its government. But who would not shrink from doing so for the Church, Christ's body? A denomination may have its human tests, its way of reception, and its codes of discipline. In Christ's Church I have but to own those whom he has received, and to abide by the rules which he has given: "Receive ye *one another*, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God." (Rom. xv, 7.)

And what about God's house and the holiness which belongs to it? Alas, upon the good foundation, which Paul as a wise masterbuilder has laid, men have built in "wood, hay, stubble" side by side with the "gold, silver, precious stones" of other builders (see 1 Cor. iii, 12). The "living stones" have been overlaid with the rubbish of false profession. The holiness of the house has been defiled by corrupters. Sins unknown among the Gentiles have been practiced there, and even sold at a price. What will be the end of it? Judgment at the Lord's hand. Just as with Israel—"the Lord shall suddenly come to his temple; but who may abide the day of his coming." The fiery trial will "try every man's work of what sort it is." The house will be purified and remodeled after the Lord's mind; man's work be reviewed, judged, or rewarded; the bad material burnt up; the living stones become in full manifestation the "holy temple of the Lord." As the apostle warns the Hebrews (ch. iii, 6), "whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end."

Thus has man failed in his responsibility. The members of

the body are scattered. The holiness of the house is lost. What remains? The truth and faithfulness of God. To own before him the ruin and our part in it; to abide by his principles in separation from all that so dishonors him; to wait as our only hope for the coming Lord. Dear reader, is this your path?

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

There are, probably, few truths contained in the Word of God about which so many mistakes are made as the coming of the Lord. The reason of this is not to be found in the lack of distinctness in what is revealed concerning it, but in the lack of simplicity of mind and heart in many of those who have undertaken to set it forth. God's revelations are to faith, and not for men to speculate or reason about. The wise and the learned will fall into errors, because they trust their minds, where the simple soul will find all plain; for "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." The Lord give us more of this simplicity, that we may be content to receive more fully his thoughts in the place of our own reasonings.

In these days of abounding evil, when almost everything is questioned, it is not surprising to find that there are numbers who deny the coming of the Lord altogether, and expect a millennium to be introduced by the spread of the gospel; others can not see the practical utility of it, and will tell you that death is the coming of the Lord to them; others, again, are perplexed to know what to believe, as so much has been said and written, and so many rash speculations have been hazarded about it, and even evil doctrines connected with it. Thus souls are robbed of comfort and blessing, and of that which God intended should sustain their hearts in this evil scene.

It is hard to conceive how any godly Christian, who searches his Bible, could long retain the first of these errors, as neither experience nor Scripture afford any foundation for it, but quite the contrary. "Where is the promise of his coming?" is the word of those whom the apostle (2 Peter iii., 4,) characterizes as scoffers, walking after their own lusts; and our Lord Jesus, in Matt. xxiv., 48, 49, goes still further, and tells us that it is the mark of an evil servant, to be saying *in his heart*, not even, My Lord will not come; but, My

Lord *delayeth* his coming. And mark what follows : "he begins to smite his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken." Now is not this exactly the fruit of giving up the Lord's coming, which, to our sorrow, we see everywhere around ; division, dissensions, and envy and strife have taken the place of the harmony and love that the Church displayed at the first, and association with the world and its wickedness is tolerated and excused.

But it is urged : Is not the gospel to be preached among all nations ? The answer is : Yea. But what for ? Never is it said for the world to be converted by it, but "for a testimony unto them." (Matt. xxiv., 14.) The world, as the world is given up of God, as in hopeless ruin, and he is gathering out of it a people for His name. (Acts xv., 14.)

But is not Christ to inherit the heathen according to Psalm ii., 8 ? I ask : How ? "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron ; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel (verse 9)." "When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth," is the testimony of the Lord Jesus himself, and those days are likened to the darkest periods of the world's history,—the days of Noah and Lot. Besides, he is to reign till he has put all enemies under his footstool. (1 Cor. xv., 25.) If the gospel is to subjugate all, how can this be true ? Everywhere that the blessing of the millennium is spoken of in Old Testament or New, judgment *precedes it*. Again, in the parable of the wheat and tares in Matt. xiii., which confessedly refers to this period, the tares are not changed into wheat, but are purged out of the field by judgment, and then "the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father ;" till then the crop is mixed. Passages might be multiplied, but space forbids. Let the reader only search the Scriptures, and this will be plain enough, for it is its universal testimony.

Let us look a little at our second objection. Of what practical benefit is it ? Is not death the coming of the Lord to the Christian ? Is there no power, dear reader, in *hope* ? What gives men courage to labor on in the midst of difficulties and dangers ? It is hope. Hopes, too, that are often destined in the end to be blasted, yet keep the heart up for a time. Now death is not what people hope for ; though for the Christian it is surely gain to die,—to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord, and, in Corinthians, it is numbered among the things which are ours. But our hope,— "that blessed hope," it is called in Titus ii., 13, is "the appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." Who

will affirm that this is the same as death? Since Christ is risen from the dead, resurrection, not death, is the believer's hope. By this I mean, not only the raising of those who sleep in Jesus, but that same power of God, by which they are raised, applied to change the bodies of the living saints into the likeness of Christ's glorious body; for it is written: "Behold, I show you a mystery; we *shall not all sleep*, but we shall all *be changed*; in a moment" (1 Cor. xv., 51); and the apostle, in writing to comfort the Thessalonians concerning those of them who had fallen asleep, and who they feared had lost their part in the blessings they were expecting to share in the coming of the Lord Jesus, does not say: Oh, they have died, and are gone to be with him, which was, of course, true; but he says: "We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent (go before) them which are asleep—the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore, comfort one another with these words." (1 Thess. iv., 15–18.) Now this is much more than death. No one looks forward to death, except as a gloomy thing they would like to put off as long as possible; that is, unless they look beyond death. But how can one look beyond it? Only as knowing One who has passed through it, and taken away its sting, so turning it into gain and blessing for us, as it lets us out of a body in which we often have to groan, thus freeing us from a clog and hindrance to our joy. But if I have known him, I want to be like him, and God's word assures me I shall be. But what is he? A glorified man. He is more. He is God, too, I need not say, and we who have believed are now redeemed by his precious blood. We have the redemption of our souls, but wait the redemption of our bodies. If I die, it is my spirit without the body; happy, beyond expression, doubtless, but not glorified. There are no such things as glorified spirits. We must have bodies like his own, and this, we see, is when he comes to raise or change them, as we find in Philippians: "Our conversation (citizenship) is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Savior, the Lord Jesus, who shall change our vile bodies, and fashion them like unto his glorious body." (Phil. iii., 20, 21.) "Now are we the sons of God, but 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." (1 John iii., 2.) "God has predestinated us to be conformed to the image

of his Son, that he might be the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii., 29)

As to the effect of this, the apostle adds in 1 John, iii. : "Every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself even as he is pure." I can not be hoping to be with and like him, without its making me more so, morally, as I go along. It is, as we, with open (unveiled) face, behold the glory of the Lord, that we are changed into his likeness from glory to glory.

As to the last point, that some are in doubt, what to believe, because of conflicting views. The answer to this is simple enough. Let *men's views* alone, and take God's word. If you had stood with that blessed One, when he spoke those words of comfort to his beloved disciples, whom he was about to leave, in John xiv., and heard him say : "I go to prepare a place for you ; and if I go away, *I will come again*, and receive you to myself, that where I am, there you may be also ;" could you have been in any doubt as to his meaning ? But are there not times and seasons and prophecies to be fulfilled ? There are. But what have they to do with our waiting for God's Son from heaven ? Dear reader, it is not a question of intelligence of the right interpretation of prophecies ; the Lord has left this blessed hope to hang on. It is wholly a question of heart for himself. You may know all about prophecy, without its giving the smallest power to your walk. But if your heart has known and values Him who hung upon the cross for your sins, and there drank the cup of wrath for you, that is the key to the whole. He tells you he has gone to prepare a place for you, and will come and take you to it, and asks you to wait for him. There are events great and terrible to take place. But they belong to earth and an earthly people, Israel, for whom he will prepare a place here. But you belong to heaven, and he has gone to prepare a place for you in his Father's house. He says he will come and take you to it. Do you believe him ? Great as the blessing is in store for Israel and the nations upon earth, for which a judgment prophesied of prepares the way, his love has planned a better place for those who have shared his rejection. Hear him saying, just before he went to the cross : "The glory thou hast given me, I have given them ;" and, "Father, I will that those also which thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world." Details of prophecy there are, interesting enough, and blessed in their place. But do not let us excuse our hearts

from being with him in all his thoughts of love fully, because there is much we do not understand. May our loins be girt, and our lamps burning, and we, like men that wait for our Lord, that when he cometh and knocketh, we may open to him immediately.

"FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP."

"Our highest lesson is to learn how to live upon Christ, who, of God, has been made unto us wisdom. If the whole world was mine, and I could purchase what I would with it, I would give it all to be a scholar, made poor in spirit at Christ's feet. And what, then, can I wish my dear friend better, than to be one of the little children, to whom he teaches his mind and will? Only I could wish you more humbled, that you may more perfectly learn the two blessed truths, which he is exalted to teach his people; namely, to believe in his blood and righteousness, and to live entirely upon his grace and power. His prophetic office is to teach us how to be always safe by believing in him, and always happy, by living upon him. He sends the Spirit into the believer, to teach him that whatever he wants for his acceptance at the bar of justice, it is perfectly and freely his, in the fullness of Christ. Sins as red as scarlet, sins as numerous as the stars, or as the sand upon the sea-shore innumerable, and nature as black as bell, a heart as wicked as the devil, the divine and eternally precious blood of Jesus so cleanses and purifies that not one spot remains. If I had been guilty of all the sins of Adam and Eve, and of all their descendants to this day, yet believing in him, I should be safe, because his *blood* cleanseth from *all* sin. And in Christ the believer has a better righteousness than that of our first parents in Paradise; theirs was the righteousness of a creature, and they lost it; this is the *righteousness of God*, and it is an everlasting righteousness, never to be lost. It is the righteousness in which the saints stand before God forever and ever. When the Holy Spirit takes of these things of Christ, and preaches them to the heart, oh, what a sweet peace follows! for the believer then finds himself saved from all the miseries of sin, and *entitled* to all the blessings of eternal glory; and being thus persuaded of his safety, by believing in the *atoning blood* of Christ, the Holy Spirit teaches him then how to live upon Christ and to make use of Christ's fullness. On our learning this lesson depends our comfortable walk toward heaven;

for Christ does not give us a stock of grace, and expect us to improve it by being faithful to grace given : no, no ; that is not his way. Our souls must depend upon him, as our bodies do upon the elements of this world. *Every* moment we must live by faith upon his fullness, and be *every* moment receiving out of it grace for grace. And this is our happiness,—to have all in Christ. A beggar in myself, but rich with unsearchable, eternal riches in him. Ignorant still, in myself, but led and taught by his unerring wisdom. Sinful still, yet over perfect before God through his blood and righteousness. Weak and helpless still, but kept by his almighty love. Nothing but sorrow in myself ; nothing but joy in him. Oh, this is a blessed life. No tongue can tell what a heaven it is, thus to live by faith upon the Son of God."—*Romaine*.

WHAT is that claim of the Lord Jesus upon us which most effectually subdues the will and touches the heart ? It is the claim which his supreme and unchanging love brings home to us ; a claim that is especially renewed *as often as we are gathered in his name to show forth his death*. Our ability to respond to that claim will be just in proportion to the power we get through the Spirit of entering into the joy of the Lord. We should always remember, that it was not by tradition from the disciples, nor from the record of the gospels, but by a direct revelation from the *Lord in the glory*, that Paul received his instructions about the supper. Our call to this comes from the glory, and is a proof to us that *Jesus is in the glory*, and there still cares for us, and watches over us. We are not to do it only as a command—not to keep it in remembrance of the appointment of the paschal supper, but in remembrance of his death and coming again. Jesus "gave thanks" as he looked through the dark vista of the cross to the land of plenty beyond it. He saw his death, and what that would bring his disciples into. Death is nothing pleasant in itself—it is always terrible ; but he saw what that death would lead his disciples into, and "he gave thanks." From the glory he now says : My death is become your life, your bond of union, your cause of rejoicing, the source of all your blessings ; and for this he gives thanks. And we have the blessed privilege of responding to the mind of Christ, in standing out for him. He says now, from the glory : "This do in remembrance of me ;" and the Spirit on earth amid the saints adds : "As often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."

"No lark ever sprang up on a dewy morning, to sing its sweet song, with such alacrity as you and I shall spring up to meet our Lord in the air. O my brother, act it before your mind's eye, as a living reality, and then let hope patiently wait for the fulfillment."

"EXTREMES meet. Truths, of all others the most awful and interesting, are too often considered as so true that they lose all the power of truth, and lie bedridden in the dormitory of the soul, side by side with the most despised and exploded errors."

Purgatory is exploded, and the Lake of Fire is covered up, —nevertheless, "*whosoever* was not found written in the book of life was cast into the LAKE OF FIRE," and "shall be tormented day and night forever and ever."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q.—W. W. writes: "I want to know God's mind on the subject of prayer. I pray three times a day, and I find the more I pray, the more communion I have with my heavenly Father; but I am afraid of getting into a formal way of prayer."

A.—True Christian prayer is the outflow of the heart in its necessities, whether for itself or others, to God, known in relationship as a Father. We are all children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and because we are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying: Abba, Father. Being quickened, and having Christ as our life, we have the sense of necessities according to that life, and the Spirit leads us to God as *children*, to tell him what we feel the need of. This may be either in temporal or in spiritual things. We should ask for daily bread, health, and strength for our bodies, and in the same way pray for spiritual food, comfort, and strength, for our souls. Nor can we be too simple in doing this. Stated times of prayer are well, especially in the morning and evening, or in the middle of the day, if opportunity is afforded. But the prayer should be *always* the result of present felt need, and expressed in words that the Spirit at the time gives. Anything like a formal use of words is what the Lord terms, "vain repetitions." All true prayer, spoken or otherwise, is by the *Holy Spirit*, though it may only amount to a groan, words and thoughts falling, to express the soul's distress: "likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought; but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us, with *groanings* which can not be uttered." Apart from stated times of prayer, the unvarying attitude of the soul should be one of prayer and dependence upon God,—"*praying always*, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit." The heart should continually refer *everything* to God as things occur; and the result is, that God keeps the soul peacefully happy amid all the wear and tear of life, while journeying to the glory about to be revealed. Prayer, in spirit and in truth, is the secret of all strength, joy, and communion with God. "Be careful for nothing; but in *everything* by prayer and supplication, with *thanksgiving*, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds, through Christ Jesus."

RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT WORKS.

(Continued from page 25.)

THERE are three characters of judgment with which the saint has to do,—self-judgment, the judgment of the Church, the judgment of the Lord. These are very distinct in their character. Attention to the first necessarily precludes an individual from falling under the judgment of the Church, whose province it is to judge those within, while those who are without God judgeth. The failure of the Church to exercise judgment, in its own proper province, on overt acts of evil—such as occurred at Corinth, brings on the judgment of the Lord in some outward and manifest form. “For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.” It is equally the province of the Church to judge the doctrine of those within. The Lord had it against Thyatira—that Jezebel, which called herself a prophetess, was suffered to teach her seducing doctrine. And the Lord must judge if the Church tolerates evil doctrine. But the judgment of the Lord is ever supreme, and we are always, individually and collectively, amenable to it. Self-judgment, indeed, would prevent us, as individuals, from falling under the Lord’s judgment in a marked and manifest manner. “If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged, but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord.” The rod for willful disobedience would not be needed, because self-judgment would prevent such outbreaks, the principle of which had been secretly judged. But although the judgment of the Lord, in the shape of present punishment, would thus be avoided, this does not interfere with the general truth, that “whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.” The difference of the Lord’s dealing, even where there might be outward sorrow, would be very apprehensible to the conscience of those who came under it. To the soul exercised in self-judgment it would readily be interpreted as the interference of love, the wisdom of which would be discerned. To the careless saint it would be felt as punishment, and regarded as a warning to bring him to a sense of his actual condition. Nor must we forget how much the needed discipline of the Lord is preventive; and this, too, is learned in self-judgment, in the holiest of all. The “thorn in the flesh” might have been interpreted by the apostle very differently from what the Lord intended, had his soul been unexercised before God about it: “Lest I should be exalted above measure.” He had not been so

exalted ; but there was the unsuspected danger and tendency to be guarded against ; and this the apostle discovered, not by revelation, but by exercise of soul before the Lord. And have we not all had occasion, not only to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God for something positively wrong in our ways, but also to justify his love and wisdom in some special discipline, the preventive character of which has been taught to us by himself in the holiest of all. I feel increasingly the importance of deep searching self-judgment, under the shelter of the blessed oracle : " Transgression forgiven—sin covered—iniquity not imputed." I say not, that we are always able to interpret the Lord's dealings with us, but I believe self-judgment, as to the springs of evil, leading to confession before God, to be the means of attaining this interpretation. God is always right. A simple but deeply practical truth ; and we own God to be right by confession ; and thus we not only get relief, but we actually learn that God is right, and understand his ways. Oh ! if saints did know the toilsome process of self-vindication ; if, instead of justifying themselves, they were to justify God, what sorrow would they avoid. And it betrays such want of confidence in God to be anxious to vindicate ourselves ; as if, after all, it was our own character, and not his grace, which was the real power of blessing. I think we see the design of the apostle in using the word " discern," not simply judge. (See Greek, 1 Cor. xi., 31.) If we would " discern" ourselves, we should not be judged. Self-discernment, getting a positive insight into the real moving springs of the activity of the flesh. Who can bear to look too closely into the flesh, unless he knows the blessed truth that God has judged the flesh in the Cross of Christ? " Our old man has been crucified with him." The evil which we are only beginning to discern in it God had seen from the beginning, and allows us now to see, that we may justify him in his total judgment of it. The flesh can not discern itself—it can not stand before God. It is by the power of life, communicated directly from Christ, brought into this exercise by the Holy Ghost himself, that we thus discern ourselves ; and this, in the immediate presence of God himself. " The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him ; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things." It is a human aphorism that " the proper study of mankind is man," but deeply fallacious. Man knows not himself by studying himself, but by

studying God. "This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent" It is by this divine science that man really knows himself; not by measuring himself by himself, but by measuring himself by God—by God as he is revealed in and through Christ. I have often thought that the annals of history, dark as they are, or the record of crime, black as it is, would not together present such a picture of the depravity of man, as would the secret confessions of saints to God, if their confessions were laid open to us as they are to him. Nothing but the consciousness of complete justification could ever embolden the saint to confess before God those secret springs of evil which he detects, when judging himself immediately in the presence of God. We wonder not at the most devoted saint speaking of himself as the chief of sinners.

"For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee in a time when thou mayest be found; surely, in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him. Thou art my hiding-place. Thou shalt preserve me from trouble; thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance."

It is indeed a blessed encouragement to the soul to be assured that there is nothing we may not tell to God. He has done everything to win our confidence, even delivering his "Son for our offenses, and raising him again for our justification," and it is by confession that we practically maintain our confidence in him. It is because of the connection between confession and forgiveness that every one that is godly can pray unto God in a time when he may be found. If sin fresh discovered in ourselves need not bar access to God—if he does not hide himself away from us, but is always to be found—what can hinder, and, practically, what does hinder intercourse with God? It is not God himself. It is not that either a sacrifice or a priest are to be sought—all is ready. But the unreadiness is in ourselves; there the real hindrance is to be found; we often try anything rather than the right thing. We may become more diligent in outward service—more regular in outward worship—more keen in judging the evil of others—when the one thing wanted is, *confession*. It is indeed a bad state of soul, when things, most blessed in their place, are used by us to interrupt our intercourse with God. God requires truth in the inward parts; and if there be alienation of heart from God, the restoration must be truthful. God must be justified, no blame must be laid on him, all must be taken on ourselves; and this is just what confession does. He who is godly must regard God as

the only Justifier, and must know him, as ever to be found, even when we have to go before him with the confession of iniquity. And is it not in this way that we foil Satan as the accuser? If there be readiness of confession, is there not the consciousness that it is God who justifieth? Who, then, can lay anything to the charge of God's elect? That which the accuser would lay to their charge, they have already laid to their own charge before God—and it is forgiven. It is thus, by experience, that the exercised soul knows God himself as its hiding-place—"Thou art my hiding-place." There may be many ways in which the blessedness of faith in Jesus may be experienced; but I question if any way is more vivid than the difference between hiding ourselves away from God, as Adam did in the garden after he had sinned, and hiding ourselves in God. What a thought it is, that God should present himself, as he does in the gospel of his grace, as the only refuge for a sinner; as the only One who is able to take the sinner's part, and can effectually take his part. Is not this one blessed aspect of the glory of God? He makes all his goodness to pass before us, and proclaims his own name as just, yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus—the only God—because he is a just God and a Savior; and has thus given his challenge that there is no God beside him; because he is a Savior God. There is a refuge from the accusations of Satan—from the frowns of the world—from that which is more bitter than either—self-condemnation; and this refuge is in God himself. He has laid himself out to us as the Depository of our every woe, the Sympathizer with our every care, the One who pitieth every infirmity, the patient Listener to every complaint we have to make against ourselves. All this is learned under the knowledge of the blessedness of the truth of "righteousness without works;" yea, is comprised in that blessedness. It is confidence in this divine way of righteousness which emboldens us to say: "Thou shalt preserve me from trouble." And is any trouble equal to soul trouble? Very few Christians are able to take the honorable place of suffering, either for Jesus' sake, or for righteousness' sake! The Christian who thus suffers may rightfully rejoice. But spirit-broken, heart-sick, self-weary, whither can we go?—God is our biding-place; he comforteth those that are cast down; he is the Father of mercies (pitifulnesses) and the God of all comfort; he can make us rejoice out of our sorrow. And surely it is not right for the song of redemption to be sung once only on the shores of the Red Sea, and then the notes of praise to die away, and to be succeeded

by murmurings. Alas, so it is practically ; the joy of conversion is frequently followed by murmuring and complaining. The beginning of our confidence is not held fast. The truth of the blessedness of God's imputing righteousness without works is let slip, as though we no longer needed it. Saints have to learn to justify the wisdom of God in redemption in all its fullness, by learning, in the progress of their own experience, that nothing short of it would meet their need. We do not, as we might expect, find saints singing the "new song ;" a song new and ever varied, yet in substance the same. And wherefore ? Because grace alone can be the ground-work of our song ; and if the heart be not established in grace, we have no heart for song. But when a saint goes on under the shelter of the blessedness of "righteousness without works," learning it as he goes on his way, how frequent the boast of thanksgiving-- "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." There is a "singing and making melody in the heart of the Lord ;" not publicly, but privately in the closet. For great, unquestionably, as is the transition from darkness to light, by faith in Christ Jesus, at the outset, yet, what is the experience of the saint afterward ? Is it not constant deliverances ? "He that is our God is the God of salvations." It is a happy school into which we are brought, to learn God in the character in which he has revealed himself to us. The history of each individual saint will tell out the same truth--that where "sin abounded grace has superabounded" and the end of each saint individually will show forth the same truth as the Church collectively, "*to the praise of the glory of his grace.*" O that we may be honest and upright in heart with God, and then the marking his ways will issue in frequent songs of deliverance.

(To be continued.)

RUIN AND REDEMPTION.

1 PETER I., 17-25.

WHAT is man's real condition before God ? He knows it not. But this is the great preliminary question, ere he can be brought under the ministry of the grace of God.

The very ground necessarily assumed, before preaching the gospel of God's grace, is that every man is a lost, ruined sinner. God has asserted it (Rom. iii., 10-23) ; and if we come

to practical Christianity, it is equally an allowed truth, that the ground of Christian action is *redemption security*.

The point at issue between God and every soul is, whether man is as bad as God's testimony says he is ; for the starting post in preaching the gospel is God's declaration, "*All flesh is grass.*" Take man in every state of moral and intellectual improvement, and he is "*grass.*" All flesh is grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass (a much more fleeting thing than the grass itself). "*The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away.*"

Job was a man remarkable for integrity and uprightness, according to God's own declaration : "*Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him in the earth, a perfect and upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil.*" But when he comes to stand before God, it is : "*I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear ; but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes.*" Here Job learnt that, as flesh, he was "*grass.*"

Whenever a plea is made for the flesh, for anything merely human, whether righteousness, or wisdom, or strength, the plea can not be established, except by condemning God ! The Lord had said, when speaking to Job out of the whirlwind : "*Wilt thou condemn me, that thou mayest be righteous.*"

In seeking to bring the testimony concerning truth and grace before the conscience, I would not take the *dregs* of humanity to prove that "*all flesh is grass ;*" here, in the first, you have *righteous* Job. Again, Solomon was a remarkable specimen of a person blessed of God in various ways, but principally in having wisdom *given* to him ; the *gift* of wisdom directly from God. (See 1 Kings iii., 4.)

"God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart even as the sand that is on the sea shore. And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt. For he was wiser than all men, * * * and there came of all people to hear the wisdom of Solomon ; from all kings of the earth, which had heard of his wisdom." His experience ended in this : "*I have seen all the works that are done under the sun, and behold all is vanity and vexation of spirit. That which is crooked can not be made straight, and that which is wanting can not be numbered. * * * For in much wisdom is much grief ; and he that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.*" *All vanity and vexation of spirit ! "All flesh is grass !"*

Again, as to *religious man*. If any really think that religion consists in doing this or doing that, the Pharisee was more religious than any of us. The era of our Lord's ministry on earth was a most religious era ; and yet, when our Lord Jesus Christ came seeking *fruit*, he could not find *any*. He was cast out and murdered, *because they maintained their religion*.

Hence we see that human righteousness, human wisdom, and human religion, are all hindrances in the way of knowing God really as He is, and ourselves as we are. One of the most genuine marks of true conversion to God, is the utter and entire denial of any goodness in ourselves, or expectation from ourselves. Man, as a moral and intellectual creature, is now putting forth all his powers to establish that, concerning which God says it is "grass." Modern philanthropists are seeking to raise and cultivate man's intellect. They may succeed above all their expectations ; but no philanthropic society, or effort for the amelioration of man, however honest the intention, can meet the ruin of the condition in which man is *before God*, because it falls short of the Cross. It can do nothing but leave man as it found him, a ruined sinner, dead in trespasses and sins, unaltered before God, knowing nothing of Him, or what it is to have thoughts and desires in communion with Him, and in a world as ruined as himself. Every man by nature is a lost and ruined sinner, and he is in a lost and ruined world. It is quite necessary to state these things together, in order to know what *salvation* is. What was salvation before the flood ? It was to be in the ark, because the *world* was going to be judged. What was salvation in the days of Lot ? To get out of Sodom, because Sodom was going to be burned. And what is salvation now ? Not merely to be saved from hell, that it is ; but it is also "deliverance from this present evil world," which is about to be judged.

Persons may be *reformed*, and yet not be *converted*. I do not like the term, "converted character ;" conversion is the being turned from everything, whatever it may be, and brought to God. What is God's testimony now to man thus ruined, and in a ruined world, but testimony unto His own grace, and His own power, to His ability to meet man in such circumstances, in a way that nothing but grace could provide ? The Apostle says : "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, which is the power of God unto salvation to every one that *believeth*." It is impossible to be the subject of God's power, without effects following ; Christ is the "power of God, and the wisdom of God." "We preach Christ crucified ; unto

Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness ; but unto us which are saved both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." This may be childishness to the present age, as it was to the Greeks, to men who are seeking wisdom ; a stumbling-block to those requiring a sign, as to the Jews ; but unto those who believe, Christ is "the power of God, and the wisdom of God."

The same God that hath told us that "*all flesh is grass,*" the same God who, after long experience of man, has said "*flesh profiteth nothing,*" is now sending forth His testimony unto salvation, through "*the precious blood of Christ.*" He is not any longer *testing* man. In that sense, there is not *now* a state of probation for ruined sinners. They have been tried under the best and most favorable circumstances, in Israel, under law, and found wanting. The Son of the living God has come, and found man "dead in trespasses and sins." Man, therefore, is pronounced as bad as can be, utterly ruined.

But grace would never be known as it is, if it could not meet a sinner "dead in trespasses and sins." This was exhibited in the personal ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. He was here the expression of grace and truth ; it was thrown in his teeth by the self-righteous Pharisee, that he was receiving publicans and sinners.

Man is more angry with God for meeting ruined sinners in *grace*, than for dealing with them in righteousness. Grace is the one thing he can not understand. Human wisdom can not grasp that word ; it can understand law ; but that God should be dealing in *grace* with poor lost sinners, the human understanding can not grasp *that*. You will find, if you test your hearts, that you naturally hate grace a great deal more than holiness. *Well, grace* meets the sinner just where he is, in all his misery and ruin ; the love of God meets him *THERE*. Each one of us, who have received Christ into our own souls, can give our answer to that. We were loved by God, not when we had improved ourselves, but when we were "dead in trespasses and sins." "God commendeth His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

What is it which thus enables God to have to do in grace with poor lost sinners ? "*The blood of the Lamb.*" "For as much as ye know that ye were not *redeemed* with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers ; but with the *precious blood of Christ*, as of a *Lamb* without blemish and without spot ; who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the

world, but was manifested in these last times for you, who by Him do believe in God, that raised Him from the dead, and gave Him glory ; that your faith and hope might be in God." It is the *blood of the Lamb* which enables the *holy God* to meet *unholy* sinners ; it fills up the amazing gap between the throne of God and them, as lost and ruined sinners. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

And this, after man had proved that there was no response in his heart to the love of God. Had there been a spark of good in him, it would have been called out by the Lord Jesus Christ. But no, the answer to all his love and grace was : "Away with him ! away with him ! Crucify him ! crucify him !"

Man has preferred a murderer to Jesus ; "*not this man, but Barabbas !*" God's Son *has been murdered !* And now the ministry of reconciliation is granted to that world *where* He was murdered. God's answer to all the hard thoughts of man's heart is : "I have given you my Son." His answer to all man's pretensions : "You have *crucified* my Son." It is always of strengthening power to my own soul, to see that when God begins, He *begins* with those who crucified His Son ! What a blessed thing to find, that from among the very murderers of Jesus a number were brought to know God's love through the blood of His Son.

The gospel to us is the proclamation of the value, not only of the *person* of Jesus, but of the *blood* which has been shed. God's controversy with man is : What estimate have you of my Son, and of the *blood* that He has shed ? You can not be neutral. "He that is not with me, is against me." But it matters not what your thoughts are ; God's thoughts, and the thoughts of all redeemed sinners are, that there is nothing so "precious" as the blood of God's own Son.

The *blood* of Christ not only brings God down in grace to us, it brings us up to God. "Christ has once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." A ruined sinner, washed in the blood of Jesus, is *immediately* brought into the presence of God. All the great things of God are very simple. By one and the same *blood* a sinner, who believes in Jesus, is washed from his sins, justified, and brought nigh to God ! In the glory, the theme of the redeemed will be "the blood of the Lamb ;" "thou hast redeemed us unto God by *thy blood* out of every kindred and tongue, and people, and nation." "Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our

sins in *His own blood*, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and His Father; to Him be the glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."

What becomes a person so "washed from his sins," "redeemed," and "brought to God?" Here we find the importance of his seeing his position in the Head. He is redeemed as he fell; he fell in one head, Adam; he is redeemed in another head, Christ. "As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." We are in Him as the *Risen One*, and derive from Him new life, a new nature, conversant with a new sphere of things, new affections, a new world. The redeemed man is brought into a new creation with Jesus, and all those who are redeemed by Him to God.

This is a *remedy worthy* of God. It is that which the apostles preached, "Jesus and the resurrection." Deny grace, you deny the wisdom of God.

Were man redeemed merely to be brought into a moral system, then remedial associations might effect the object; but he is *dead*, and wants *life*; and men are seeking the improvement of that world stained with the *blood* of Jesus, and for which God will make requisition by and by. If I am giving myself to philanthropy,—a thing which would be very well if man were to be improved for a social system here,—I am denying his ruin and that of the world. In this we see the deceiving power of Satan. The Church should not be deceived by him. He is the accuser of the brethren; but *the deceiver of the whole world*. Christ is the light of the world, and the Saviour of *sinners*.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT REPENTANCE.

THAT the Cross of Christ is for *sinners*, is a fundamental truth of the gospel which can never be insisted on too strongly nor proclaimed too widely. That the salvation of God is thus brought to all men freely to be accepted, as what Another's toil has wrought for entirely apart from any work of man's, can not be made too simple, or adhered to too unqualifiedly. In the matter of justification, the work of Christ is the only ground of it, and faith without works the only condition. He who has convicted the whole world of unrighteousness, stopping the mouths of all with the assertion, that there is "no difference" Godward among men, "for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. iii., 23), and "all are

dead" (2 Cor. 5), and in "death there can be no difference—has given One to "die for all," and through his work, taken righteously the place, not of judge, but of justifier; and, moreover, they whom he justifies are "the ungodly." The picture of a prodigal met in rags and ruin is just our picture. And the picture of One, who, with a father's heart, has but to have presented to him the misery which touches it, in order to relieve it,—yea, has but to have our face turned toward him, to run and fall upon our neck, and, without one upbraiding word, kiss us into peace and brokenheartedness; this is a picture which may he forbid, should ever have thrown over it the shadows of legality.

No, God has *manifested himself*. In Christ he has done it. Put away the veil forever. And we are brought to him to learn a love, which, after all our experience of it, "passes knowledge." If it be unlike *us*, it is the more worthy of *him*, and we love, because we *are* loved, and because in Christ we know the Father.

I dwell upon this, because my purpose is to ask as to another part of Scripture truth, the doctrine of repentance, is it in any wise inconsistent with the freest and fullest gospel? Many seem to judge it so, and leave it practically out of what they hold and preach as such. Many more do make it something really inconsistent with it. And many more have it lying as a hard question upon their souls, robbing them of peace and of the blessedness of a child's place with the Father, and robbing him of the fruit of peace they should be rendering to him. This is why I propose a brief thought or two upon it, which, may He-make plain, to the freeing of souls from burdens which are not of his imposing.

Let me say, then, first, that repentance is a fruit of faith and of life, and not a condition to be fulfilled before it.

This ought to be simple. Faith is that wherein life begins in the soul. "The dead hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear live." "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me HATH everlasting life." (John v.) These are the Lord's own statements. Moreover "without faith it is impossible to please God." (Heb. xi.) The dead repent not, save as Judas did. Natural conscience, of course, they have, but no true, no "godly sorrow," which alone "worketh repentance" (2 Cor. vii., 10); nothing, in short, which can "please God;" nothing, therefore, which I can bring to him, as what he can approve, and in order to be justified. No; for he "justifieth the *ungodly*"—and "him that

worketh not, but believeth." (Rom. iv., 5.) Nor is there (as some dream) a certain degree of faith by which I repent, but which does not justify. There is a dead faith surely which does not, but neither can that work repentance, and there is no degree of true faith that is not justifying. It is simply, "he that *believeth* on him hath everlasting life," and "he that *believeth not* shall not see life." (John v., 113.)

Secondly, although repentance is in the most absolute way essential to salvation, it is in the very nature of it, a thing that I can not rest in. A repentant soul is just, and only one who can find in himself no ground but for self-abhorrence. "I abhor myself, and *repent in dust and ashes,*" (Job xlii., 6,) is not the expression of a self-complacency, which has picked up out of the dunghill even a few glittering grains of gold. If it be experience, it is the experience of utter worthlessness, such as can only find in "Him who justifieth the ungodly" the relief it seeks. It is the come down of self-righteousness, and self-sufficiency,—even of that specious form of it, which can find even in convictions and experiences material whereon to feed. "*I abhor MYSELF:*"—ah, not past acts, nor a past state, but *myself*, and all that comes of me; for a corrupt tree can not bring forth good fruit.

Thus the suited order, so much misunderstood: "Repent ye, and *believe the gospel.*" What is *that*? Why, here is a blessed message of grace for sinners; stoop to the sinner's place, and drink it in. Is that limiting the freeness of the gospel? God has pronounced of every man what he is. "There is no difference. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." Bow to that. Repent. Then and there the gospel meets you with its full sweet assurance of justification. "Repent ye, and *believe the gospel.*" There are many souls who have believed in Christ, and so have really life, who have not in the full sense believed the *gospel*. Otherwise they would have peace, for God preaches peace by Jesus Christ, and to believe that would bring it. They need a more hearty belief in the truth of what God declares them to be, "without strength," as well as "ungodly," and they need to see more clearly how, in the midst of that ruin as "*when we were yet without strength, Christ died for the ungodly,*" so *when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son.*" (Rom. v., 6, 10.) If any one doubts what that means, let him think of that Saul of Tarsus who wrote it, looking up into the face of that Jesus whom he was persecuting as the vivid illustration of it; and let him still further listen to that apostle's account

of unbelieving Israel, who "following after the law of righteousness, did not attain to the law of righteousness." And, "wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith." (Rom. ix., 31, 32.) So for any one who seeks repentance (the first step in practical righteousness for a sinner) in any other way than "by faith," he will not attain it, and will be found not to have "submitted to the righteousness of God." Let him believe God's testimony, and repent. Let him own the utter helplessness of his ruin, and trust the mercy which alone suits his case. He need not shut his eyes to God's grace until he have repented, for "repentance and remission of sins" are proclaimed "in the name" of Him whose death for all tells how truly all are dead. (Luke xxiv., 47.) The more he learns of grace in God, the deeper will be his repentance; nor will it cease but only acquire its fullest character, when, in the faith of God's good news, he awakes to the blessed certainty of a Father's arms about his neck, and the kiss of peace upon his forehead. More lowly than ever will be the confession of the heart, then, in the presence of a *Father*,—"Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight." But little does he, who so *repents*, value his repentance, or build on it. No; he builds upon the grace alone which has rescued a prodigal, and without reproach.

Beloved, this is not making light of repentance. No; we would again and again echo it: "Repent ye, and believe the gospel."

NOTES OF AN ADDRESS

ON PHIL. III., 20, 21.

THERE is a remarkable difference in the aspect and hope connected with the Lord's return in Old Testament scriptures, from what is suggested to the believer in reading such a scripture as this in Philipians.

In the Old Testament the *glory of the kingdom* is connected with the coming; with us the proper hope is not the glory of the kingdom, but that *He*, whose the kingdom is, is coming.

Doubtless there will be the full display of the glory of the kingdom also; but it is not what we are looking for, but for the Lord himself. "Our citizenship is in heaven, whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

We often sing the words :

" Heaven is our fatherland,—
Heaven is our home."

There is our citizenship. If we consider the people of God as we see them in the world, we behold them a pilgrim band passing through the wilderness ; when they lift up their eyes to heaven, they are all gladdened with the sweet thought of *home*. Here it is the wilderness ; but we have a city ; our citizenship is in heaven. When the people of God raise their eyes to heaven, all is bright and full of joy. Ah ! is it not bright to our souls to look up there ? But what is it makes it so bright ? What makes it our home ? Is it not that *Jesus* is there ? We shall be greeted there by His own welcome. We shall see His face in undimmed glory. There will be no cloud upon that blessed countenance there. Nothing to dim His beauty. All will be bright. We shall see Him as He is. Heaven is to us the place whence we look for Him whom our souls love. We are looking to go to heaven, but we are looking for the Lord Jesus from heaven. Mark that expression : " We look for the *Saviour*." There is exceeding beauty in the introduction of the word " Saviour" here. " We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ." If I, as a man, had penned these words, I should have simply said : We look for Jesus, or the Lord Jesus. The Spirit of God presents another thought to our souls. We look for the Lord Jesus as the Saviour. True, indeed, we already know Him thus in having saved our souls, and delivered us forever from our sins ; but we can not look at this character of the blessed Lord, as what applies only to the past. It is the character in which we know Himself personally. If a man could tell me everything about the glories of the Lord Jesus, save this glory in connection with Himself as Saviour, with the cross of Calvary, I should say to him : Well, but can not you tell me something about the blessed Lord as Saviour ? Do you not know anything about Him for yourself, in connection with the cross ? If not, I must say that, after all your knowledge about Him, you do not know Himself. As a Saviour, it is alone that any can learn what He is, unless, dear friends, you know His cross ; unless you have met Him there, saving you as poor lost sinners, you are as yet strangers to His love ; you know not what He is Himself. And here I would add a practical word on this expression : " We look." It is significant, and reveals the inward condition of the soul ; it expresses practical communion with Christ. It is the Lord Jesus saying to your heart :

"Surely, I come quickly;" and your replying: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." What do you know of this sort of intercourse with Christ? How often is your heart thus lifted up to Him during the day? It is the same thing which we find in Thessalonians: "Waiting for His Son from heaven." This is quite another thing, from the *understanding* the doctrine of the coming. That is important solely as a means to an end, even to lead us into this waiting position of the soul, *this quiet, continued breathing of the heart after Himself*. "I have waited for thy salvation, O God."

I dare say many of you can look back to the time when the Lord had to teach us what His coming meant. We had a vast number of things to unlearn; the idea that the coming of the Son of man meant our death, for instance. Now this process is very important. It is the work of the Spirit in us, teaching us to bring all our notions to the word of God, that that furnace may try them, and show us what they are worth. Then we found how one thought after another had to be given up, till the Lord had cleared the ground to lead us into His truth. But this searching out the *doctrine* of the coming, is not *looking* for the Saviour. We may hold the truth of the coming quite clearly in our *heads*, and yet not be waiting for the Lord in our *hearts*. Ah! we well know whether this is really the posture of our spirits, quietly waiting for Him as the one whom our souls love. He says: "Surely, certainly, I come." And as surely as the blessed Lord Jesus is still a man in heaven, having a human heart, and human thoughts, and human affections, so surely He will come. Do you know, then, this kind of intercourse with the Lord, He saying, by His Spirit: "Surely, I come quickly;" and your heart responding: "Quickly come."

But it might be said by some who heard us speaking of heaven as our home, from whence we expect the Saviour: Truly, yours is a large title—you have vast expectations if you can lay claim to heaven itself as yours; but what about possessing your home, and carrying about with you, as you do, a body of sin and death? The next verse, which I now turn to, meets this question by that which will enable us to enjoy this glorious home. "Who shall change our vile body and fashion it like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." Here we have indeed a body that savors of the wilderness. There we shall have a body that savors *only* of the glory. Here we have a body that well accords with

groaning and tears, a body weighed down with the corruption of sin, and with the circumstances of sin and death, which form the sorrows of the way. Well, He shall entirely change this body of humiliation, that not a trace of sin or of the wilderness shall remain. It shall be fashioned like unto His own body of glory. You will not be able to sigh or groan in the glory. Now we sigh and groan, not only by reason of sorrow, but sometimes a view of the glory brought home to the heart by the power of the Spirit produces a groan by reason of incapacity to receive it in this present condition. Like Daniel we are ready to faint under it. It is too much for this poor body of humiliation. As in Rom. viii., we groan within ourselves, having the first-fruits of the Spirit, because our body is entirely unfit to sustain the glory. Well, we shall have a body capable of enjoying it all in peaceful blessedness. We shall be at home in that bright glory, quietly at rest in all its brightness. There will be no groaning because of incapacity. We shall enjoy the rest of God and be at rest in His own glorious home.

And now, what, let me ask, is to you the most blessed thought in this verse? Is it that then we shall be at home, freed forever from the sorrows of the wilderness? Or that there there will be no more groaning after the glory through possessing a body of humiliation? Oh, there is a more, a far more blessed thought than either of these. I shall have, indeed a body meet for the glory, but the sweetness of the hope is this,—that body of glory shall be the gift of the personal love of Christ to each individual saint. *He* shall change our body of humiliation. His own power shall be put forth to bestow on me this blessedness. We shall be able to look at ourselves in that day, and say: So much does He love me that He has made me entirely like Himself. Mark how His love comes out in the entire action. "He shall change." Not your being able to slip the body and get into the glory. No; you must have the glory from Him when and how He pleases. Now He may say to you: "I give you the wilderness, for I wish you to pass through it, that you may learn that it is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord." He gives you now the wilderness and He will be with you all the way, that there you may learn more of His love. Ah! and in which of all your troubles was He not with you. You can not mention one. I do not say that in looking back you can not name one in which you did not find Him, for, alas! we often see Him not through unbelief, though

He is *with us all the time*. Has He not been with you, watching how you have borne the cross? He has seen every time you have pushed up your shoulder under it, and often then He pressed it down more heavily that your will might be broken.

Thus He who gives you the wilderness now will give you the glory afterward; both alike the gift of His love. If we could get the glory when we liked we should never know His love in changing our vile body to make it like His own. Yet this is the sweetest thing of all, that He has loved poor creatures so wondrously, that He will fit us to dwell in a heavenly home; loving us so much, that He will not rest until He has made our body of humiliation exactly like His own body of glory, "according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself."

In conclusion, I would press this again upon my own heart and yours. Are we *looking for Him*, not looking for the glory or the rest, but for HIMSELF?

RELATIONSHIP.

OUR affections and our duties flow from the relationships in which we are set. It is clear that if we are creatures of God, our duties as such flow from our knowledge of that. So with our duties and affections—they flow from our relationship one with another, whether as husband and wife, or father and child. It is a very simple remark, but of all importance with regard to the saint's position. But then I must be in this relationship to have these affections, and I must know what the relationship is to which those duties belong. If I had no consciousness of being a child, and happened to meet my father, I should have no sense of the duties and affections belonging to me as a child. In order to have right affections I must be *in* the relationship to which the affections belong, and I must *know* that I am in it too. The relationship must be known as mine, in order to possess the affections belonging to it. I cannot love God as a father, if I am not sure whether or not I am His child. Now the importance of this is that a full settled knowledge of *salvation* is the spring and foundation of our duties to God—not only the knowledge of the fact of salvation, but of what that *salvation* has brought me into. *It* has made me a child, and I am bound to walk

and feel as a child. It is so if I take Christ as he presents himself at the end of the Book of Revelation ; immediately the Spirit and the bride say: Come. If I do not *know* that I belong to the bride of Christ, how can I, when he presents himself to me, say to him : Come ? It is the relationship in which *I am*, from which all must flow, and no duties and affections are rightly founded until we know ourselves to be in this relationship to God. There may be a craving after the thing, and there will be. If I am an orphan I would give anything to have a father ; but I can not have the affections of a child, because I have not got a father to love me. Wherever the divine nature is, there is the spring of these thoughts and feelings of love to God and of holiness ; but I can not have them in perfection for my soul, because I have not the constant enjoyment of my relationship. A law may be imposed upon a person, but it *never* produces any *affection*. There may be a law which *claims* certain feelings and affections from me, but that gives me no consciousness of the relationship by which these affections are produced ; consequently it gives me no power. This is the real character of law. Instead of being founded on a relationship that is existing, it promises that by keeping it, I shall get life. If I keep the law without having real life, I am to get life by keeping it.

This principle is clearly laid down in Scripture—duty called for in order to the obtaining of life ; but *never* does it *produce* the thing. Law claims from man what he ought to be, but it does not and can not place man in any relationship with God in which he may enjoy the blessings that belongs to God. Now it is not so with Christ ; he *does* bring us, by the salvation which he has wrought, into relationship with God ; he *gives* us a known, settled place before God ; and then our affections and duties flow from the place we are in. They are not the means of obtaining the place, but that which belongs to the place we are in. If we are the children of God we ought to have the affections and aims that characterize this relationship. So if we are the bride of Christ, we ought to have the feelings and wishes of one that is such. In whatever way Christ is spoken of, it should at once call forth a response from the hearts of his saints. Whatever may be said as to his titles or offices, or what he is, the effect of speaking of him with whom we are in relationship, is to awaken feelings in our heart of what he is to *us*. For instance, if I were to speak to a child of its father, as one who had eminently distinguished himself as a hero, or a statesman,

the child's feeling at once would be: That is my father. He would not say: That is a great conqueror. The child's feeling would be: That great man is my father. So it would be with a wife. If she were told that such a person had greatly distinguished himself in any place, and she knew it was her husband, she would say: That is my husband; because all this glory awoke in the mind of the child or the wife, consciousness of the relationship in which they stood to the one to whom they belonged. Now this is the case with the Church of God. You can not speak of any glory of Christ or of God, that does not awaken in the heart of the saint the consciousness of what God and Christ are to itself. This is characteristic of the existence of such a relationship, and the affections that belong to it. You can not speak of one with whom others are in relationship without awakening in their hearts the sense of what the person is to them. When God is named, the child cries: Father. Is Jesus alluded to, the redeemed at once answer: "Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in his own blood." Christ, the bright and morning star, is announced, and immediately the bride says: "Come."

" FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP."

"O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in ME is thy help found."—
(Hos. XIII., 9.)

"I began, and have always gone on with the sense that all was ruined, and that we must look to GOD, who can not fail us, in and out of the ruin. *The Lord suffices for all the states of his church and people. He can not fail.* And it is there faith has its hold—a hold no power of Satan, or anything else, can effect; GOD IS its force, and Christ has already accomplished the victory. Our position and circumstances may be changed; sorrow may accompany our march; but *faith* rests always the same, because it rests on GOD, who changes not; and with intelligence of the circumstances (for it is thus with faith) rests on GOD for them. For it is of *what is*, that God occupies himself, not of *what is not*. If I descend to the bottom of what really is, I shall find GOD there. This is what Christ ever did, and found the power of GOD in resurrection. He was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father. Faith always does this. But it requires simplicity of faith to do this—to descend to the bottom;

for one must count on GOD, notwithstanding the death of all that flesh leans upon ; so Abraham, so all who have found the power of GOD. Can He be in aid of the flesh? The Cross is an answer to that."

"THERE is not one thought in the crowd of eternal ideas ; there is not one moment in the duration of eternal ages ; there is not one note in the compass of the everlasting song, that is separated from the cross of Christ."

"I SAW A LAMB AS IT HAD BEEN SLAIN."

(Rev. v., 6.)

Lamb of God! thou now art seated
High upon thy Father's throne ;
All thy gracious work completed
All thy mighty victory won—
Every knee in heaven is bending
To the *Lamb* for sinners slain ;
Every voice and harp is swelling,
Worthy is the *Lamb* to reign.

Lord, in all this power and glory,
Still thy thoughts and eyes are here,
Watching o'er thy ransom'd people,
To thy gracious heart so dear.
Thou for us art interceding,
Everlasting is thy love,
And a blessed rest preparing,
In our Father's house above.

Lamb of God! Thou soon in glory
Wilt to this sad earth return ;
All thy foes shall quake before thee,
All that now deeply thee mourn.
Soon thy saints shall rise to meet thee,
With thee in thy kingdom reign ;
Thine the praise, and thine the glory,
Lamb of God! for sinners slain.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q.—A sister writes us: "Many think '*Sound Words*' too deep."

A.—We desire to take note of this remark and profit by it, going to the Lord to enable us to put forth truth in a simple and acceptable form, as well as to grant dear children of God the spirituality that shall render them able to receive the "deep things of God," as well as the elementary truths of the gospel. We seize this opportunity of earnestly inviting our readers to comment freely on what is put before them, and by questions to make known their wants and difficulties, so that their need of soul may come before us for prayer, and seeking to the Lord to give them through these pages "food convenient."

RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT WORKS.

(Continued from page 45.)

"I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go. I will guide thee with mine eye. Be ye not as the horse or as the mule which have no understanding; whose mouth must be held in with bit and bridle lest they come near unto thee."

Under the blessedness of transgression forgiven, sin covered, and iniquity not imputed, comes in a new order of guidance, the guidance of the eye; even the eye of Him who has justified us freely by his grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.

When it pleased Jehovah to redeem Israel out of Egypt he himself became their guide. Israel needed guidance; and Jehovah went before them in a pillar of a cloud by day, and a pillar of fire by night. He thus went before them to search out a resting place for them in the wilderness. They pitched or struck their tents at the moving or settling of the pillar of the cloud. "The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys." This surely was blessed guidance—in strict keeping with the character of redemption then manifested—a shadow of a far deeper reality—but it was not intelligent guidance. There was no communion of soul with Jehovah needed to apprehend this guidance: "the cloud of the Lord was in the sight of Israel throughout all their journeys."

But now the very end of redemption is to bring us into communion with the thoughts and ways of God, and such a guidance could not be suitable to our standing. "The servant knoweth not what his master doeth." He goes and comes at his bidding, but he knows not the reason of either. Such a character of obedience would not suit those who know the blessedness of transgression forgiven, and are thereby admitted into the very thoughts and counsels of God. "We have the mind of Christ." The obedience now suitable to the saints is intelligent obedience, "understanding what the will of the Lord is"—"proving his good, perfect, and acceptable will." Now just in proportion as the guidance is of a higher order, so is it more difficult; and there is ever a readiness in us, from this very difficulty, to take the lower order of providential guidance, instead of the guidance of the eye. The "Directorship" practiced in the Romish Church, may as

readily be accounted for, on the principle of relief from the exercise of conscience before God, as on the principle of priestly domination. It is far more congenial to the natural heart to have the conscience kept by another, than to have it exercised before God. And the plea of infallibility has a charm in it, because it saves us the trouble of judging before God, what is truth and what is error—what is right and what is wrong. If the real power against the fundamental doctrine of Popery is found alone in the doctrine of "righteousness without works," the practical use of this truth in leading our souls into habitual intercourse with God, is the alone preservative from the principle of "directorship." It is not the guidance of the eye of God, to follow an individual Christian, or a congregation of Christians. The provision of God in the blessed truth of righteousness without works, is that the conscience of each individual should be in direct connection with *Himself*. And is there any instance on record where even Christian legislation for the Church has not trenched on God's prerogative, of having to do with the consciences of individuals. Apostolic authority dare not come in between God and the conscience. I utterly repudiate the idea of each man doing what is right in his own eyes, but I do most strenuously assert the truth of God's right to have to do with the conscience; and of the believer's *privilege*—I say not duty—to have his conscience exercised before God. "Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." "Whatever is not of faith is sin." And is it not the necessary fault of every Church Establishment, that it arrogates to itself the right to settle those things which God has left to be settled by the conscience exercised before him; and thus the very obedience of saints is regulated, not by God, but by the convention of the religious Society to which they belong. We are members of one body, and members one of another; but our healthful corporate action must be hindered, if we leave out the important addition, that we are severally members of Christ. How needed is intercourse with God, to guide the conduct of a saint. And it is for neglect of this intercourse that we bring much discipline on ourselves. God will have his way with us. But we are as the horse or mule, which have no understanding; we do not understand the will of God because we study not the guidance of his eye; we are led by circumstances, and not by the Spirit, wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty, we walk in a large place, when we walk before the Lord. How often do we turn each one his

own way, and then God has his bit and bridle for us. This he is wont to use for his enemies. "Because thy rage against me, and thy tumult is come up into mine ears, therefore will I put my hook in thy nose, and my bridle in thy lips, and I will turn thee back by the way which thou camest." Alas! how constantly do we as his saints, to our shame be it spoken, need the bit and bridle to turn us back by the way we have come. Who is there that has not to confess, that the *right* path, which would have been readily found, had heed been given to the guidance of the eye, has been reached after much painful and humbling discipline. Amidst the manifold proofs of present conscious weakness, this appears to me very prominent, the little confidence which the saints have of spiritual guidance in their several paths. They walk not as those consciously led of the Spirit. Among many, indeed, such guidance is not acknowledged even as a principle; providential guidance; if so it may be called (for providential control over circumstances, or even our own waywardness, can hardly be called guidance), is alone regarded. But where the principle of intelligent spiritual guidance is maintained as the privilege of the saint, how readily do we take hold of providential ordering as our ground of action. Hence we tread uncertainly: or we may follow the steps of others; but this is walking by sight and not by faith, and arises from the habit of only using our blessedness as a shelter, and not as that which introduces us into the presence of God. It is a beautiful description of the Thessalonians, that their "work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ," was "in the sight of God and our Father."

To Israel God showed his *acts*; but he made his *way* known to Moses, the one with whom he conversed familiarly, as a man talketh with his friend. Surely God has by his grace introduced us into intimacy with himself that we too might know his ways.

(Conclusion in next number.)

FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

"WITHOUT shedding of blood is no remission," or forgiveness of sins, and "where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sins." Such is the brief and weighty testimony of Scripture upon this momentous question, which, for a sinner, and hence for every one, "for *all* have sinned," yields

in importance to no other. Forgiveness of sins lies at the threshold of all blessing for man. It is where God begins with man, and where man begins with God. If God does not *forgive* the sinner, he *must judge* him; and if man does not know he is forgiven, he can not be happy in God's presence, or, at rest, in view of the judgment seat. The conscience must *be purged*, or there can be no settled peace with God. Now the ground upon which God can righteously pardon the sinner, is also the only ground upon which the soul can be at peace with God as to the question of sins. God's eye *rests* eternally upon that which enables him to forgive sin; the conscience, which is the eye of the sinner, must *rest* there, too, exclusively. Now the first of the Scriptures which we have quoted, gives us the only ground upon which sins can be forgiven: "Without shedding of *blood* there is no remission;" a sacrificed victim, with its blood poured out, forms the meeting-place between God and the sinner. In every type and shadow, from Abel down, this weighty truth has been maintained. Death must come in in another between God and the living sinner, or he must judge him. The sinner *must* come to God over a blood-stained mercy-seat, and God must come to the sinner under the shelter of the blood, or coming must cut him off in judgment. Under a type, we have this double truth simply and blessedly taught us in God's way of dealing with Israel in the Land of Egypt. He was about to come down to that land in judgment, but he would righteously pardon and save his people in it. He *himself* provides them with a ground of pardon and a way of escape from impending judgment. A lamb spotless and unblemished is sacrificed; type of the Lord Jesus crucified on the cross, and the blood of the lamb is put by the believing Israelite upon "the two side posts and on the upper door-post of the house" wherein they were, and the testimony of the Lord was: "and the blood shall be to you for a *token* upon the house where ye are; and when I see the BLOOD, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt." The ground of pardon was the blood of a victim that had been judged in their stead. Their faith acknowledged that ground, and sprinkled it, so to speak, upon themselves. It was a "*token*" to them of how they looked in the presence of God, and when "I see the blood" upon you, God said, "I will pass over." They could peacefully behold the God of judgment, as with his glittering sword, he passed through the land of Egypt, while they sat in safety within those blood-sprinkled

lintels. The *blood* barred the entrance of the destroying angel ; he righteously passed them over ; judgment for them was already passed, and they were in God's presence, "justified by blood ;" all their sins being put away in the blood of the lamb that sheltered them. It is thus, "mercy rejoiceth against judgment," and God becomes "the just, and yet the justifier." If this was so in type and shadow, how blessedly does the truth shine out, when we come to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things, "the precious blood of Christ as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." The ground of *eternal redemption and forgiveness of sins* has been laid in "the blood of Christ, who, by the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God." Eighteen hundred years since, this blood, "shed for the remission of sins," flowed from the side of Christ, the Son of God, as he hung sacrificed and dead on the cross of Calvary. That blessed one has been raised from the dead, is now seated at God's right hand in heaven, and God sets "forth *Jesus*, a mercy-seat, through faith in his *blood*." To go to God through any one but Jesus, the mercy-seat ; or through Jesus, by faith in anything but "his blood," is to reject the ground of pardoning mercy, and to call down judgment upon the soul from God ; in the very act that approaches him. There is "but one *Mediator* between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." There is but one *ground* of mediation, the blood of the Mediator. To come in any other name, or on any other ground whatever ; to add anything to that name or ground, is to lose all, and to trample under foot "the Son of God, and count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and to do despite to the Spirit of grace." If God is the just, and the justifier of the one, he is by that very ground, the righteous judge of the other.

Dear reader, upon what ground do you, *at this moment*, stand before God ? Have you peace with God ? Are your sins forgiven ? If you are standing before God, simply, upon the "blood of the Lamb," God is at peace with you, for Christ has made peace by "the blood of his cross," and that on which you stand is *your peace with God*. It is this, because your sins are forgiven through that blood, and sin for you is forever put away from God's presence by him, who hath "put away sin by the *sacrifice* of himself." You have now "redemption through *his blood*, the forgiveness of sins." By faith you have accepted the ground of forgiveness, and are forever possessed of *all that ground secures*. God says to you by the Holy Spirit, come down from heaven : "Your

sins and iniquities will I remember no more;" and, as has been well said by another: "The certainty that God will never remember our sins and iniquities, is founded on the steadfast will of God, on the perfect offering of Christ, consequently seated at the right hand of God, and on the sure testimony of the Holy Ghost. It is a matter of faith that God will never remember our sins." But another blessed truth meets us here, as a consequence of sins being forever forgiven or remitted; there is "no more offering for sin." The one sacrifice having obtained remission, no other is required. The typical sacrifices could not do this, however fully believed in by the godly Israelite, "for the law having a shadow of good things, and not the very image of the things, can never, with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect." Could they have purged the conscience, as having purged the person before God, they would have ceased to be offered. The work of Christ has done this; "for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified," and the consequence of this is, that where the sacrifice of Christ is fully accepted, the conscience is forever perfected, has "no more conscience of sins," in God's sight judicially. There is no repetition of the sacrifice, and there is no resprinkling of the blood on the worshiper, and he can always, as a worshiper, once purged, draw near, "with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, having his heart sprinkled from an evil conscience." Not only has Christ sat down, as having completed his sacrifice, and put away sin, but as having offered it in its efficacy for his people to God; he is no longer standing and ministering daily, as the priest did under the type; for "this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God." He is now neither sacrificing nor presenting his sacrifice to God for acceptance, which is what Popery is doing, but has sat down as to both these acts. He is now pleading: "ever liveth to make intercession" for the people whom he has saved and brought to God in all the efficacy of that precious blood, by which he has put forever away all their sins, and "obtained eternal redemption" for them. The believer, resting in this blessed place before God, says: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace," and already sings the new song of adoring worship to the Lamb in the midst of the throne: "Thou art worthy to take the book and to open the seals thereof; for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

SAVED BY THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD.

"Thy righteousness, O God, is very high, who has done great things? God, who is like unto thee! Thou which hast shown me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side."—PSALM lxxi., 19-21.

THIS passage describes the righteousness of God. It is God's character as such, displayed in righteous acts, and handed over in the gospel to the sinner for acceptance by faith, as the grounds of his justification.

There was a young officer in the army some eight years ago, who was brought to the knowledge of Christ by these words. He was brought up religiously, by a godly mother; but on going to school lost every good impression, and lived in uncleanness, wickedness, and sin. Strong convictions seized hold of him at one time, and a correspondence opened with a Christian governess, who for a long time had been in the house, engaged in the education of his sisters. But it was like the morning cloud and early dew that passes away. Pleasure carried him away, and a desire to be the greatest at every game and amusement was his only aim and object. His eldest sister's admonitions, who had been brought to Christ, were rejected with scorn, and he plunged deeper and deeper into sin. He entered the army at about the age of seventeen and a half; and, as most young officers, gave himself up to gambling, billiards, and pleasure. Night after night was spent in the billiard-room, till he was reduced to a skeleton. At Portsmouth he had hairbreadth escapes out hunting. Once madly urging his horse onward, he was run away with, and charged right on another man and horse. He was thrown right under another horse, and if the horse had kicked would in all human probability have been killed. After death the judgment. He had during the winter leave serious convictions, again only to vanish on his return to his regiment. During the spring of 1860 he was brought very low. He was ashamed even to look at his brother officers in the face, and gloomy thoughts of death, and even suicide, used to take possession of him. It, however, wore off in the summer, and in the autumn he used to spend almost whole nights at the gambling table, in Dublin. Even there the Lord followed him, and as his heart used to beat over the excitement, the sudden thought of plunging into the flames of hell would seize upon him. He went home that winter. His mother saw the haggard look, the thirst after pleasure; and one day she burst out in the fullness of

her heart, telling of the awful results of such a course, and exhorting him to turn to God, and flee to Jesus who had died for him. He answered: "Mother, its no use your talking to mo. I have tried again and again to be good, and now I have given it up as a bad job. Cease talking to me." However, the words stuck to him. Try once more, was the thought in his mind. He began reading the Bible, and praying three times a day. He attended a faithful ministry; and one day his youngest sister persuaded him to go to the sacrament. The mother would not let his sister go, and he in a rage was almost giving it up. However, she again persuaded him to go. Just after the sermon, the thought came into his heart. I am not worthy to take the memorials of Christ's love. He was broken down before God for the first time. His sins rushed up before him, and with strong crying and tears he fell on his knees, and confessed all to God. God's Spirit thus working in him, he took the elements. From that time a real work of grace began in his soul. He was suddenly ordered back to his regiment, which was ordered to Canada. A consciousness of something possessed which he had never got before, gave him a wholesome dread of falling away, for he did not know the liberty of Christ yet. Gambling, swearing, and uncleanness were given up now, and his fellow officers noticed the change. He knelt down in fear and trembling in prayer before his brother officers, on his way up the country. Though outwardly changed, however, he was daily discovering his inward wretchedness. A legal spirit brought him under condemnation, and all the terrors of a broken law, and having to do with a righteous God, were before his soul. As he daily read the Word of God, he seemed to get worse and worse, and often was he tempted to give up in despair. At length the regiment reached its destination in Canada. Here, however, matters grew worse, and he was about to throw up all in despair. One morning he read the 71st Psalm, in which he found many passages that suited his own case at this juncture. It was marching out day for the soldiers. He was walking sadly and gloomily by the side of his men, thinking over his lost condition, despairing ever to work out a righteousness of his own, which he had been trying to do, when the words of the 71st Psalm, verse 20, in Tyndale's translation, came home to his heart: "Oh, what great troubles and adversities hast thou shown me, and yet didst thou turn and refresh me, and broughtest me from the depths of the earth again." Jesus filled the eye of his soul His death as bearing the judgment

of sin, and as the full payment of the debt he owed to God. His resurrection, as the reward of his glorifying God on the earth was brought before him. Though he did not understand it, yet he did see that the work was finished, that righteousness was his by God's free gift, and that he stood complete in Christ, sin having been all put away. His soul was filled with glory. He forgot everything. Christ filled every avenue of his soul. He thought no one in the world had received such a revelation before. Though not publicly confessing it, the light could not help shining. The light shone, and God was glorified, though, alas! greatly hindered by the "fear of man, which bringeth a snare." He soon found that the Lord's service was far greater joy than amusements and pleasure, and one after another of the latter fell off, though, alas! the flesh for a long time hindered the full development of the new life. He was a soul saved by the righteousness of God.

Dear reader, are you thus saved? Have you this righteousness in the *sight of God*? Nothing but the personal knowledge of this can give present peace with God. The righteousness of God, accepted by faith, will alone avail in the day of judgment, or stand the searching eye of a righteous and holy God. Christ's death and resurrection are God's righteous acts in man, for man's justification. The first Adam disobeyed, death was the penalty. The second Adam, the man Christ Jesus on the cross, entered into man's place of separation from God, though himself perfect, was made sin, and suffered death. God's righteousness judged sin. (Matt. xxvii., 45, 46; Mark xv., 33, 34; Rom. viii., 3; 2 Cor. v., 21.) The second Adam obeyed, glorified God in life and death. Life and glory was given him, as man, in righteousness. The righteous God gave it him, and I see a perfect man at God's right hand, who is the righteousness of God. That man is Christ. That Christ is yours, if you believe in his name. (Rom. v., 18, 19; viii., 31-33; Phil. ii., 8, 9; 2 Cor. v., 21.) God is for man, and man for God in the person of the Christ. Reader, are you a sinner (1 Tim. i., 15), an ungodly one (Rom. iv., 5), an enemy (Rom. v., 10)? Then, *blessed be God*, you can claim Jesus as God's gift to you. Now is the accepted time (2 Cor. vi., 2). Take Christ, and all he is, and has done on the cross for the sinner, is yours. Christ himself, as risen from the dead after having put away sin, and glorified God in doing so, is the righteousness in which the believer stands accepted now before God. God's righteousness is displayed in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the grand subject of the

epistle to the Romans. Not Christ keeping the law for me, for I was never as a Gentile under law. (Rom. ii., 14.) Nor is it a righteousness worked out apart from the person, and put on me a child of Adam as a covering; but I have it in the person himself, Christ in whom I stand accepted, who is living now for me at the right hand of God. The righteousness of God, is God's character as such (thy righteousness, O God, is very high), displayed in his own acts (who hast done great things), and handed over in Christ for acceptance by faith in the sinner, for his justification or righteousness. (Rom. ii., 5 to 26.) These acts are the death and resurrection of Christ. "Thou which hast shown me great and sore troubles, hast quickened me again, and hast brought me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side." (Psalm lxxi., 20.) God showed the man Christ Jesus these troubles. He judged sin on the cross. But so much was he therein glorified, that he quickened the man who glorified him, and put him at his own right hand, in the highest place of exaltation, and gave him the Comforter for his people who believe on him. It is revealed in the gospel, but is not all the gospel. (Rom. i., 16, 17.) It is linked on in the Old Testament with salvation. (Isaiah xlv., 22-24; xlvi., 13; li., 5, 6; lvi., 1; liv., 17; lxi., 10.) Likewise in Psalms cxxxii., 9-16, and in other places. We Christians are made the righteousness of God in Christ; but where? Placed as he is at God's right hand, in righteousness and glory. That is our place. It is a righteous thing for God to put us there, for Christ was made sin for us; but our place is in Christ, not by Christ keeping the law for us. Where the righteousness of faith, or of God by faith is mentioned, it is not the righteousness of the man Christ Jesus keeping the law imputed to me; but it is God's righteousness displayed in Christ's death and resurrection, handed over in Christ to faith in me, and that is my righteousness, my sins are forgiven, my old Adam nature judged, and at an end before God. Christ risen is my righteousness, eternal life in him, my portion; and as Christ is, so am I now in this world.

HOW A JEW FOUND CHRIST.

AN EXTRACT.

I BECAME acquainted with a very intelligent Jew in the city of Montreal. His father, I am informed, was a wealthy

banker in Germauy. I heard this Jew relate his Christian experience in a fellowship meeting, the substance of which, in his broken English, was this : "The Spirit of de Lord take hold of my heart in my fader's house in Germany. He make me feel so bad, I could not eat my food or take any rest.

"My fader said to me : 'Why you no be happy? You mope round, just as miserable as can be. Plenty of money, why you no be happy?'

"I say : 'Fader, I find no place for my soul. De money won't buy a place for my soul. I lie down and die one day, and den what good de money to me, and where go my poor soul?'

"By-and-by I reads in a paper about one Dr. F., a Jewish Rabbi, in Canada, dat find Messiah. I says to myself ; I go to Canada to find dat Rabbi dat find Messiah. When I come to Canada, I ask de first thing : 'Where is Dr. F.?' and dey tell me dat he live in de city of Hamilton. When I go to the city of Hamilton, he not at home. I no find him for two weeks. Then one man show him me at a public meeting, and I look at him till de meeting was out ; and as he came, I say to him : 'You Dr. F. ?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'You Jewish Rabbi?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'You find Messiah?'

" 'Yes.'

" 'Will you give me two lessons, and I pay you.'

"Dr. F. say : 'Come to my house, and I give you many lessons, and not charge anything.'

"But I say : 'Oh, no, Dr. F. ;' and he talk to me, and talk to me, and talk to me, but I no find Messiah.

"Den I go to de Catholic Church, and talk to de priest to find Messiah.

"De priest, he tell me about de baptism and de holy water ; and I say : 'Go away with your water ; I want to find a place for my soul !'

"Den I go back to Dr. F., and he say : 'You Hebrew scholar? Now take your Hebrew Bible, and read what the ancient prophets say about the Messiah. Take your pen and write down de exact description dey give of him, especially the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah ; and when you get de prophetic directions how to find Messiah, take your Greek Testament, and search, and you will find, as face answereth face in a glass, so de New Testament answers to de Old, and

dat everything de old prophets say about Messiah was fulfilled exactly in de person of Jesus of Nazareth. When your judgment be convinced, den bow down on your knees, and pray to God, in the name of Jesus, and you find Messiah in your heart. He save you from all your sins.' So I follow de instructions that Dr. F. ; he did give me ; and my judgment he got convinced, and I bow on my knees, and I cry : ' O Got of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob ; Got of my faders ; I pray to dec in de name of dy dear, suffering son, Jesus Christ ; I be convinced from dy holy books of de Old and New Testaments dat He be Messiah which Dow hast sent into de world to save sinners. Dow knows what a great sinner I am ; but Jesus comes to save de chief of sinners. I trust my soul to him ; I believe he can save me. O Got, have mercy on my poor soul, and save me from my sins for Jesus' sake. I believe all Dow has say about Jesus, and I take him as my Savior.' While I pray, I feel more and more bad, and I tot my poor soul he must go to hell. Den, I say, if Jesus Christ bore my sins in his own body, and redeemed my soul with his own blood, my soul he no need to go to hell. Den I give my soul to Jesus ; I believe in Jesus, and just as quick as lightning, I finds Messiah. He save me from my sins. He fill my soul wid unspeakable joy. My soul he find a home in Jesus. He abide in Jesus now for tree years, and I know him more and more, and love him with all my heart." He proceeded to tell of some remarkable answers to prayer he had experienced, and such was the artless simplicity of his story, and the light and unction of the Holy Spirit shining through his broken utterances, that when he sat down, there were but few dry eyes in that large assembly.

HUMILITY.

" O PRAY that I may be a good soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ ; but above all, ask for me *humility*. A humble man can come to no harm ; he will be ever trusting in the Lord, because he finds nothing in himself to trust in, while he gives great glory to God by trusting in him. God gives him great grace, and this grace is to keep alive an abiding sense of what he is in himself ; to show his ignorance and helplessness ; to open to him daily more of the mystery of iniquity ; to discover to him the stirrings of corruption, which others feel not, and make him sensible of these, even in duties and ordinances,

that he may loathe himself and his very best works. These are the fruits of true grace ; and he that is under the teachings of the Holy Ghost will abound in them. The more God does in the heart, the more he humbles it. The great design of his grace is to bring the proud sinner low, and then to keep him low. When he hath brought us low, we do not like to be kept there, we want to get up again ; our foolish desire is, that he may do something in us, for which we may have a good opinion of ourselves ; and so with this thought we are apt to wish : ' Oh, that I were more holy ! ' ' Oh, that I could pray better ! ' ' Oh, that I was more spiritual in duties ! ' ' Oh, that I was thankful enough ! ' If you could come to the true nature of these wishes (specious as they appear), you would find them spring from the secret workings of a proud, self-righteous spirit ; take off their cloak of holiness, and their meaning is this : ' I wish God would give me something for which I might be pleased with myself.' If this was the case, would not the eye be turned inward upon this *very good self*, and be drawn off from looking unto Jesus ? And so far as self is made something, Christ is made nothing. You may depend upon this as one of the surest axioms of divinity : ' Whatsoever it be that makes you pleased with yourself, that is not true grace ; and whatsoever makes you displeased with yourself is not true grace, unless it bring you humble to Christ, and make you put more trust in him.' The Lord teach you these things practically ! I have learned them by long experience. Though I know but little, yet I am getting on in Christ's school, and hope soon to be in the *lowest form*, for there we learn most and fastest ; we there depend entirely on the teaching of our divine Master, who reveals his secrets to none but babes. A new-born babe depends absolutely on the care of its parents, so must we depend on God, on Christ our prophet and teacher ; and when we are brought thus humble, he will then make known to us what he hides from the wise and prudent. I would wish you, therefore, the humblest man upon earth ; that not only you may know most, but love most. He that feels his sins and miseries, his vilness and unprofitableness, with the deepest loathings of them, is in the fittest way to love Christ. His own vilness sets forth Christ's grace, his unworthiness the worthiness of the Lamb, the sufficiency of Jesus, who is *all in all*. When you are going to measure Christ's grace do not get upon a mountain, but go down into a valley—lower still, to the belly of hell, from thence Jonah cried ; from thence see the heights of Jesus' grace, and from

thence see how lovely he is. When the spirit of Jesus is humbling you, showing you your deceitful, wicked heart, laying open your ruined nature in all its abominable workings—has not this often discouraged you, my friend, and instead of loving Christ more, and trusting him more, did it not weaken your trust and lessen your love? May he teach you better; that every future discovery of sin may greatly endear that Lamb of God to you, whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Depend upon it that is the only *true humbling for sin, which makes his blood more precious*. Be faithful to your own heart; stop here a moment; look back and read what, from one thing to another, I have written to you, and examine if you do not begin to fear for the interests of duty and holy obedience. If the more I *feel* sin, I may trust Christ the more, and love Christ the more, what place is left for obeying? Is that your thought? To which I answer: 'The humblest man not only knows most, and loves most, but also obeys most.' Is not grace the principle of gospel obedience? And does not God give grace to the *humble*? Grace to do all things? Grace to suffer all things? What says he who was less than the least in his own eyes? 'Oh, I can do all things through Christ, who gives me strength!' The humblest lean most on Christ's strength; and, therefore, through that strength, which is almighty, he can do most. Show me a seemingly humble man, who does not love duty, and I will show you his pride; but let me see a truly humble man, and I am sure to find him walking humbly with his God. He walks with God, and God walks with him. Hear how he declares who are his favorites! Not the rich; not the learned; not the Pharisee; not the great and noble. No; but 'to this man will I look, who is of an humble and contrite spirit, and who trembleth at *my word*.'"

ROMAINE.

"FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP."

SERVICE.

CONNECT your service with nothing but God—not with any particular set of persons. You may be comforted by fellowship, and your heart refreshed; but you must work by your own individual faith and energy without leaning on any one whatever; for if you do, you can not be a faithful servant. Service must ever be measured by faith, and one's *own communion with God*. Saul even may be a prophet when he gets among the prophets; but David was always the same; in

the cave or anywhere. While the choicest blessings given me here are in fellowship, yet a man's service must flow from himself, else there will be weakness. If I have the word of wisdom, I must use it for the saint who may seek my counsel. It is : "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." But, also : "Let every one prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another." There is no single place grace brings us into, but is a place of temptation, and that we can not escape, though we shall be helped through. In every age the blessing has been from individual agency ; and the moment it has ceased to be this, it has declined into the world. 'Tis humbling, but it makes us feel that all comes immediately from God. The tendency of association is to make us lean upon one another.

Where there are great arrangements for carrying on work, there is not the recognition of this inherent blessing which "tarricth not for the sons of men." I don't tarry for man, if I have faith in God. I act upon the strength of that. Let a man act as the Lord leads him. The Spirit of God is not to be fettered by man.

All power arises from the direct authoritative energy of the Holy Ghost in the *individual*. Paul and Barnabas (Acts xiii.) were sent forth by the Holy Ghost, recommended to the grace of God by the Church at Antioch, but they had no communication with it till they returned, and then there was the joyful concurring of love in the service that had been performed. He that had talents went and traded. Paul says : "Immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood." Where there is a desire to act, accompanied by real energy, a man will rise up and walk, but if he can not do this, the energy is not there ; and the attempt to move is only restlessness and weakness.

Love for souls sets one to work. I know no other way.

The 17th of John opens up to us the heart of the Father toward his children, and the 15th of Luke, the heart of God toward poor sinners. I hardly know which is the sweetest to look upon. Are we in company with such a God? In the 15th of Luke, Jesus stumbles the worldly religious people by identifying himself with sinners in their necessities : eats with them to give them confidence. The vilest sinner finds a home in the arms of Jesus, and one ready to be the friend of publicans and sinners. One come to seek and save them. Do our characters suit Him and docs His suit us? Are we to ourselves as publicans and sinners, that we may fully know Him in His character as the friend of such? Are we, too, cat-

ing with the same heart as He had with poor sinners? He drew to his heart those who had no title but their sins, and rags, and filth,—the vilest of the vile,—breaking their hard hearts with his love. Is our bosom thus open to our arms thus outstretched? I see Jesus bringing out grace from God that comes down to the chiefest of sinners. Are we drawing down the same grace for such?

When Christ is working in a heart, there will be the tenderest consideration for others, there will be straight paths made for lame feet.

We want to have the God of peace with us, so as to have humbleness about evil, affections occupied with good.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q.—A much esteemed brother makes the following remark on "The Thief on the Cross," in the January number of "Sound Words."—"The teachings on page 14, is open, I think, to criticism—it seems to be taught that the *old* nature is renewed. I do not so understand being "born again." "Have you experienced this change?" is asked.

A.—Anything that tends to elucidate truth is happy and desirable. We can answer for the writer of the paper under criticism, that we feel sure he had no intention of conveying the idea that being "born again" means "having the old nature renewed." Perhaps it would have been better had he more clearly stated what being born again really is, instead of only bringing out into relief the effects that flow from the possession of a new nature, and interrogating his readers as to whether they had consciously experienced this change. We desire to give no uncertain sound upon this subject, for we hold that an "*absolutely new nature*" is communicated. Man is not only lost in person and ruined in nature, but the old nature is *unrenewable* and God's way of dealing with it, is by destroying it by death, in the cross of Christ. "Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be *destroyed*, that henceforth we might not serve sin, for he that is *dead* is freed from sin." (Rom. vi., 6.) Flesh, or the old man, "is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." The law could get no righteousness out of man, it was "weak through the flesh," and God's way of getting righteousness out of man is not by renewing the flesh or old nature, but, as a means to an end, "sending his own Son

in the *likeness* of sinful flesh, and as a sacrifice for sin, *condemning sin in the flesh.*" (Rom. viii., 3.) The cross is not only the judgment of the sins of man, but it is the condemnation of himself, his end judicially before God, as *alive* in flesh. Paul, applying the doctrine of the cross to himself, says: "For I through the law am *dead* to the law, that I might live unto God." He then states how he has become dead to the law, and how he gets the life in which he lives to God. "I am *crucified with Christ*; nevertheless I live; yet *not I*, but *Christ* liveth in me." (Gal. ii., 18-19.) Christ crucified and dead is his crucifixion and death. *Christ risen* from the dead is his life. He states the same truth in Eph. ii., 5, for the whole Church: "Even when we were *dead* in sin, hath *quickened us together with Christ.*" Being in life "*risen with Christ,*" we are to "*seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.*" (Col. iii., 3.) Then our affections are not to be set on things on earth, because "*we are dead and our life is hid with Christ in God and when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall we appear with him in glory.*" The means by which this new life is communicated is by the word of God in the power of the Holy Spirit. "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." (1 Pct. i., 23.) Which is just what is stated in the 3d of John: "Except a man be *born again* of water and of the Spirit, he can not enter into the kingdom of God." The water being clearly the word of God under a figure, as we learn from Eph. v., 26, "*the washing of water by the word.*"

Q.—A sister requests "an exposition of the truth contained in 1 Cor. xiv., 34, 35."

A.—The apostle is contrasting the effects of speaking with tongues, which was teaching truth in *foreign languages* not understood by those present, with that of prophesying, which was the bringing out of fresh truth, or the application of that which was known to the heart and conscience, in a language which they did understand. The consequence of an unbeliever witnessing the first would be, that not understanding it, he would say they (Christians) were mad; whereas, if he came into the Church and heard one was speaking a language which he understood, his *conscience* would be affected by what he heard, and he would feel that God was there in their midst, was personally present in the church, which is the habitation of God through the Spirit. The apostle is correct.

ing the folly of the Corinthians, who were boasting themselves of gifts of power, as tongues were, which made the possessors of them great in their own eyes and the eyes of others, while neither they nor their hearers understood what was said, no interpreter being present. The blessed thing was to be able to bring truth, which the person himself enjoyed, home to the hearts and consciences of others. He says in verse 5: "I would that ye all spake with tongues (foreign languages), but rather that ye prophesied; for *greater* is he that prophesieth than he that speaketh with tongues, except it be interpreted, that the church may receive edifying;" adding, further on, that he thanks God that he spake with tongues more than they all; "yet in the church I had rather speak five words with my understanding, that by my voice I might teach others also, than ten thousand words in an unknown tongue." His soul loved the things of God—loved to receive truth intelligently from him—loved to hold intelligent intercourse with others. A most important principle for all speaking in the assembly, for the end of all speaking is *edification*, and thus all spoken should, in *substance, language, and sound*, subserve this end. Love being the only spring of action, as seeking the good of others according to God.

Q.—A brother inquires: "Is there any rule as to how people should be admitted into an assembly? What I mean is this: has any brother, who has the acknowledged confidence of those in the assembly, the right to say such an one desires fellowship at the Lord's table, and is the one thus proposed to be allowed to break bread at once, or to be kept back one, two, or three weeks, as the case be, so that all in fellowship may have the opportunity of visiting him and agreeing upon his case, before he is admitted to fellowship?"

A.—We are a little afraid of the word "rule" and "right." The Church of God is not an arena where saints carry out "rules" or exercise "rights," but a scene where Christ *rules* "as Son over his own house," maintaining what is due to God. The assembly is the place of God's own *personal* presence, and where he acts mediately through those around him as a testimony to his *own presence*, so that the unbeliever or ignorant report that "God is in your midst of a truth." (1 Cor. xiv., 25.) He is present not merely to act on conscience and heart by the word through gift, but to produce *order and harmony* amid his saints, "for God is not the author of disorder, but of peace, as in all the assemblies of the

saints." (1 Cor. xiv., 33.) All actings in the assembly connect themselves *livingly* with God as present, and become the expression in detail of his *then* mind and will, so that "God in all things may be *glorified* through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter iv., 11.) Practically God acts by his Spirit through the word, let the human instrument be whom he may. Hence it is impossible to lay down *rules* of action. God rules *livingly* though always in *accordance* with the written word. The letter of the word, apart from the Spirit kills, and such it *always* does when man uses it in his will and wisdom, the consequence being scattering and division, by the very means that God has given to gather and bind together. The broad and unvarying principle of receiving to fellowship is given us in Rom. xv., 7: "Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God." If Christ has received some one to God, and that one is known to us as a believer, having sound doctrine, and walking in godliness, we have nothing to do but receive such to fellowship as to the glory of God, and that *at once*. We are presupposing that the state of the person in question is *well* established in the minds of those who are acting for God in the matter, and that they or he as premised have the confidence of the assembly, as able to discern in such matters, so that God's glory in the case in point, which is matter of *the whole assembly*, is confidently intrusted to them or him by the rest. Where the case is not quite *clear* in the way above named, or in the case of one very recently converted, it would be right to wait a while for the Lord to show his mind and will clearly in it, as we are called to fellowship with those *only*, "who call upon the Lord out of a pure heart." (2 Tim. ii., 22.) We are exhorted diligently to look "lest any fail of the grace of God, lest any root be admitted or allowed to spring up to trouble, whereby many would be defiled." (Heb. xii., 15.) The time that this may require, as a question of admission to fellowship, must be left with the Lord. In any case, God's glory and peace amid the saints, in result, must be the guide and "*the fruits of righteousness*, are sown in peace of them that make peace." I would just add, that all believers, whatever their denominational name may be, who are *known* to be walking *godly*, have a full title, in virtue of redemption and membership in the body of Christ, to the "table of the Lord," which is the visible expression of both these truths, and we are bound in the Lord's name to receive them, to what belongs to them through grace equally with ourselves.

P O E T R Y.

"Cast thy burden on the Lord and He shall sustain thee."

Christian, when thy way seems darkest,
 When thine eyes with tears are dim,
 Straight to God thy Father hastening,
 Tell thy troubles all to Him;
 Not to human ear confiding
 Thy sad tale of grief and care,
 But before thy Father kneeling,
 Pour out all thy sorrows there,

Sympathy of friends may cheer thee,
 When the fierce wild storm has burst,
 But God only can console thee
 When it breaks upon thee first;
 Go with words, or tears, or silence,
 Only lay thee at His feet,
 Thou shalt prove how great His pity,
 And His tenderness how sweet.

Think, too, thy divine Redeemer
 Know, as thou canst never know,
 All the deepest depths of suffering,
 All the weight of human woe.
 And though now in glory seated,
 He can hear thy feeblest cry;
 Even hear the stifled sighing,
 Of thy dumb heart's agony.

All thy griefs by Him are ordered,
 Needful is each one for thee,
 Every tear by Him is counted,
 One too much there can not be;
 And if whilst they fall so thickly,
 Thou canst own His way is right,
 Then each bitter tear of anguish
 Precious is in Jesus' sight.

Far too well thy Saviour loves thee,
 To allow thy life to be
 One long, calm, unbroken summer,
 One unruffled, stormless sea;
 He would have thee fondly nestling
 Closer to His loving breast,
 He would have *that* world seem brighter
 Where alone is perfect rest.

Though His wise and loving purpose,
 Clearly yet thou mayst not see,
 Still believe with faith unshaken,
 All will work for good to thee;
 Therefore, when thy way is gloomy,
 And thine eyes with tears are dim,
 Straight to God, thy Father, hastening
 Tell thy sorrow *all* to Him.

RIGHTEOUSNESS WITHOUT WORKS.

(Concluded from page 63.)

"MANY sorrows shall be to the wicked; but he that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about. Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."

Nothing can be more hollow than the mere conventional righteousness of men; it is based on human convenience or selfishness, without any regard to the holiness of God at all; it is simply character, as man estimates character, the most fatal hindrance to the reception of the truth. "How can ye believe who receive honor one of another, and seek not the honor which cometh from God only?" And so strongly does this regard for character act, that even when the judgment is convinced of the truth of God, man is too cowardly to avow his conviction. "Nevertheless, among the chief rulers also, many believed on Him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." There is one way in which we find the Word of God frequently detecting this hollowness, and that is, by the remarkable contrasts which it draws. "Every one that *doeth evil* hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds be reprov'd; but he that *doeth truth*, cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God." Here the human contrast to doing evil, would be doing good; but that would simply be man's estimate of himself, by comparing himself with his fellow-men; but God contrasts man with Himself, and "he that doeth truth" forms his estimate of himself from God. This is the thing needed. The light lays man open to himself, as he is naked and open before God. So, again, God will send "strong delusion on many to believe a lie, because they *loved not the truth*, but had pleasure in *unrighteousness*." In the Psalm before us we find "the wicked" contrasted with him "that trusteth in the LORD." And surely the wicked is he who "submitteth not to the righteousness of God"—the one who will not submit to be saved, as a sinner, by the grace of God, through the redemption which is in CHRIST JESUS, but seeks for righteousness in some other way. To trust in the LORD—how simple, yet how sure! How honoring to God, and yet how happy for ourselves, to give Him credit for having all in Himself which we find not in ourselves—to go out of ourselves for every thing, and to find every craving

answered in CHRIST. GOD knows our need as sinners, and He has provided for that need in CHRIST. Yes, "We are the circumcision who worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in CHRIST JESUS, and have no confidence in the flesh." Such have obtained mercy—such know their need of it. GOD is rich in mercy; He is able not only to add mercy to mercy, but to multiply mercy—yea, to surround them with mercy; or, in the beautiful expression of the English Psalter, "mercy embraceth Him on every side." This is our truthful place. If we look back, "it is not by works of righteousness that we have done, *but according to His mercy* GOD has saved us." And it is "according to His mercy" that He still deals with us; there will be discipline and correction by the way, because it is for our profit; but GOD's rule of dealing with us is according to that which is in Himself—"His mercy." And if we look forward, is the thought of glory connected with our faithfulness or service?—and the thought does arise sometimes to dispirit, and sometimes to set us on a wrong ground of service,—how suitable the word, "looking for the *mercy* of our LORD JESUS CHRIST unto eternal life." We have earned no title to glory. Glory will come to us in the shape of mercy. GOD will make known "the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy which He hath afore prepared unto glory." When Israel came into possession of houses built which they built not, vineyards planted which they planted not, wells digged which they digged not—then the danger was of their forgetting the LORD, and assuming that as their own right, for which they were merely debtors to the grace of GOD.

This is too true a picture of our own hearts. We take as a right that for which we are debtors to mercy alone. We rejoice in the blessing which we have reached in trusting in the LORD; and then we trust in the blessing, and forget the LORD. We only and always stand in grace; we live by faith, we stand by faith; we are constant debtors to mercy. In glory we shall know ourselves eternal debtors to mercy, and a great part of our most humbling discipline is designed to keep us in our right and no less blessed standing. "He that trusteth in the LORD, mercy shall compass him about."

It is interesting to follow the line of thought of the Spirit of GOD—if the expression may be allowed—to see the connection between one part of his utterance and another. It is of great advantage to have a solid substratum of Christian doctrine, such as we frequently find in the Protestant Confessions of Faith. But this, however valuable to detect error

and to prevent headiness and high-mindedness, does not meet the need of the soul. The soul is not satisfied with an accurate theory; it needs the truth to be applied in its wondrous variety. In this psalm the Spirit of God is not treating a subject, but rather carrying out into its blessed results the oracle with which the psalm commences. The "righteous" are not previously mentioned in the psalm; and if we were to take our own thought of "righteous" instead of the thought of the Spirit, we should sadly mistake. But the comment of the HOLY GHOST Himself, by the mouth of His Apostle, in Rom. iv., immediately leads us to connect the last verse of the psalm with the first verse, and to identify "the righteous" here spoken of with those whose blessedness is declared in the oracle with which this psalm commences. And thus, too, we see that the HOLY GHOST, throughout the psalm, is describing the blessedness of those to whom God imputes "righteousness without works;" and closes all, with calling on such to be glad in the LORD and rejoice, just as, by the Apostle, he says: "Rejoice in the LORD always, and again I say rejoice." There is a time coming when "all lands will be called upon to be joyful in the LORD," even after He shall have made known His salvation, and after His righteousness shall have been openly shown to the heathen. But we wait not for circumstances; knowing the LORD, we can and ought to rejoice. And wherefore is it, that others judge, through us, of the Gospel, as though it were a system of privation and renunciation, instead of one of the richest acquirement? Is it not that we try to be glad in ourselves, or in circumstances, instead of in the LORD?—and thus are subject to much variability, instead of living by faith in the Son of God; learning what he is of GOD made unto us, and what we are, and what we have in him. In the most truthful confession before GOD of what we are, we can still "rejoice in the LORD." Before he shows himself publicly—before he manifests in glory to the eyes of all what the Sons of GOD really are—believing, we can rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. And wherefore our deplorable lack of such joy? Is it not that we fail in discerning and carrying out the blessedness of "righteousness without works?" We do not know it experimentally; we do not see its moral beauty; it does not shine with increasing lustre on our souls;—because our souls are not exercised as they should be before GOD. We are, somehow or other, more occupied with that which displays us before men, than with that which displays GOD to us. Hence, we drink

not at the spring-head of joy. O that we could practically tell out to others that God Himself has made us happy, and that we are happy in God!

And the upright in heart are again connected with the blessedness declared in the first verses of this psalm. We read of one whose "heart was not right with God." He had the base thought "that the gift of God might be purchased with money." Now, though no real Christian could entertain the thought that such a gift as Simon coveted is purchasable by money, yet the base thought is in our hearts, to earn something from God, and this hinders uprightness of heart. Surely, uprightness of heart is to maintain our character before God as sinners saved by His grace through the redemption which is in CHRIST JESUS, and to carry with us that character before men. If we forget what we are in ourselves, or what grace has made us to be in CHRIST, we are not upright in heart. It is blessed, indeed, not to have a part to act before God (for such is human religion); but to go before him in the character which he has given to us, in the righteousness with which He Himself hath clothed us. To be upright in heart, is not to draw a line between religious and other duties, but to come to the light to learn ourselves, and learn the glory of God in His grace. There may be human sincerity and human uprightness, the very opposite, as man judges, to hypocrisy; but such natural uprightness may exist and *has existed* where God has not been known or revealed. But now light is come into the world, men may know their real character in the estimate of God; and the condemnation is that "he cometh not to the light." Before God all will be found hypocrites—that is, acting a character—save those who, coming to the light, and learning what they are, in God's judgment have sheltered themselves under the blessedness of "righteousness without works." Such are upright in heart; in their spirit is no guile. They may shout for joy.

PRESBUTES.

THE END OF RELIGIOUS TOIL.

It was my privilege to be taught, at an early age, that I was a sinner, and that JESUS CHRIST, the SON of God, came into the world, and was put to a cruel death upon the cross, that sinners might be saved—that is, that when they passed out of this world, they might go to heaven, instead of being cast into hell, providing they prayed to God regularly through JESUS CHRIST; kept the Sabbath; and did not swear, lie, or steal.

Such was my early teaching, and such were the impressions which took hold of my mind.

Now, being naturally inclined to be *religious*, this suited me very well; and I set about the task of *working* my way to heaven and to God; for I was also taught that, after death, I should have to stand before God in judgment, to answer for every sin I had committed, and that, if unprepared to give this account, I should be cast into hell; which filled my soul with fear.

Time rolled on, and I found that my sins rolled on too, and those of *youth* were added to those of childhood, and became too much for me. Somehow or other, I had not discovered the fact that my very *nature* was *sin*, and that in me, in my natural state, there was not *one good thing*; and, not having learned this, I was ever seeking to conquer and subdue what was simply the fruit of a corrupt tree, the very *root* of which was a mass of sin. Blessed be God! I have *since* learned that the whole thing was judged, set aside, and put out of God's sight forever for the believer in Jesus, when He offered up Himself a willing sacrifice upon the cross.

I must here state that the Christians with whom I was at that time associated, generally held and taught that, in the case of conversion, some mighty and overpowering change must be experienced; for instance, the old, black, wicked heart taken away, and a new one, white, and pure, and clean, given in its place. Taking this for granted, I was ever questioning and examining myself as to whether I had ever experienced this wonderful change, which, of course, led me to look *within*, and at myself; and, oh! what terrible things did I find there! so terrible, that I shrank from the task, yet dared not give it up. The more I looked within, the more did I discover my thoroughly fallen condition, as a child of Adam; and the *fact* that I was a *lost sinner*, still in my sins, and my sins in me, became *now* very clear to me; and it was also clear that, unless I got rid of my sins, I should one day be cast into the lake of fire. But, by thus looking the truth in the face, another conflict began. My proud heart would not submit to the righteousness of God. I had all this time been seeking to establish my own righteousness, and now to find that it was worse than useless, even as "filthy rags," and that all my RELIGIOUS TOIL was worthless, was too great a blow for my pride, and I resisted the testimony of the Spirit of God as to my real condition before Him, continuing to toil on in the hope that I should by-and-by be truly saved, or become a fit subject for salvation. No doubt, I had often heard the Gospel,

and that CHRIST had been presented to me as *God's* remedy for sin; but Satan had so occupied me with *my way, my doings, my remedy*, and so blinded my eyes, that I failed to see it.

Thus, year after year fled away, and I felt that the great question between my soul and GOD must of necessity be nearing its settlement.

I now found myself in the great city, a stranger to its snares and its dangers. Here I wandered from one place to another, seeking what my soul longed for—peace, and conscious deliverance from the bondage of sin. Strange! strange indeed! when one believing look at JESUS would have settled the whole question; yes, *one believing look!* But I was so engrossed with what *I* was, so occupied with *my sins*, that I never thought of looking simply to JESUS, God's Lamb—God's accepted sacrifice for sin—the One who had already *done* all that I was striving to *do*.

Finding all my *working* did not bring the desired rest, but only *added* to my burden, I began to grow weary, and was sinking into a state of indifference, when, one morning, a young man, who resided with me in the house, suddenly accosted me, and, with a heart running over with joy and praise to Him who loved him, told me that he had found peace through believing and trusting in the LORD JESUS, who *had* washed away his sins in His own blood, and that they were forever gone! This was to me a new way of settling an old question, and I determined to begin afresh, though I knew not how to set about it. I reviewed the sins of my past life which I could remember, conscious that there were thousands I could not remember, to say nothing of my nature being sin in itself; the result was, of course, still greater misery. With a conscience quickened by the power of the Spirit of God, alive to my real condition, and not knowing deliverance from sin, and so, not having peace, was, indeed, a sad state to be in, and one, too, which can only be understood by those who have experienced it. Sin and death, judgment and hell, came before me in all their solemn realities. Much of this, mark, was the result of the preaching and teaching I had been accustomed to, which set the sinner to *work*, instead of setting CHRIST before him as the One who had *done* all the *work* that was needed, and done it, too, in God's own way; so that the soul, feeling itself to be lost, and unable to do anything for its own salvation, should believe all that God says about it to be true; and should also believe what God has said about His

love in giving His SON to die for the ungodly: "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten SON" (when nothing else could save it), "that whosoever believeth in Him" (not whosoever is good, does not lie, steal; walks uprightly, etc.) "should not perish, but have everlasting life." John iii. 16.

Now, it was not wrong to teach me that I was a sinner; it is surely a matter for thankfulness to learn that. But it is wrong to set the sinner to work his way to GOD. Would to GOD that those Christians who are given to preaching and teaching were more zealous to set JESUS before the sinner, instead of setting him to look at himself and his sins!

Let it not be supposed that I am making light of sin. God forbid! It cost the LORD JESUS everything He had to rescue His loved ones, and deliver them for ever from its power. For the Church's sake He parted with all He possessed that He might purchase the field wherein was hidden the precious jewel. 'Twas sin which caused the LORD JESUS to lay down His life, and it is too grievous to be made light of, this every heart that is true to him will admit. For it is written: "The grace of GOD that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great GOD, and our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST; Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from all iniquity."

But to return to my narrative. While in this unhappy state my curiosity was awakened by hearing of a servant of GOD, who was attracting great numbers by his preaching. Determined to satisfy my curiosity, I went to hear for myself. The building was full, but through the open door I could hear all that was said. It was evident he was setting forth GOD's way of salvation, and His remedy for sin. I listened eagerly, and while I did so, these words fell with power upon my ear, and sank deep into my heart: "What the sinner needs is JESUS; yes, JESUS, JESUS, JESUS;" and with well-directed aim, the preacher swept away everything else, the whole refuge of lies wherein men put their trust, and presented CHRIST as GOD's refuge, and one that could never be swept away. I discovered at once that He was the One that could meet my case; yes, He was *the One!* and His precious name fell as a sovereign balm upon my sin-stricken troubled heart, and I forgot everything else the preacher said; and though,

from ignorance of the perfect work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, I did not there and then find that peace which every believer in JESUS is privileged to enjoy, yet I had found the right One to give it me, and in Him I did find peace, for He Himself is the believer's peace. Tired and heart-sick of *religious toil*, I gladly gave up the hopeless task; (yes, hopeless task, and one which can only end in utter ruin,) and rested in the finished work of CHRIST, who shed His own precious blood for me, went down into death for me, rose again, and ascended to God's right hand, where He ever lives to make intercession for me, having settled for ever the question of sin both in *root* and *branch*, to the perfect satisfaction of God, and my perfect joy; and who will ere long call me, with all those who love His appearing, to share His glory, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.

Is my reader one who has found out that he is a sinner? If so, let me say that you are the very person to have to do with JESUS; He came into the world to "save sinners," not righteous people, and the sooner you come in direct contact with Him, the more blessed will be the result; you may be spared the heart-sickening and unsatisfactory *religious toil*, which, apart from the blood of JESUS, can only end in judgment; I will again repeat the words of the preacher: "What the sinner needs is JESUS; yes, JESUS, JESUS, JESUS!" This is where *my toil* ended, and where everything else belonging to man by nature must end, whether *wicked works*, or *religious works*, yea, have been already brought to an end in the Cross. There, all the guilt and sin of man was made to meet upon the spotless Lamb, of God's own providing, and borne away for ever; and it is now the happy privilege of every one who simply trusts in JESUS, to be *resting* on the ground of what *has* been done, instead of trying to do the work over again. The Christian's real position is between the *cross* and the *glory*, looking back to the Cross in heart-felt remembrance of what the LORD JESUS did and suffered for him there, and looking onward, with a bright and "blessed hope," to the glory so soon to be revealed.

I repeat: If you know yourself to be a lost and hopelessly ruined sinner, JESUS is the one to have to do with about it. He once said: "Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out," and we know that JESUS always spoke the truth, because JESUS is GOD, and GOD cannot lie. If you are weary on account of sin, and weary of your own doings to get rid of

it, and find you only get deeper and deeper into the mire, JESUS alone can give you deliverance from it all, yea, rest, peace, joy, eternal life, but it will be in God's own way, through the blood of JESUS, which so fully atoned for sin, that all who believe in Him are freely justified from all things.

If you reject God's salvation by JESUS CHRIST, judgment will surely overtake you, for it is written: "The LORD JESUS shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that *obey not the Gospel* of our LORD JESUS CHRIST;" and again, that: "At the name of JESUS every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue shall confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD to the glory of GOD the FATHER."

May God in His mercy, and by His Spirit, lead you to bow *now* while grace *invites*, lest you have to bow presently when judgment will *compel*. And may He lead the soul weary of sin and self, and of its own doings, to cease from its *toil* and to trust in JESUS—for JESUS—and JESUS alone can meet its need.

HOW TO WORK OUT OUR OWN SALVATION.

"WHEREFORE, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."—PHIL. ii. 12, 13.

It is well to remember that God's work, in connection with His people, is *two-fold*: His work *for us* at the cross, and His work *in us* by the Spirit. The passage quoted teaches me nothing about the way to get peace. It is addressed to those who, it is supposed, have the knowledge of their acceptance with God, through the blessed work of the LORD JESUS. If I use it to quiet my conscience, or to give me peace, it must tend to legal strivings after what I can never attain to in that way, where the conscience is upright before God. To give peace, and satisfy the guilty conscience, nothing can avail, before God, but "the *blood* of JESUS CHRIST, His Son, which cleanseth us from all sin"; and it does so on the ground that all the consequences of my sin have been met, and answered for fully, by the work of the cross, where God has smelled a sweet savor in CHRIST's offering Himself, without spot, to God. I can fully rest only in God's satisfaction with the death of CHRIST for me, a sinner, and, as such in myself, without strength, and ungodly. I have, then, as Peter expresses it,

the *salvation of my soul* (1 Peter i. 9). But *salvation* is not yet complete, although my *security* is. Salvation, in God's thought, is our being *with* CHRIST, and perfectly *like* him, "that He might be the first-born among many brethren." (Rom. viii. 29.) As to our *standing* and *acceptance*, this is so *now* perfectly, "as He is, so are we in this world," and hence, boldness in the day of judgment. (1 John iv. 17). And this, in two ways. Not only is all our sin put away for ever, but we are in a *new* life. In Paul's epistles, death and resurrection with Christ introduce us into this place; in John's, being born of God. So that, as Paul teaches, it is not I that live, but CHRIST lives in me. (Gal. ii. 20); and, as John, "he that is born of God doth not commit sin; for His seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God" (1 John iii. 9); so that which makes up the fulness of our place is, that atonement has been made for all the sins connected with the old Adam life or standing, and they are put away for ever, and we are in a *clean* life, to which no sin can attach before God, as the blessed Lord says to Peter: "He that is washed is clean every whit, and so needeth not, save to wash his feet" (John xiii. 10). Blessed place! the having which enables us to rejoice in the sunshine of God's favor, "which is better than life."

But is this all? I need scarcely say, "No," as the passage from Philippians ii. is the full answer to. It is the neglect of this side of the truth which often causes so low a walk in those who know their acceptance, and, also, a loss of the full sense of their place, and the enjoyment of its privileges. I turn, then, for a moment, to look at this other side—the *work of God in us*. Even upon this ground, this epistle tells me I have equally security; "for He which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of JESUS CHRIST" (i. 6). But whilst it is well to remember that it is all God's work, whether *for us at the cross*, as sinners, or in us by His Spirit, through the word, as saints, still we have our responsibilities as those who are saved, not to do some great thing, but to yield ourselves to God. Now, in the passage before us, the Apostle tells us what God works in us for; it is "to will and to *do* of His good pleasure." By nature, we all had wills of our own, which made us "children of wrath, even as others." The first Adam, with whom we were connected, fell by disobedience, and brought ruin on all his race. The second Adam, "the Lord from heaven," never did His own will as distinct from, or opposed to, that of His FATHER'S, but found

His meat and drink in doing the will of Him that sent Him. Now, it is just this *will* of the first Adam in us that God has to break, so as to make us like His SON morally, in our ways and walk, as we are like Him in our place of acceptance, except that He is always eternally GOD. But do we not often forget this, and content ourselves with keeping ourselves from known evil? This is far below God's thought about us. We are accustomed to too low ideas of what sin is. Now, if we take the Scripture definition of it, we shall find that *will*, working in a creature, is sin. So, in 1 John iii. 4: "Whosoever committeth sin, doeth also *lawlessness*; for sin is *lawlessness*" (*ἀνομία*)—that is, all *will* is sin, even though its fruits may not take the form of a gross transgression of the law in flagrant wickedness. A *creature* has no right to an independent will; and so we are sanctified to the *obedience*, as well as the *blood* of sprinkling, of JESUS CHRIST (1 Peter i. 2). There may be nothing in one's walk to shock the natural conscience; but we are to seek to have our wills subject to GOD, and indeed have no will of our own; not merely to keep from doing wrong, but to walk in obedience; for "to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." It is not doing some great thing God looks for. One might have a zeal and activity that would command man's respect and admiration; but to *obey* is what is pleasing to GOD; thus, the feeblest saint can glorify Him, in whatever place GOD has put him in.

What we need in this day of man's will and activity is more subjection to the *will* of GOD, and reliance upon His *power*. "But where do I find His will, some will ask"? In His word, and there alone surely. So that it does not leave us to follow blindly the impulses of our hearts, but in proportion as we drink in its precious truth, we have our mind, and judgment formed by GOD's thoughts. "We have the mind of CHRIST," and we learn to live, not "by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD." Indeed, it is alone in this, that we can find joy and peace in our daily walk through the world. Look at our blessed Master in Matt. xi.; His path in itself had yielded Him nothing but sorrow. He came to His own, and His own received him not, and He has to denounce judgment upon the cities, where His mighty works had been wrought. As far as apparent results were concerned, He had to say, as in Isaiah xlix. 4: "I have labored in vain, and spent my strength for nought, and in vain." As far as this scene went, there was nothing for Him

but sorrow and disappointment; and yet, in that hour, JESUS said: "I thank Thee, oh Father, LORD of Heaven and earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, FATHER: for so it seemed good in Thy sight," and He can say even then, as having it fully in Himself: "Come to Me, and I will give you rest." And to those who have come: "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls." But what was His yoke? It was the subjection to His Father's will, which He had done on earth in the midst of difficulties, and in which He found His rest. Well might He add: "My yoke is easy, and My burden light." So again, in John iv., where in opening up the rivers of living waters to a poor thirsty soul, He had found refreshment Himself, so that all His previous weariness was gone. When His disciples say: "Master, eat," His answer is: "I have meat to eat ye know not of." "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." Now, it is His path *in this*, we are called to follow, a path indeed the flesh may pretend to imitate, but yet cannot really take a step in, and one we can only walk in as long as we are willing to learn practically the lessons the *Cross* teaches, and by it to have our natural will and desires set aside, that we may do His will. But then our strength for this, as for all else, is found not in resolutions or purposes, but in having a *right object* to engage us. If *self* is what occupies us, we may be mourning our failures, and the pressure of conscience may lead us to try and rise above them, but there is no power in that. To have the conscience upright is very needful, but it is not *power*. We may learn that way, that we have no power, as well as that "in us, that is in our flesh, dwelleth no good thing," and this is a useful lesson. But power is found in being occupied with an object that can fill, and satisfy us. And that is why the Apostle in this Epistle presents CHRIST to us in two characters. If I am thinking of One who stooped from heaven to be the lowly humbled man, and as such to take the lowest place, it will make me lowly too, in proportion to the degree in which I drink in the vision of moral loveliness, the Spirit of God presents to me in CHRIST. There is no other way. If I think of Him, and admire Him; unconsciously I get His spirit. "Let this mind be in you," says Paul. But how? If I look within, and seek to regulate what is there, I find no power to set one wrong thing right, though I may judge, and mourn over the wrong things there. But the Apostle goes on to unfold the

mind of CHRIST, as seen in His humiliation, and thus says: "Look at Him." In the second chapter, His humiliation, and the steps by which He came down from the highest to the lowest, and this that His lowliness may be reproduced in us. In the third chapter He is seen in His exaltation and glory, that the glory may give energy to the saint to press after Him, and that, with the blessed assurance that in the end, his desires will be fully satisfied. For He shall come and "change our vile body that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able ever to subdue all things unto Himself."

May He give us to know daily, more of what it is *thus* "To work out our own salvation with fear and trembling," knowing, "That it is God which worketh in us both to *will* and to *do* of His good pleasure."

SCRIPTURE:

THE PLACE IT HAS IN THIS DAY.

2 Timothy.

UNDER this title, the first of a series of "Present Testimony Tracts" has just been issued. The importance of the subject of which it treats, it is impossible to overrate. Whether for the glory of God or the practical blessing of souls, it equally claims the attention of every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. And we would earnestly advise all our readers, and every dear child of God, who desires to learn *his place* according to the mind of God in this day, to obtain, and prayerfully read that which teaches the place that *Scripture* has in this day. The tract before us is based upon the Second Epistle to Timothy, and begins by pressing the very great importance of simplicity and decision on the subject which it takes up. The writer of the tract observes, that this Epistle presents to us, "the ruin of the Church in its earthly standing, and exhibits the heart of the Apostle deeply affected by it, as would be the case, under the working of the spirit of God, with one who had been God's instrument for founding it." In these days, when priestly domination is putting forth with renewed energy in the name of the, so-called, Church, claims to govern conscience, he remarks on the momentousness of the principle it inculcates, of the *individual* duty of every Christian. Contrasting the state of the Church in this Epistle with its heavenly character in the Ephesians, and its earthly order in the first Epistle to Timothy, he remarks, "But we

have in it life and salvation now fully revealed in Christ, but a piety which could be found in Jews as such, and in which Paul would speak of his forefathers. The Church, indeed, is not mentioned at all—not that the fellowship of Saints is not noticed; it is, expressly, but of those in whom *purity of heart* is known to exist, the testing of which was not known in the first beginning. Then those who came were received, only the Lord took care of the purity of the assembly, and manifested His own, adding to the Church daily such as should be saved. Now, *He* knew those that were His, and the responsibility rested on *every one* that named the name of CHRIST to depart from iniquity: and the believer is to follow the path of peace and grace with those that call on the name of the LORD out of a *pure heart*.”

Two points are brought before the believer here to guide his feet. “His individual conduct, including his conduct to other individuals, and his relationship to the public profession of Christianity in the world.”

With reference to the first of these two points, he shows the importance of both its parts being fairly balanced and carried out. The believer is to separate from all that is evil, which is the very essence of Christianity, and to associate himself with others in what is good. “If the first part only is taken up (the departing from iniquity and purging from vessels to dishonor), the conscience may be upright; but a spirit of judgment and of self-righteousness will be gendered. If the latter only (to seek to walk with those pure in heart), without the former, conscience will be loose, and faithfulness to CHRIST, and obedience, more or less lost. The heart must be engaged in the love of God’s people, and fellowship with them, and the conscience be pure and faithful, as having done with evil, when evil is all around and allowed.”

The second great point, namely, “His relationship to the public profession of Christianity in the world,” is also divided into two parts. 1st, what is to be done; and then the authority that guides the soul in so doing. The peril of the last days is found in a form of Godliness, denying the power, and the direction as to action is simple and decisive: “from such turn away.” The authoritative guide in doing this, is the word of God. He then discusses the question, whether this authority is mediate or immediate, and affirms it is the latter, adding, “This is no rejection of ministry. If another know *the word* better than myself, has more spiritual power, he can help me; and that is according to the mind and will of God.

But he does not come between my soul and the Word, but brings me more fully into acquaintance with what God says to me in it. My soul is only the more in immediate relationship with God by His Word. That only is the measure of my responsibility, the expression of the *authority* of God over me."

He says that the Church is to be judged; the individual has to take notice of it, is called to do so, so that it (the Church) cannot have any authority over him as the ultimate rule of his soul. "He is bound to take the Word of God as the ultimate rule and *norma* of truth and conduct, having authority immediately from God over his soul, with nothing else between him and God." The question, too, of whether the soul "is *immediately cognizant* of the Word, and is it responsible to God for itself according to that authority?" is raised, and against Romanism, is answered in the affirmative. Church history is then gone into at some length, and the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, old and new, and every part, affirmed against the rationalists. He says: "It is not all the truth that the Scriptures contain the Word of God; but everything that is in the Scriptures is inspired (the correct translation), and profitable for all needed to make the man of God perfect. Everyone who has to act for God in this world, to stand for Him before the world—and (though some be specially called) all have more or less to do so—finds all he wants to complete his state and competency for service in Scripture."

In conclusion, he remarks: "The man of God has to hold his ground against advancing evil; and then the Scriptures get the place they were meant to hold—a necessity not so felt when all flowed in the stream of divine power, receiving the care and leading of the Apostles themselves, but brought out in the days of evil and seduction with divine authority, divine inspiration, and divine sufficiency to instruct.

It is evident that "knowing from whom thou hast learned them," now resolves itself also into the Scriptures. The Word of God, as the blessed LORD Himself, comes out from God, and is adapted to man. In this, with the living Word, it stands alone and is perfect in it.

Let me here engage my reader to realize in his own mind, and, if occasion call for it, insist with others, on the passage which connects itself closely with what we have considered—I mean the passage 1 John ii. 24, or "Let that therefore abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning: if that which

ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son and in the Father." Nothing has secure authority for the believer but that which was from THE BEGINNING. This alone secures our continuing in the Father and the Son. There may be much respectable, much "reverend antiquity;" and the spirit of reverence, *where the object is true*, is a very important quality in the believer, but an amazing means of seduction when it is not; but, as a *ground* of faith, the Christian must have "what was from the beginning." The *authority* for believing must be "that which existed from the beginning," must have been heard from the beginning. In the Scriptures I have this certainty—I have the thing itself; nowhere else. Many may preach the truth, and I profit by it; but by the word, specially here by the New Testament, I have the certainty of what was from the beginning, and I have it nowhere else. No agreement of Christians can give me this. If Rome and Greece and England were all one, their agreement would not give me what *was from the beginning* as a fact; the Scriptures certainly do. I may be told that it is very presumptuous for me to set my judgment against such authority. I have no judgment of mine to set; I believe in what Paul and John and Peter and the blessed Lord said; there is no presumption in that. I do as they bid me, "Receive and hold fast to what was in the beginning." If indeed they say that "it is not easy to understand," I ask, "are they?" That is presumption, to say they can teach the truth better than the Apostles and the Lord, who spoke to the multitudes. At any rate, I must have, not what the primitive Church held, but "what was from the beginning." Hence the same Apostle says, "He that is of God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us; hereby know we the spirit of truth and the spirit of error."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q.—"What is the difference between the kingdom of Heaven and the kingdom of God?"

A.—The kingdom of Heaven, or, more correctly, the kingdom of the *Heavens*, is a term used only in Matthew, and signifies God's rule from Heaven on earth. It is peculiarly a Jewish term, and one they were well acquainted with, as anticipating the coming in of that which it designated, as foretold in prophecy, the term itself being derived from Daniel iv. 26, where Nebuchadnezzar is told that, after his humiliation,

he would know "that the heavens do rule." The kingdom of Heaven is God's rule on earth and in time, hence it is peculiarly dispensational and limited in period. John the Baptist announced it as at hand, the LORD being about to come (Mat. iii., 2). The Jews rejected the King, and crucified Him, consequently the kingdom as first offered was not set up. We get the kingdom of Heaven in mystery, or in its hidden character, pictured by the LORD in parables in Mat. xiii., and elsewhere. The present dispensational character of the kingdom of Heaven, we are in now, as a mystery, a hidden but existing thing. The millennium will be the kingdom of Heaven in manifestation, being set up after the LORD JESUS has restored the kingdom to Israel, He Himself reigning over them and the whole world: Zion the centre of government, God's throne being still in Heaven (Mat. v. 34). The kingdom of God, though often, as in Luke and Mark, applied to that which, in Matthew, is the kingdom of Heaven, is a term of far wider range, and therefore can not be used indiscriminately with it. The kingdom of God is the entire range of God's power and rule in Heaven and in earth, in time and in eternity, everywhere and forever. The kingdom of God includes the kingdom of Heaven; therefore, without discriminating between its parts, the Spirit of God speaks of the kingdom of God, or, doing so, says the kingdom of Heaven. Just as we might speak of such an one being in America, though referring to his presence in the United States. A person might be in America without being in the United States; but he could not be in the States without being in America.

Q.—"What is the difference between suffering for CHRIST'S sake and righteousness' sake?—(SOUND WORDS, page 44.)

A.—There are three ways in which children of God can suffer. First—Under God's hand, chastening them for their faults, or what is in them. This may either be alone or associated, in God's wisdom, with suffering for CHRIST. It was so blended in Paul's case—for what he *had done*, in the trouble he got into at Jerusalem; for what *he was*, in "the thorn in the flesh," of the xii. of 2d Corinthians. Second—They may suffer for doing what is right in God's sight, in a world that is evil and unrighteous. This is suffering for "righteousness' sake," and is what is referred to in 1st Peter iv., 15-19, as suffering "according to the will of God." It was in this way all Old Testament Saints suffered. The life sufferings of the LORD JESUS were chiefly of this kind; and because he "loved

righteousness and hated iniquity," God has "anointed him with the oil of gladness above his fellows." Third—They may suffer because of what they are to CHRIST as His. This is matter of privilege, being "*given-us* in the behalf of CHRIST, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." (Phil. i. 29.) Suffering for CHRIST, though not the same thing, will *always* be associated with suffering for righteousness, otherwise it would be chastening for unrighteousness. Peter, in the chapter already referred to, associates it in this way: If a man suffer "as a Christian" in well-doing, and "if ye be reproached for the *name* of CHRIST, happy are ye: for the spirit of glory and of God resteth in you: on their part *He* is evil spoken of, but on yours *He* is glorified." In suffering under chastisement, it is for wrong-doing; in suffering for righteousness, it is for right-doing; in suffering for CHRIST's sake, it is for *doing* nothing, but for professing CHRIST's name and exalting Him.

Q.—"Is conscience a safe guide for a child of God? Every child has a purged conscience; how is he to keep a good conscience?"

A.—Conscience is no guide at all. The Word of God is "a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path," and "the entrance of Thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple," says the Psalmist; and prays, "order my steps in Thy Word" (Ps. cxix). The Spirit of God is the *guide*, acting upon the conscience by the Word, and hence called the Spirit of Truth; and it is thus the Comforter is promised to the disciples by the LORD: "When the Spirit of Truth is come, He will *guide* you unto *all* truth" (John xvi. 13). So the Apostle Paul, in Romans viii. 14: "As many as are *led* by the *Spirit of God*, they are the sons of God." In order to have divine guidance, the *will* must be in subjection; and *then* the promise is: "If any man *will* to do *His will*, he shall know of the doctrine whether it be of God" (John vii. 17). As to the purging of the conscience, this is effected by "the blood of CHRIST" (Heb. ix. 14); and once purged, "the worshipper should have no more conscience of sins" (Heb. x, 2), that is, judicially before God. A good conscience raises the question of one's practical walk, and is the result of walking in obedience to the known will of God, so that though still having sin in me, as a root of evil, I am not conscious of its allowed actings, or having by carelessness allowed sin to act, I have *confessed* it to God, and received His forgiveness, so that my

conscience does not condemn me in His presence about it Paul exercised himself to have a "conscience void of offence toward God and man," and "the end of the *commandment* is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." A purged conscience being the effect of the blood of CHRIST, a work outside us, can never, once fully known, be lost, but a good conscience being dependant upon myself, can be "put away," as in the case of Hymenæus and Alexander, "who, having put away a good conscience concerning the faith, had made shipwreck" (1 Tim. i, 19). A good conscience, consequently, is *kept* by obedience, or, temporarily lost, is *restored* by confession.

Q.—"Is it possible for a child of God always to know His will; and how is it so many are perplexed, and occupied more with circumstances?"

A.—The promise of the LORD to the believer in Psalm xxxii. as to this, is very precise and full. "I will instruct thee, and teach thee, in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye," and we are entitled to *always* know His will. Our ability to avail ourselves of this blessed Divine guidance, depends upon our state of soul, and here humbleness is everything, "for God *resisteth* the proud, and giveth grace to the *humble*." So in Psalm xxv, where the saint prays, "Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths. Lead me in Thy Truth, and teach me," he learns that, "the *meek* will He guide in the judgment, and the *meek* will He teach His way." In the same way, the LORD JESUS in the end of the eleventh of Matthew, proffers rest and guidance to them that will learn of Him, saying, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am *meek* and *lowly* in heart." Then, in the twelfth verse of the 8th of John, He presents Himself as the Light of the World, adding that the benefit of the light would be to those that *followed* Him. "He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." From this, too, we learn that a saint need never walk in darkness, or ignorance as to his path, if only he will *follow* the LORD, and the reason why saints are "perplexed and occupied with circumstances," is that they are not really following the LORD, but some feeling or desire of their own heart. With the eye of faith fixed on CHRIST at God's right hand (Heb. xii.) we have to "run with patience the race set before us" by God, and thus be outside circumstances as to guidance for our path entirely. Circumstances *meet* us in the path, and we walk

through them with God. To Israel, the sand of the desert, and the bitter waters, the manna, and the gushing streams were the circumstances, but the pillar of cloud by day, and the pillar of fire by night guided them. JEHOVAH'S eye to them was the pillar of fire, and the commandments were the instructions. When CHRIST is in our eye, and the word of God in our consciences, the Spirit of God leads us surely and safely across the wilderness to the rest beyond. To follow CHRIST is the business of life and service, and then circumstances never perplex or occupy the mind.

Q.—“A subscriber to *“Sound Words”* wishes to know, whether it is Scriptural for Christian females to break bread together, either in case of their being no male members of the assembly, or in case of the occasion of the unexpected absence of such?”

A. We know of no Scriptural ground for sisters breaking bread when no brethren are present, and we very much doubt if the Spirit of God would lead any to do so in either of the cases put. The HOLY GHOST is our power, but the Scriptures are the rule, “all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all *good works.*” If the breaking of bread by sisters alone were a “good work,” it would have been provided for in the Scriptures, we believe.

“FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.”

THERE are three ways of looking at CHRIST: (1) as dead and risen; (2) as ascended and seated on high; (3) as coming again. Now, of these three grand branches of Christian truth—justification through the death and resurrection; the formation of the Church, in connection with CHRIST ascended and the HOLY GHOST sent down from Heaven; and the second coming of CHRIST to receive the saints and judge the world—the Reformation did not go beyond the *first*, the preaching of justification by faith. The last two were not even touched, so to speak. Similarly, Christians in general do not see these truths at the present day. Neither the distinctive calling of the Church, nor the true character of the Lord's coming again for us, is entered into beyond scraps and opinions. *These are the great truths to present to the apprehension, rather than to begin with ways of meeting.*”

"I WANT SALVATION."

WILLIAM BLACK was one of the most upright, benevolent, and religious young men in the village of G——.

A Sunday-school teacher, a faithful visitor of the sick, a tract distributor, an office-bearer in the church, a rigid teetotaller, and a kind and affectionate son—what more, what else was needed?

If goodness and worth, or a moral standing with God could be had by religion, William, of all others in the village, could lay claim to it. But something *else* was needed; not all these combined could give what his soul so eagerly craved—*peace with God*.

William Black was a seeker after salvation. His sins and their punishment, "death, and after that the judgment," stared him in the face. His soul was filled with the most fearful apprehension of the future. He had to meet God—a holy and righteous God; this terrified him, *for he was a sinner*, and totally unprepared to enter eternity.

Reader, William Black, religious, teetotaller, and amiable as he was, was yet a sinner, over whose head the wrath of God rested. All the righteousness of man with God is worthless; it can only wither in His presence. And so *acceptance with God, forgiveness of sins, present and perfect justification from all things*, is not to be had by all the doing, striving feeling, or religiousness of man. Salvation is in CHRIST; Peace only through His precious blood; He did all the doing and suffering needed.

CHRIST is now risen from the dead; there is a glorified man in heaven. Once He hung upon the cross for sins. Drop here, dear reader, your deadly doings at His pierced feet, and gaze oh! gaze, upon that work, the Son of God answering for thy sins, and for the very nature, too, in which the sin was committed; answering for it in agonies and blood—answering for it during the silence, loneliness, and darkness of the three hours' anguish and abandonment by God. "My God! My God! why hast Thou abandoned me?" was His cry; and why such a cry from the soul of the spotless Lamb of God? Absolutely spotless and pure in Himself, yet on *that "tree"* our iniquities are made to meet on Him. He stands in the sinners' place, bears His doom, gives a divine answer to God for His righteous judgment upon the sin, the nature, the condition of man, and so removes every barrier to peace. So priceless the blood, so perfectly finished the atoning work, that the God of

Glory and Resurrection on the third morning, *did* triumphantly raise His Son and seat him in victorious power at His own right hand in the Heavens. The empty tomb, and arisen and glorified CHRIST is GOD'S answer to the finished work of His beloved Son. CHRIST carried with Him to His grave, the sin and sins he answered for upon the cross; and His tomb has now become the eternal hiding-place of every believer's sins. God has a memory in which is treasured up the doings of the universe; all is remembered but the sins of the believer; for He says "their sins and iniquities will I remember no more." Blessed truth! JESUS risen, exalted and glorified, and my sins left in His grave. Risen from the dead! Glorious news, indeed. Reader, that JESUS before whom angels bow, and saints adore, was *once* smitten to death for thee—what is He doing in the glory? He is there offering to thee a *present, full, and perfect salvation*. He is no mean Giver; He died to procure it; He delights to give it—accept then, of the *gift* of eternal life and present forgiveness of sins. The gift is only to "him who worketh *not*, but believeth on Him—Him who justifieth the ungodly."

A friend, hearing of William's distress, sought to allay his anxiety by a recital of his good deeds, his morality, teetotalism and the like. "Don't speak to me of these things," he answered; "I *need salvation*; I'm lost, undone. Tell me how I am to be saved; *I want salvation*; I'm afraid to meet God with these rags of human righteousness clinging about me. *I want salvation*." His friend had no Gospel to meet a case like this. He left the scene. A sinner stript of his rags, and standing, trembling and affrighted in the very presence of God, was too much for the poor legalist, who retired and left the sinner *alone* with God. Legalists don't know grace.

A very young man who had but recently been converted at a revival meeting, heard of the case, and resolved to visit the anxious inquirer after salvation. This young convert only knew the following truths: 1st. That his sins were forgiven; 2nd. That he had peace with God through JESUS, who made it by His blood; 3d. That God had raised from among the dead His dear Son, and given Him glory in the Heavens; 4th. That the Holy Ghost, the Glorifier of JESUS, is as truly in this world as JESUS is now in Heaven; 5th. That JESUS is coming a second time to take to Himself every one who has truly apprehended the work He accomplished at His first coming. Very distinctly and slowly did he utter these words to his fellow-sinner: "He (God) is gracious unto him and saith,

Deliver him from going down to the pit; *I have found ransom.*" "Who says that? who utters those blessed words?" exclaimed his eager listener. "GOD" was the answer; "turn to 24th verse of the 33d chapter of Job, and you will find the very words." It was enough; GOD spoke through the living power of His own Word to the soul of William Black. Instantly his soul passed from death to life. He got a divine and eternal salvation on the very spot. Dear reader, still that voice is sounding from Heaven to thee—what joy! It is the voice of GOD; oh, listen to the blessed words: "Deliver him from going down into the pit: *I have found a ransom.*" Reader, if unsaved, thou art going with railway speed down, down, down to the pit, pause, I beseech thee—listen to the voice of the Son of GOD while he points out from His very soul those wondrous words: "GOD so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

A LETTER ON SALVATION.

You ask, "What about our doing! Have we nothing to do by way of working out our own salvation?"

The Bible nowhere recognizes salvation as a result of *man's doing*, but always of the LORD'S. As Jonah said, while yet in the belly of the fish, "They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy. But I will sacrifice unto Thee, with the voice of thanksgiving. I will pay that I have vowed. SALVATION IS OF THE LORD." Now as Jonah could do nothing to deliver himself from the belly of the fish, just so the sinner can do nothing to deliver himself from the pit of hell. He is a "child of wrath" by nature, a child of the devil by practice; and, if he is ever anything else, or any better, it will be because GOD *has done something*, and *does something*, for him. Well, what has GOD done? "GOD so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him might not perish, but have everlasting life." "For GOD sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world (for they were condemned already), but that the world, through Him, might be saved." These very same children of wrath "might be saved;" not, if they would: GOD does not add that here, from the very fact that no man ever had, or ever can have, a will to be saved, until GOD first gives it him. Men never think of wanting to be saved, until they are made sensible of the fact that they are

lost sinners; and the devil, whose children they are, would never show it them, neither is it in their nature to discover it. No man ever has a godly sorrow for sin, until he is convicted or quickened. "*The Son quickeneth whom He will.*" "And you *hath He quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins." What can a dead man do? Hence, it is God who worketh in you *BORN to will* and to do, from beginning to end. From a child of wrath, to glory in heaven, *salvation is of the Lord*. So God said to the Hebrews, "stand still and see the salvation of the LORD," because He would have them, as we, realize their helplessness, and thus honor the God who could save them. Man always wants to have a hand in working out his own salvation, in order to claim some credit for himself. There is hardly anything so humbling to man, as to confess fully and with a godly conviction, his own ruin and helplessness. And, on the other hand, there is nothing which so much honors God's grace.

Now, then, you will see that the confusion has come in through the teaching of what is called "falling from grace." If a man can become a child of God by an act of his own will, then, of course, he can become a child of the devil the next thing, by an act of the same will. But if *no man* becomes a child of God by an act of his own will, then, no man can blot out that relationship after God's will has established it. "No man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." "No man can come to me, except my Father draw Him." "No man can come unto the Father, but by me."

"Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, BUT OF GOD." "*Who hath begotten us again.*" "*Of His own will* begat He us." "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit."

Is a child born because he deliberates and concludes on the whole, that that is the best thing to be done? No more is the sinner thus born of the Spirit. "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "For when we were yet without strength, in due time CHRIST died for the ungodly." "For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet, peradventure, for a good man some would even dare to die." "But GOD commendeth His love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us. Much more, then, being now justified by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him."

“For if, when we were enemies, we are reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by His life.” Blessed be GOD. Now, then, if God’s love pledged to me while an enemy, sinner, and ungodly, bring me into justification and reconciliation, how much more shall that same love pledged to me, now that I am an adopted child, in the resurrection of His Son, keep me unto His glory.

I am aware that there are many passages from which men teach the opposite, but when carefully examined and compared with other Scriptures, they show very plainly that the HOLY GHOST had in view a class who were never children of God by quickening and regenerating grace. Take, for instance, the strongest passage in the Bible, Heb. vi., 4, 6. When we compare this carefully with other Scriptures, we find that “once enlightened” (not quickened) “tasted” (never eat) “partakers (not indwelt) of the HOLY GHOST.” (Ye are the temple of the HOLY GHOST.)

You see at once the different language employed. God’s children are spoken of first, as elected, called, quickened (life given), justified, reconciled, accepted, adopted, complete in Him. But read on: the seventh verse illustrates, and the eighth and ninth is a plain acknowledgment of the truth of the passage. A class represented who were never saved at all. Take also the passage where Paul to the Galatians says: “Ye are fallen from grace,” Gal. viii., 4. And we see that it does not hit the point at all, because they had turned, or were in danger of being turned from the grace of the Gospel back to Judaism or the law. Not a question of salvation at all. Then the passage, “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” is often used; but entirely wrested from its true meaning. For look: Phil. ii., 12. “Wherefore, my beloved, (does the HOLY GHOST own those who are not saved as *my beloved*?) as ye have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence” (you see he is addressing a body who were saved, and knew they were saved), and what does he say: “work out your own (already yours) salvation,” deliverance, for this is the true meaning, deliverance from the temptations that beset you and the evils that surround you, in a word, the three great enemies of your souls, the “world, the flesh, and the devil.” Well, how shall we do it? Listen! “For IT IS GOD *which worketh in you BOTH to will and to do*, of his good pleasure.” Yes, it is not of yourselves at all, but God, who gives you the will and the

power to do. To do what? Resist the devil, overcome evil, and rejoice in hope of glory. Now, then, we see that the whole scheme of free-will is aside from the truth.

It starts wrong, from wrong views of God's Word, and man's thought of God and himself. When a man submits to God's thoughts about himself, he finds he has no liberty to elect or save himself; neither to condemn himself; for he is already condemned. A prisoner condemned, and only awaiting execution, what power of election, or liberty to save himself has he? But the child of God, being saved, walks in conscious liberty; for "whom the Son makes free, is free indeed." Take this illustration: Here is a man of abundant wealth; he picks up a poor boy, with neither father nor mother, and no one to care for him. And he says: "Look here, my lad; if you will come and serve me faithfully for fifteen years, then I will adopt you as my heir." What is his position? One of bondage and fear, the whole fifteen years. He dare not do this, and he dare not neglect that, lest he shall displease *his master*, and be cast off at last. Just where the prevailing theology of these days puts every man: in a bondage, through fear of hell.

If you work, work, you shall be saved. If you wash your hands before you eat; if you keep yourself clean and pure, you shall be saved. But if not, you will be lost at last.

But God and the Gospel puts us on the other track altogether. "Here, my boy, I want to adopt you. I will adopt you as My heir. Come now, and see how worthy a boy you can be." Do you see the difference? He enters at once into the liberty of a son. He "is free indeed." He says: "This is all mine; and it is only a question of time when I shall come into full possession." He can do his FATHER'S will with a glad heart, and a cheerful song, because he knows that, as regards the inheritance, all is safe. Glory be to God! Amen. So is our inheritance safe, and sure laid up in heaven. Do you not see the difference between the lad who hopes, if he is faithful, to be adopted some time, and is never sure of anything, because it all depends upon pleasing a master; and the boy already adopted, and now acting in conscious liberty as a son, because he knows he is adopted? You see that it is not a question of my faithfulness or perseverance at all, but of what God has done, and will do. For I am a total ruin of myself, and have no power for good in me, by nature, at all. "For I know that in me"—that is, in my flesh—"there is no

good." So, then, it is not that I have life in myself, but because "CHRIST liveth in me; so that the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the SON of GOD, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." Glory be to His dear name!

I, then, as a renewed man, an adopted son, am working out my own salvation (deliverance) with fear and trembling; and that which makes me tremble is, not that I fear I shall be lost at last, but it is the sense of my own weakness, and the adverse forces I have to contend against, with the consciousness that *it is God* who is *dealing with me in grace*, to bring me to His glory, who was once a child of wrath. Oh! the goodness and the mercy of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! Do you, then, see the difference? I am doing because *I am saved*, not because I hope to be if I am faithful; for this puts in my work where God's work alone can avail or stand. When it comes to my work, the best I can do, I am an "unprofitable servant." But "henceforth I call you not *servants*, but *friends*; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth; but I have called you *friends*." "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." Not *because ye do*; but *if ye do*. And if you don't do, it only proves that ye are not my friends at all. Ye are not my friends *because ye do*; but ye are doing because ye are my friends. The second chapter of James refers to this very point. There was a class who claimed, by profession, that they were saved (the friends of CHRIST), while their lives gave the lie to their profession. They did not act like friends; they did not walk like saved-men. They might have been very religious, as many are now; but the natural fruit of adoption was not there. Twelfth verse: "So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the *law of liberty*." Eighteenth verse: "Show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." You may profess faith, but your works deny it. I profess faith, and my works prove it. You profess your faith without its legitimate walk, while I show you my faith by my walk. I have not faith because I walk; but I walk because I have faith. Beloved brother, do you see the difference? Henceforth let your faith mount up to the position and standing of God's elect, and let your walk prove that you are there.

This is what God has done, if you are a child at all, and what He will perfect in glory, through JESUS CHRIST, our LORD. "Behold what manner of love the FATHER hath be-

stowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God." "And 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. And every man that hath this hope in Him, purifieth himself, even as He is pure."

LIFE AND LIBERTY.

"Loose him and let him go."—*John xi. 14.*

THERE are many divinely-quickened souls who need to know the power of those commanding words, "Loose him and let him go." (*John xi. 44.*) They have been quickened out of a state of death, by the life-giving voice of the Son of God; but they "come forth, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes," and their faces "bound about with a napkin." That is to say, they have not, as yet, been able to shake off the trammels of their former condition, or go on their way in the liberty wherewith CHRIST makes His people free. That they have received divine life, is manifest from the very struggles, fluctuations, and conflicts of which they complain. Those that are "dead" know nothing of such things. So long as Lazarus lay in the silent tomb, in the cold grasp of death, he never felt his grave-clothes to be any hindrance to movement, or his napkin to be any hindrance to vision. All was dark, cold, and lifeless; and the grave-clothes were the suited trappings of such a condition. A man whose hands and feet were fast bound in the fetters of death, could not possibly feel any inconvenience from grave-clothes; and one whose eyes were fast sealed by the stern hand of death, could not feel any inconvenience from a napkin.

Thus it is with the unconverted, the unregenerate, the unawakened. They are "dead"—morally, spiritually "dead." Their feet are fast bound in the fetters of death; but they know it not. Their hands are confined by the handcuffs of death; but they feel it not. Their eyes are covered by the dark napkin of death; but they perceive it not. They are dead. The robes of death are around them—the grave-clothes are upon them, and suit their condition.

But, then, in some way or another, the persons, for whom I write this paper, have been acted upon by the mighty, quickening voice of the Son of God—"the Resurrection and the Life." A verse of scripture, a sermon, a lecture, a tract, a hymn, a prayer, some passing event, has proved to them a life-giving voice. It has sounded upon their ears, it has fallen upon their

hearts, it has penetrate to the very depths of their being. They are aroused, they know not how. They awake up, they know not why. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit." (John iii. 8.) The life is there, in all its reality. The new birth has taken place. The new nature has been communicated. Those who are standing by, who know what life is, see the movements, the struggles, the heavings and workings of life; but, as yet, the grave-clothes and napkin are there. I believe there are many in this condition—many quickened—many born, who know not the privileges which attach to their birth, or the source and object of the life which has been communicated to them. In a word, they need that the voice which has already said, "Lazarus, come forth," should also say, "Loose him, and let him go." They have been *quickened*; they need to be *set free*.

Let us take an example from the word of God. The prodigal was quickened before he was set free. "I will arise and go to my Father," was the utterance of the new life—the aspiration of the new nature. When he spoke thus, he was full of doubt and uncertainty as to the mode in which the Father would receive him. He was full of legality—full of the thought of servitude instead of the thought of sonship. The new life was there, but, as yet, it was connected with numerous doubts and fears within, and the rags of his former condition were upon him. He had been acted upon by a life-giving voice, and he only needed to be set at liberty. The new nature, having been imparted, moved toward the source from which it had sprung, but, as yet, its movement was cramped, as it were, by the grave-clothes, and its vision impeded by the napkin.

Now, who would think of maintaining the monstrous idea, that the prodigal ought to have continued in his rags? to have persisted in his doubts, fears and uncertainty? Who would assert that, for the rest of his days, Lazarus ought to have worn his grave-clothes and napkin, in order to prove that he was a living man? It will be said that the Father's embrace dispelled the prodigal's fears, for how could he fear in the arms of paternal love? But was it not the Father also who commanded the rags to be displaced by "the best robe?" And, then, as to Lazarus, it may be urged that the voice that had quickened and raised him, commanded him to be loosed and let go. Exactly so; and is it not just the same in reference to any one who has obtained new life by believing in the name

of the Son of GOD? Truly so. He should no longer wear the rags of the "far country," nor the trappings of the grave. His hands and feet should be unbound, so that he may serve the LORD CHRIST, and run in the way of His commandments. His face, too, should be uncovered—the napkin should be removed—so that he may gaze upon the One whose voice has quickened him.

And, be it remembered, that it is the self-same voice that quickens and sets free that gives *life and liberty*—that delivers from the dominion of death, and leads forth in the liberty of life. It is well to see this. The life and liberty are connected, as coming from the same source. The life which the believer has is not old Adam-life improved, but new Adam-life imparted; and the liberty in which the believer walks is not liberty for the old Adam to fulfil his horrible lusts, but liberty for the new man to walk with GOD and tread in the holy footprints of CHRIST. How does he get this life and liberty? By the word of GOD, received by faith, through the power of the HOLY GHOST. The same voice that quickened Lazarus quickens the soul. And where is this voice heard? "In the word of the truth of the Gospel." The soul that believes on the name of the Son of GOD has received new life. What life? The resurrection life of CHRIST. The simple word of the Gospel is the seed by which this new life is produced. And what does this Gospel, this message of glad tidings, declare? That CHRIST died and rose again—that He put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself—that He is gone into Heaven—that He has, by Himself, purged our sins—that He has met every claim, every demand, every objector—that Justice is satisfied—conscience tranquillized—the enemy confounded. This gives life and liberty—new life—divine liberty. It carries the soul entirely out of the old creation and all its belongings, and introduces it into the new creation and all its privileges, joys, and glories. The death of CHRIST delivers the believer from the old Adam condition in which he was *born*: and His resurrection introduces him into the new Adam condition in which he is *born again*.

Now, all this is by the word of GOD—the voice of CHRIST—the operation of the HOLY GHOST. There is no human effort in the matter. The dead body of Lazarus was acted upon by the voice of CHRIST. The one is as independent of man as the other. The quickening power for both soul and body is in "the voice of the Son of GOD." (See John v. 25, comp. with verses 28, 29.) This takes all the glory out of

man's hand, and places it where it ought to be, even in the hand of the Son of God. He must bear *all* the glory, for ever, blessed be His name!

Oh! how ardently I long that those precious souls for whom I write may fully enter into what I have written. I write for quickened souls who are not yet set free—who have life, but not liberty—who have “come forth,” but are not yet “loosed and let go.” There are many in the condition of the prodigal when he arose from the far country, but had not yet reached the Father's arms. I earnestly long for their full liberty. I would affectionately remind them that the whole work is done—the sacrifice completed—the ransom paid. They have not to read another syllable in order to get settled peace. CHRIST has made peace. God is well pleased. The HOLY GHOST bears witness. The word of God is plain. Where, then, is the foundation for a doubt? The reader may exclaim, “Alas! it is in myself.” Yes; but, my dear friend, you have nothing to do in a matter which has already been done for you. The righteousness of God is “to him that worketh NOT.” If you had to do aught in order to get righteousness, then Rom. iv. 5 would not be true. Remember, and delight in that most glorious “NOT.” It will not suffer the weight of a feather of human doings, human feelings, or human anything, to be thrown in the scales, in order to make CHRIST's sacrifice available for you. CHRIST has done *all* for your present, personal, and perfect salvation.

May the LORD, the Spirit, deliver precious souls from the grave-clothes in which they are entangled. May many hear and understand those thrilling accents, “LOOSE HIM AND LET HIM GO.”

WHERE AND WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

IN these days when Christians are ranged under so many different names, it behoves us to consider well whether there is a visible Church on this earth, and if not, whether children of God can meet together as the early Christians did.

Now it must be evident to any thoughtful student of Scripture that in the Apostles' days there was a Church—visible, united. And the LORD added to the Church daily such as should be saved” (Acts ii. 47). It was composed of those who believed on the LORD JESUS CHRIST. There was no thought then of believers and unbelievers joining together in worshipping God.

Again there will be a visible, united Church. When the LORD JESUS comes He will take the Church to be with Himself. But now you will find a few members here, a few there—scattered, divided: members of the Body of CHRIST it is true, but not gathered as the one Body, the Church.

When CHRIST ascended into heaven, He sent the HOLY GHOST, the SPIRIT of truth, "to gather together the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 52). GOD is still seeking worshippers, who will worship Him in spirit and in truth; for the FATHER seeks such to worship Him (John iv. 23, 24). It is *children* who are called to worship their FATHER.

In the LORD's well-known prayer (John xvii.) He prays "that they all may be one; as Thou, FATHER, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they all may be one in us." And why? "That the world may believe that Thou hast sent me." Is it GOD's mind that the members of CHRIST's Body should be scattered? No, "that they all may be one," etc. He would have all His children worshipping as one family. Nothing will suit GOD but what is of Divine authority,

In Eph. ii. 20—22, Paul says, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostle and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief corner stone; in Whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the LORD: in Whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of GOD through the SPIRIT."

We have CHRIST, the chief corner stone, on which the building rests. Take away CHRIST and the building is gone; but give Him His own proper place, as the only Centre, round Whom the HOLY GHOST is drawing the children of GOD, and there GOD can dwell. If there are only two or three gathered in His Name, He is in their midst. This was the only ground on which the early Christians met for worship, and this is the true ground of the Church of GOD now. See 1 Cor. xii. 12—27; xiv; Eph. iv. 3—16; 2 Thess. ii. 1.

There are a few who, by GOD's grace, do meet together, led by His SPIRIT to worship Him in spirit and in truth. But is this the Church? The Church being composed of all believers, it cannot be; but then these few are meeting on the ground laid down in Scripture, and acted on by the Apostles.

CHRIST loved the Church, and gave Himself for it, that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, etc. (Eph. v. 27).

And now, in closing these few lines, I would affectionately

entreat any who read this, to consider on what ground you meet to worship GOD. Will your worship stand the test of Scripture? Will it stand the test of that day when every man's work will be made manifest? (1 Cor. iii. 10—17).

"HOLDING THE HEAD."

It is a common expression among Christians, when speaking of others, to say, "They hold the Head." By this is meant that the persons in question are simply trusting in CHRIST as their SAVIOUR, and confessing Him as LORD. It is thus often used as a set-off against the ostensible divisions of the Church; a saving clause in the indictment for sectarianism, and thus becomes a plea for its allowed continuance, even where the conscience has in some measure been exercised with reference to it. When the divisions among true believers are deplored, and the *unscripturalness* of the several organizations with which they are connected is pressed, the answer frequently given is, "Well, after all, they all hold the Head; they are all trusting in CHRIST and His finished work for salvation and the forgiveness of their sins; and when all get to Heaven, it won't much matter what *section* of the Church they have been connected with on earth." Such an answer betrays two things: ignorance of what the Church really is, and consequently of the significance of the term, "holding the Head"; and total indifference to the glory of God now in the Church, as long as people get safe to Heaven in result. *Corporate* responsibility, as members of a body of which CHRIST is *now* the head in Heaven, is got rid of, and all the exhortations of Scripture that bear upon this subject are without force or meaning. "Endeavoring to keep *the unity* of the spirit in the bond of peace," has no significance, and is of no importance, as long as people are saved and get to Heaven. Now, such a state of thought and feeling could not exist if the true meaning of "holding the Head" were really felt in the heart and conscience. If the charge of "*not holding the Head*" were brought against Christians now, as it was by Paul against some in Colosse, it would be indignantly rejected, and the answer given in rebutting the charge would be such as we have already described, as to CHRIST being trusted in as SAVIOUR, and confessed as LORD, which would amount merely to an acknowledgement of genuine faith in CHRIST. Now, this answer, by its own terms, excludes any idea of corporate relationship to others in connection with CHRIST, thus known as

SAVIOUR and LORD. There is no acknowledgement of being a member of a body, of which the One trusted in is **HEAD**. The thought of a body is not even in the mind, and the faith of the soul, in such a relationship, is in no wise in exercise. It is a use, now very general, of a term by the lip, that has no significance, either in heart or conscience; an instance of a sad and prevalent habit, even amongst Christians, of wresting a Scripture from its proper connections, and perverting it to a use, according to the will of man, the very opposite of that for which it was given. This mode of dealing with Scripture is, in character, just that of which Peter speaks, when referring generally to the writings of Paul, and giving them the full authority of "Scripture," he says: "In which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, unto their own destruction." It is one of the clearest evidences of Satanic acting, and one that marks specially the age in which we are living, the closing one of the dispensation, this perversion of Scripture from its true bearing, so as to give it force in the hearts and consciences of men, the very opposite of that for which it was given. In nothing is Satan so busy, as in connection with Scripture, either in entirely dethroning it in the consciences of men, or in perverting its use to their destruction, and in the case of true believers, to their present loss of blessing, in their ability to glorify God according to His revealed will. One of the saddest evidences of the practical infidelity of the heart, even in Christians, is what is called *difference of judgment* as to Scripture. In rejecting the assumptions of the Church of Rome to teach and enforce *uniformity* of faith and practice in the things of God, Christians have deliberately given themselves up to the winds of *diversity* of faith and practice. In breaking loose from human thralldom, they have given reins to the will, under the form of what is termed liberty of conscience. The legitimate result of this is Protestantism, with its numberless sects and creeds. Hence Protestantism, as a Church system, in its diversity of faith and practice, is as far from God and the truth as Romanism, with its uniformity of faith and practice. The Word of God equally judges both, whether it be the uniformity of Rome, or the diversities of Protestantism.

This is no question of souls genuinely trusting in **CHRIST**. Thank God, they are found in both one and the other, and in spite of what they are thus connected with. Where there is *faith*, it is in **GOD** and His Word, in one case as much as the

other. It is this alone that saves, and brings any soul to God. Blessed be God, the one thing that is *not* provided for in His Word is uncertainty in any, of the soul's relationship to *Himself*, whether this be individual, or in association with others, as "the Church of God, which He has purchased with the blood of His own." If only we desire His will, the path is clear about everything. For the soul that will accept and trust it, the word of CHRIST still is, "if any man desire to do His will, He *shall know* of the teaching whether it be of God." We are no more left to the will and dogmatism of other men, than we are left to ourselves and our own reason. The blessed "Spirit of Truth," that other Comforter, has come down from an ascended and glorified CHRIST, to *lead us "into all truth,"* and every believer has "an unction from the Holy One," and "the anointing which ye have received of Him *abideth* in you, and ye *need* not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie, and even as IT hath taught you, ye shall abide in Him." In full confidence in the "holy Scriptures of truth," which are given of God, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. iii, 17), and in simple dependence upon the blessed Spirit of God to guide into all truth, we would now turn with our readers to these Scriptures of truth, to learn the real force of the term, "holding the Head." For this purpose, we cannot do better than first take up the verse in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, where the expression occurs, "*not holding the Head,* from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." It is clear from this verse that "holding the Head" has its entire significance in connection with that which follows: "from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." The thought presented to the mind is that of a body in connection with a head, from whom it draws all its strength and nourishment. Turning back to the eighteenth verse of the previous chapter, we at once learn whom the Head is, and what the body: "and He (CHRIST) is the head of the body, the Church." From this it becomes clear that holding fast the Head is not a question of the individual place of every believer, as having each CHRIST for Saviour and Lord, but of the corporate relationship in which they stand one to another, in connection with CHRIST as head of His body, the Church;

and that in holding fast the one, they hold fast the other, or in letting go the one, they let go the other. The believer is as much united to his fellow-member as he is to the Head. In this light, and it is the Scriptural one, it is clearly a matter of Church relationship, in direct *contrast* with that of the individual place of each believer, and is used by the Apostle under the warning, "and not holding the Head," for the very opposite of that in which it is so frequently used by Christians, when trying to evade the question of the visible unity of believers on earth, as the Church of God. We would, therefore, most earnestly press upon the attention of our readers the solemn consideration of what this term really means, and would beg each one to ask himself, in God's presence, under the searching light of His word, "Am I truly holding the Head?" "Is my *soul* before God and in the power of the Spirit, in the true significance of this weighty truth?" In connection with such a soul-stirring inquiry as this, it is of all importance to be quite clear in our minds, and upon Divine authority, in what *way* CHRIST is the head of the body, and what constitutes membership in that body. Our enjoyment of *true* Church relationship, and with it our ability to glorify God, depends upon the *true* knowledge of these blessed truths. Communion with God, and communion with the saints, according to the Spirit, flow along together.

(*To be continued.*)

FAMILIAR CONVERSATIONS ON THE ELEMENTS OF ROMANISM.

THE second of the "Present Testimony Tracts," has come into our hands, under the title, "Familiar Conversations upon the Elements of Romanism." In a familiar and colloquial way it first takes up the inquiry, "Faith—is it in God and His Word: or in the Church?" Then in a second part, the question of the "Forgiveness of Sins: Purgatory," is gone into at considerable length. To any one who desires to get an insight into the practical working of Romanism, its insidious mode of attacking the soul, and its peculiar teaching, this tract will be found invaluable. To those whose service in the Gospel lies amongst those subject to Romanist influences, we would especially commend it, as calculated to afford them much help in their work of dealing with souls thus affected. To one, under the SPIRIT of God seeking

truth and a Catholic, it might be of much service, while no better tract could be put into the hands of any soul seeking peace, and yet tending toward Romanism in the hope of finding it there. It seems especially written for such. We subjoin a couple of pages, that our readers may see its character and aims.

N.* Well, James, I hear you have been visited by some Roman Catholics, and are in some perplexity.

James. I have, and they spoke very fair; and I can't deny that I do not see clear. CHRIST surely left a Church on earth, and some authority to guide us poor people, and instruct us in the right way. It is a great comfort to feel assured that one is of the true Church that CHRIST founded. And, after I had been reflecting awhile on what they said, I began to feel that I have got no proof that the Bible is the word of God.

N.* And did you ever doubt it before, James?

James. No, I can't say I did; I have always believed it to be the word of God; though I am afraid I have sadly neglected it many a year, still I, and my wife more than myself, used to find comfort in it; and the children, too, used to read a chapter when they came from school; and I think it used to do us all good, and bring God home to us somehow, and keep our consciences alive; and the children took wonderfully to beautiful histories that are in it, and so, indeed, did we, and it made our home happy. There was only Jem that paid no heed to it; and he was an unruly boy; I have had a deal of trouble with him. But, since I have got more serious and anxious in my mind, I have found the Bible bring trouble into my conscience. I hardly know where I am with God; it condemns me; I see there is goodness and wonderful grace in JESUS; but then, I have no peace in myself, and now I see there is a deal I do not understand, and I should like to know the bottom of it. Bill M. (my neighbor, who has turned Catholic), says he has never been so happy in his life, his soul never got rest till now. He never thought much about religion, it is true, and those ladies that visit were wonderful kind when his lass was sick; but he says he knows some who never got a minute's rest in their souls, that were always seeking it, till they found it in the true Church. It was he that asked me how I knew it was the Bible; and if the true Church had not kept the Bible and given it, who could say it was the word of God, as I called it? and that has dashed me uncommonly, because, though I never doubted

it before, and saw in infidels that there was no good nor godliness in their ways, yet, I felt I had no proof to give, and what am I to do? I know that it speaks of a Church that CHRIST would build on the rock, and I think if that would give me certainty, it would be a great rest to me. But my Mary says she could not think of such a thing; that she could no more doubt it to be the word of God than that the sun shines, and less, if that were possible; that there is more light and comfort to her soul in the Bible than there is light for her eyes and warmth in the sun. And she is a rare wife to me, and I see she has great sense in the things of God, and is a comfort in the house, and wonderful to the children—very civil to those black ladies that visit, but shy of them and the way they try and get into the family. I do not think that I doubt at bottom, that it is the word of God; my conscience and my heart too, I think, make me feel it is. But since this talk with Bill M. my mind is all in perplexity, and I feel I have no proof it is the word of God; and just because I have begun to be anxious about it, and about my soul, I should like to have something certain to rest upon. You'll forgive, I'm sure, Sir, my saying everything, and telling you all that is in my mind, because I have known you so long and your kindness, and I am in perplexity, and to tell the truth, glad to open my mind to some one I can trust, though I do not rightly know what to trust now. I thought I could entirely trust the word of God, and what am I to do now? You'll excuse me.

*N**. I am very much obliged to you, James, for telling me what was passing in your mind, and grateful for the confidence you have shown me, and thankful to God that He disposed your heart to do so, and we could not do better than take up the subject; there cannot be a more important one. The faith, or, to speak more truly, CHRIST, is everything for us poor sinners, and we do want some sure ground on which to believe. Our faith must be a divine faith, in its nature and source, as well as in the things which it reveals; and for a divine faith we must have divine testimony. But there is, in what you say, one thing which strikes me much, namely that your Roman Catholic friends have only led you to doubt the authority of the Scriptures, which yet they believe to be divine, or they are infidels themselves. They have not ventured to say the Scriptures are not divine; that would be infidelity,

and, as far as man went, straight-forward infidelity; but they have sought to make you doubt of the certainty of their being divine. This may be well to bring you under their influence, and to make you believe that they only can give you this certainty; but I confess that I do not see the honesty of making you uncertain as to the authority of the Scriptures, when they own that authority themselves."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q.—“Is it a slight upon a woman’s position, or making little of her, to be told that she is to be ‘a keeper at home’?”

A.—It certainly can be neither a slight, nor making little of woman, to give her the place that God gives her in His word. The Spirit of God, by the Apostle Paul, as much penned the verse in 2nd Titus from which this exhortation is taken, as he did that in 10th of Luke, where the *Lord Jesus* says: “Mary hath chosen the better part, which shall not be taken from her.” Woman has her place before *God*, as much as man, though in connection with man; her beauty and her blessing is to keep the place in which God has set her for *His own* Glory, and her well-being. God gives *His* mind about woman’s place in sweet detail in His word; and she who sits at the feet of Jesus will learn this place through that word, in power and happiness. In cases of doubt as to this, it is generally the *heart* that wants setting straight. The walk is simple and easy when the heart is right. The heart divinely taught finds its joy in God, and God finds His delight in the “*hidden* man of the *heart*,” in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which in the *sight* of God is of great price.” (1 Peter iii., 4.)

Q.—“Are the ‘dead’ in 1 Peter iv. 6, those that are ‘dead’ to sin but alive unto God?”

A.—We believe the “dead” in this verse refer to the wicked dead; those who in the past dispensations, had had the promises of blessing presented to them while living, so that they might live according to God in the spirit, being quickened by the word addressed to them, and thus through a spiritual life escape from the flesh; or be judged as responsible for what they had done in the flesh, by rejecting the blessing offered them. One or other of these two results would be the effect in any case of having heard the Gospel. Upon the same ground is it, that *CHRIST*, on God’s part, is now *ready to judge* the living or the dead, as the case may be, at His appearing and Kingdom.

POETRY.

"We see JESUS crowned with glory."—HEB. II. 9.

A MAN in glory, lo! we see—
A man; yet, very GOD is He.
The brightness of the FATHER's face,
His image, majesty, and grace;
Upholding all things by His might;
The Son, in whom is God's delight.

A Man in glory! yes, 'tis He,
That Man who died on Calvary;
Who bowed His head to grief and pain,
That we eternal life might gain;
Made sin, for us, a victim fell,
To free our souls from death and hell.

A Man in glory! once on earth;
Angelic hosts proclaimed His birth.
A meek and lowly One He came,
The lost and famishing to claim;
To bind the broken, bleeding heart,
And healing balm, in love, impart.

That Man in glory! set at naught
By haughty men, whose good He sought;
Betrayed, derided, crucified!
(Exalted now and glorified!)
He bare reproach, poured out His blood,
To bring creation back to God.

That Man in glory, from the grave
Hath risen, to justify and save.
Captivity bath captive led,
Himself, the First-born from the dead.
The FATHER makes His throne His seat,
Till foes shall bow before His feet.

That Man in glory! high above,
He lives to prove His matchless love;
To bring His ransomed saints to share
His perfectness and glory there;
Present them to His FATHER's face,
Complete in Him, complete in grace.

YEDDIE; OR, "YON LOVELY MAN."

A POOR idiot, who was supported by his parish in the Highlands of Scotland, passed his time in wandering from house to house. He was silent and peaceable, and won the pity of all kind hearts. He had little power to converse with his fellow-men, but seemed often in loving communion with Him, who, while He is the High and holy One, condescends to men of low estate. Yeddie, as he was called, was in the habit of whispering and muttering to himself as he trudged along the highway, or performed the simple tasks which any neighbor felt at liberty to demand of him. The boys, while they were never cruel to him, often got a little fun out of his odd ways. He believed every word they said to him; and because he had been told in sport, that if he once rode over the hills to kirk in a donkey-cart, he would never be heir to the Earl of Glen-Allen, he refused all the kind offers of farmers and cotters, and replied always in the same words: "Na, na; ill luck falls on me the day I mount a cart; so I'll aye gang on my ain feet up to the courts o' the Lord's house, and be talking to Himsel' as I gang."

Once, when a merry boy heard him pleading earnestly with some unseen one, he asked, "What ghost or goblin are you begging favors of now, Yeddie?" "Neither the one nor the tither, laddie," he replied; "I was just having a few words wi' Him that neither yoursel' nor I can see, and yet wi' Him that sees the baith o' us!" The poor fellow was talking to God, while the careless wise ones laughingly said, "He is talking to himself."

One day Yeddie presented himself in his coarse frock and his hob-nailed shoes before the minister, and making a bow, much like that of a wooden toy when pulled by a string, he said, "Please, minister, let poor Yeddie eat supper on the coming day wi' the LORD JESUS." The good man was preparing the observance of the LORD'S Supper, which came quarterly in that thinly settled region, and was celebrated by several churches together; so that the concourse of people made it necessary to hold the Services in the open air.

He was too busy to be disturbed by the simple youth, and so strove to put him off as gently as possible; but Yeddie pleaded, "Oh, minister, *if ye but kem'd how I love him, ye wud let me go where He's to sit at table!*" This so touched his heart that permission was given for Yeddie to take his seat with the rest. And although he had many miles to trudge over hill

and moor, he was on the ground long before those who lived near, and drove good horses.

As the Services proceeded, tears flowed freely from the eyes of the poor "idiot," and at the name of JESUS he would shake his head mournfully and whisper, "But I dinna see Him." At length, however, after partaking of the bread and wine, he raised his head, wiped away the traces of his tears, and, looking in the minister's face, nodded and smiled. Then he covered his face with his hands and buried it between his knees, and remained in that posture till the parting blessing was given, and the people began to scatter. He then rose, and with a face lighted with joy, and yet marked with solemnity, he followed the rest.

One and another from his own parish spoke to him, but he made no reply, until pressed by some of the boys. Then he said, "Ah, lads, dinna bid Yeddie speak to-day! He's seen the face o' the LORD JESUS among his ain ones. He got a smile fro' His eye, and a word fro' His tongue; and he's afear'd to speak lest he lose memory o't; for it's a bad memory he has at the best. Ah! lads, lads, I ha' seen Him this day that I never seed before. I ha' seen wi' these dull eyes *yon lovely Man*. Dinna ye speak, but just leave poor Yeddie to His company."

The boys looked on in wonder, and one whispered to another; "Sure he's na longer daft! 'The senses ha' come into his head, and he looks and speaks like a wise one."

When Yeddie reached the poor cot he called "home," he dared not speak to the "granny" who sheltered him, lest he might, as he said, "lose the bonny face." He left his "porritch and treacle" untasted; and, after smiling on and patting the faded cheek of the old woman, to show her that he was not out of humor, he climbed the ladder to the poor loft where his pallet of straw was, to get another look and another word "fro' yon lovely Man." And his voice was heard below, in low tones: "Aye, LORD, it's just poor me that has been sae long seeking ye; and now we'll bide together, and never part more! Oh, aye! but this is a bonny loft, all goold and precious stones. The hall o' the castle is a poor place to my loft this bonny night!" And then his voice grew softer and softer, till it died away.

Granny sat over the smouldering peat below, with her elbows on her knees, relating in loud whispers to a neighboring crone the stories of the boys who had preceded Yeddie from the Service, and also his own strange words and appearance.

"And beside all this," she said in a hoarse whisper, "he refused to taste his supper—a thing he had never done before, since the parish paid his keeping. More than that, he often ate his own portion and mine, too, and then cried for more; such a fearful appetite he had! But to-night, when he cam' in, faint wi' the long road he had come, he cried, 'Na meat for me, granny; I ha' had a feast which I will feel within me while I live; I supped wi' the LORD JESUS, and noo I must e'en gang up the loft and sleep wi' Him.'"

"Noo, Molly," replied granny's guest; "doesna' that remind ye o' the words o' our LORD HIMSEL', when he tell'd them that bid Him eat, 'I ha' meat to eat that ye know not of?' Who'll dare to say that the blessed HAND that fed the multitude when they were seated on the grass, has na' this day been feeding the hungry soul o' poor Yeddie as he sat at His table? Ah, Molly, we little know what humble work He will stoop to do for His ain puir ones who cry day and night to Him! We canna tell noo but this daft laddie will be greater in the kingdom o' heaven than the earl himsel'—puir body—that looks very little noo as if he'd be able to crowd in at the pearly gate!"

"And, oh, Janet, if ye could ha' seen the face o' yon puir lad as he cam' into the cot! It just shone like the light, and at first, even afore he spoke a word, I thocht he was carrying a candle in his hand! I believe in my soul, good neebor, that Yeddie was in great company to-day, and that the same *shining* was on him as was on Moses and Elias when they talked with JESUS on the mount. I e'en hoped he brocht the blessing home wi' him to bide on the widow that was too auld and feeble to walk to the table, but who has borne wi' him, and toiled patiently for him, because he was one of the LORD'S little and feeble ones."

"Oo, aye, doubtless he did bring hame the blessing, and that ye'll get the reward o' these many cups o' cold water ye've given him; for what's the few pence or shillings the parish grants ye, compared wi' the mother's care ye give him?" said Janet.

"Aweel, aweel," replied granny; "if I get the reward, it'll not be because I wrought for *that*. I seemed ne'r to ken, syne the day I took the daft and orphaned lad, that I was minding, and feeding, and clothing one o' 'these little ones,' and I ken it better to-night than ever. I ha' strange new feelings mysel', too, neebor, and I'm minded o' the hour when our blessed Master cam' and stood among His faithfu' ones, the door being

shut, and said, 'Peace be unto you.' Surely this strange heavenly calm can no' be of earth; and who shall say that Himsel' is not here beside us twa, come to this pair placo more for the daft lad's sake than oor ain?"

And thus these lowly women talked of Him whom their souls loved, their hearts burning within them as they talked.

When the morrow's sun arose, "granny," unwilling to disturb the weary Yeddie, left her poor pillow to perform his humble tasks. She brought peat from the stack, and water from the spring. She spread her humble table, and made her "porritch"; and then, remembering that he went supperless to bed, she called him from the foot of the ladder. There was no reply. She called again and again, but there was no sound above, save the wind whistling through the openings of the thatch. She had not ascended the rickety ladder for years, but anxiety gave strength to her limbs, and she soon stood in the poor garret, which had long sheltered the half-idiot boy. Before a rude stool, half sitting, half kneeling, with his head resting on his folded arms, she found Yeddie. She laid her hand upon his head, but instantly recoiled in terror; the heavy iron crown had been lifted from his brow, and, while she was sleeping, had been replaced with the crown of the ransomed, which fadeth not away. Yeddie had caught a glimpse of JESUS, and could not live apart from Him. As he had supped, so he had slept—with Him.

A deep awe fell on the parish and the minister at this evident token that CHRIST had been among them; and the funeral of the idiot boy was attended from far and wide. A solemnity rarely seen was noticed there, as if a great loss had fallen on the community, instead of the parish having been relieved of a burden. Poor "granny" was not left alone in her cot; for He who had come thither after that last supper with Yeddie, was with her, even to the end.—*From "The Christian Era."*

"NO MORE CONSCIENCE OF SIN."

Hebrews x.

THE object of redemption is to bring us nigh to God, as it is written, "CHRIST hath once suffered for sin, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God." But what is our state before God when thus brought nigh? The right understanding of this is most important. It is impossible that we could be happy even in the presence of God, if there still

existed a thought of His being against us. I need the perfect, settled assurance that there is no sin upon me before Him. The sense of responsibility ever makes a person unhappy where there is any question as to sin standing against him: see the case of a servant and his master, or that of a child and its parent—the conscience is miserable if there is upon it the sense of that which will be judged. So God's presence must be indeed terrible, unless the conscience be perfectly good. If there be happiness for me there, it can only be with sense of His favour, and of the completeness with which we have been brought back—the perfect assurance of the "worshipper once purged" having "no more conscience of sin."

God speaks to us according to His *estimate* of our standing—it may not be our heart's *experience*. There is a distinctness between the operation of the Spirit of God in bringing me unto JESUS, bearing witness to me of God's love, and of the efficacy of what CHRIST has done, and His operation in my soul in producing in me the love of God. That which is the subject of experience, is what is produced in my own soul—whereas that which gives me peace, is His testimony to the work of JESUS. A Christian who doubts the Father's love to him, and who looks for peace to that which passes in his own heart, is doubting God's truth.

The Gospel is the revelation God has given of Himself—it displays the love of God towards us, and what is in His heart. I can trust the declaration of what is in God's heart and not what I think of myself.

The Apostle speaks of a *due time*: "when we were yet without strength, in due time CHRIST died for the ungodly." It is almost always true that there is in us a terrible process of breaking the heart, in order that we may be brought to the ascertainment that we are lost and ruined sinners; but the Gospel begins at the close of God's *experience of man's heart*, and calls us from that in order that we should have the joy and peace of the experience of what is in *His heart*.

Man, left alone before the flood, put under the law in Canaan, indeed, under all and every trial of his nature and tendency up to the death of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, was just God's putting to the test man's power.

One would have thought, after Adam had been turned out of Paradise for transgression, that would have been a sufficient warning; but his first-born became a murderer. We should have supposed that the flood, which swept off the workers of iniquity, would have repressed, for a time at least, by the terror

of judgment, the outbreak of sin; but we find, immediately afterwards, Noah getting drunk, and Ham dishonouring his father. The devouring fire of Sinai, which made even Moses fear and quake, seemed sufficient to subdue the rebel heart and make it bow beneath God's hand; but the golden calf was the awful evidence that the heart of man was "deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Again, in Canaan, a part of the world was tried to the utmost to be cultivated, but it would not do. A bad tree producing bad fruit, was the only type by which God could set Israel forth. (See Isa. v.) He might dig about it and dung it, but after all these efforts it could only bring forth more bad fruit. At last He said, "I have yet one son, perhaps they will reverence my son;" but man preferred having the world for himself, and so crucified JESUS. Looking to His cross, CHRIST said, "Now is the judgment of this world." (John xii.)

At the crucifixion of JESUS, the veil was rent, and the holiest opened; what GOD was within the veil then shone out in all its fulness. When grace reveals this to me I get confidence. I see GOD holy and expecting holiness, true, but the peace of GOD is in knowing what He is to us, and not what we are to Him. He knows all the evil of our hearts; nothing can be worse than the rejection of JESUS—man's hatred is shown out there, and God's love to the full. The wretched soldier who, in the cowardly impotence of the consciousness that he could with impunity insult the meek and lowly JESUS, pierced his side with a spear, let out, in that disgraceful act, the water and the blood which was able to cleanse even such as he. Here *God's heart* was revealed, what He is to the sinner, and this is our salvation.

Death and judgment teach me redemption. GOD judged sin, indeed, in sacrificing His well-beloved Son to put it away. It must be punished; JESUS bore the blow—this rent the veil, and showed out what GOD really is. The very blow that let out the holiness of GOD, put away the sin which His holiness judged.

The perfect certainty of GOD's love and the perfect cleansing of the conscience, is that which the defiled and trembling sinner needs.

"*By the grace of God,*" JESUS CHRIST has "*tasted death;*" death, the wages of sin, is seen in the Cross of JESUS as the consequence of "*the grace of God.*" "*Out of the eater cometh forth meat, and out of the strong sweetness.*" Were any one to demand of me proof of *God's love*, I could not give more

than God has done in that "He *spared not* His own Son"—none other could be so great. But then, it might be asked, may not my sin affect it? No—God knew all your sins and He has provided for it all—"the blood of JESUS CHRIST, His Son, cleanseth from *all* sin.

In real communion the conscience must be purged; there can be no communion if the soul be not at peace. We read here: "By one offering He hath *perfected for ever* them that are sanctified." There is very frequently the confounding of what Faith produces with what Faith rests upon. *Faith* always rests upon *God's estimate* of the blood of Jesus as He has revealed it in His Word; Faith rests on no *experience*. Jesus said, "Lo I come to do thy will, O God! "*by the which will we are sanctified by the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all.*" "We are sanctified"—it is not that which is proposed for our attainment; it was the good will of God to do it, and the work is done to bring our souls back to Himself. Jesus has said, "It is finished." But then there must be the knowledge of this also, in order for us to begin to act. You might have a person willing to pay your debts—nay, you might even have them paid—but if you did not know it you would be just as miserable as before. We are not called upon to believe in a promise that Jesus should come to die, and rise again. The work is *done*. He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High," when "He *had* by Himself purged our sins." But then this is not sufficient for me. I must *know* that the work is done, and therefore He sent down the HOLY GHOST to be the witness that God is satisfied.

Knowing perfectly their guilt and amount, God has declared, "Your sins and iniquities *I will remember no more.*" Faith rests on this: God is true. "He that hath received His testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." The Lord said to Israel in Egypt concerning the blood of the Paschal Lamb, "When *I see* the blood I will pass over." Could there be hesitation if we were in a house marked with blood on the door-post? Should we not *know* that He would pass over. Faith is always Divine certainty. God has said, "I will remember *no more.*" This is the ground on which we enter into the holiest. "The worshipper once purged" has "*no more* Conscience of Sin."

CHRIST MY SANCTIFICATION.

1 Cor. i. 30.

How many who, through grace, have learnt CHRIST as their wisdom and righteousness, have yet to learn the true force of those words "who of God is made unto us . . . sanctification." It is in reality a truth as simple as the other; but alas, we are not simple, and that which faith would put us in possession of in a moment, is often only grasped after years of sad experience of discouragement and failure in seeking by self-devised methods, what lies close to our hand, and unperceived.

The process of learning self is the most painful and tedious one in general, because we are so unwilling to take God's estimate of what we are. That "the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked," is of course admitted by all who bow to the Word of Him who alone knows it. But we soon find how little practically we are beyond its deceptions, and how little we have learnt really to distrust it. How vast an amount of what we have, many of us, been taught to rejoice in as "experience," is anything but that which the Apostle says "worketh hope," being merely the fruit of legality and self-righteousness; not of that "faith" which alone effectually "purifies the heart," (Acts xv. 9.)

"Now for a holy walk," is the joyful language of the Christian, just conscious that in him, not measured by the throbbing of his pulse, abides eternal life. The thing is true, and the thought of God. But still, how often there is, underneath all this that one knows so well how to sympathize with, a spring of self-confidence and self-seeking yet unknown. Perhaps the thought is even of such a change of the old nature itself (which may be *practically* believed, where far other thoughts have been *apparently* received) as shall enable the one in whom it has taken place, to find *in himself* the fulfilment of those words—true of what we are "*in Christ*" and not in self—in *faith*, not in *experience*—"old things passed away, and *all things* become new" (2 Cor. v. 17). Perhaps for a little season, in the new joy of salvation, this apparently is found. But little by little, if not at once betrayed by very unsuspecting into some painful fall, the truth breaks in upon him. The flesh is still unchanged, its "mind" still "enmity against God," never "subject to the law of God," (Rom. viii. 7), "that which is born of" is still "flesh" and *only* flesh. I

do not dwell on this, although so important for our peace to know. The remedy is "Walk in the spirit, and ye shall"—not find the flesh gone, but—"not fulfil the lusts of the flesh," (Gal. v. 16). For *still*, when we have the Spirit, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary, the one to the other, so that ye *should* not (it ought not to be cannot, but should not) do the things that ye would."

So that the way of victory over sin is this: "walk in the Spirit." It is beautiful to see, and needful to consider well, that it is not the new nature that is here spoken of. We do get a new nature, surely, as born of God. And it is entirely opposed to the old; as entirely good, (because it is from God) as the flesh is corrupt and evil. But the possession of the new nature is not *strength*, as many, as *all*, have to find practically by experience. People often say, "A Christian couldn't do such and such things." And when we find out first our evil after conversion, we are thus tempted oftentimes to think we have never been converted, until we learn that faith's evidences of what we are, are all in One who is at God's right hand for us, and that simply by faith in Him we are children of God (Gal. iii. 20). Scripture language is far different. "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." And that is enforced by many, many solemn admonitions. The Scripture teaching is that not as having been born again are we strong, but that our strength lies in the knowledge of our weakness. I do not *fall* because of weakness, for I have my FATHER'S strong arm to cling to then. But when I think I stand and let it go, I fall.

Thus, the possession of a new nature brings me into the consciousness of creature weakness and nothingness. It is the creature's only right, and only safe and happy place; there where I learn His love who keeps me and cares for me, in whom I live, and move, and have my being. Thus the Spirit of God, dwelling in me, is my power, and if I walk *in the Spirit* I do not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

But you ask, What is this then? how shall I walk in the Spirit? Let me tell you a little as I have learned it.

The Spirit of God is come forth, consequent upon the glorification of JESUS (John vii. 39,) to testify of *Him* (xv 26). If He speak of me, He testifies that I am most unlike, and most unworthy of Him; never flatters me into self-satisfaction by fair pictures of what I am—sinner or saint—for "no flesh shall glory in His presence"; never occupies me with myself at all,

save for *self-judgment*, but fills my eye and heart with the beauty and glory of One who is for me, and who is mine in the presence of God. He is my righteousness, but more, He is my *sanctification*. I cannot be nearer to God than I am, for I am in Him. I cannot be dearer, for I am "accepted in the Beloved" (Eph. i. 6). No attainment, as growth in grace, can do aught for me *in that respect*. But still more, no attainment can make me more "fit for the inheritance of the saints in light." (Col. i. 12). I am taught to give thanks to the FATHER that He *has* made me meet. True, I have an old nature, but God reckons it not to me, but reckons what CHRIST is. He has judged it in the Cross of CHRIST, and I bless Him for it. He is against it, I know, and so am I. It is an indwelling enemy, but "it is not I." The only "I" I am taught to recognize is CHRIST, in whom I am. Furthermore I have a nature fit to enjoy, and which does enjoy, Him, and let the LORD come, or death, my body of sin is dropped, and glory is mine.

What then? I am at rest. I gaze up into His face, and while I do so *my* face brightens (2 Cor. iii. 18). It is a brightness, which like that in Moses' face, we are unconscious of—conscious only of His, just as if I were up in the moon I should not rejoice in moonlight but in the sun. Thus I do grow in grace. There is development of the nature (perfect though it be from the first). I have received, as the little babe, perfect in human nature, grows up into the man. I do grow in grace, just in proportion as I "grow in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST" (2 Pet. iii. 18), as the babe grows up into the likeness of what it sees in others.

Thus there is rest and joy. CHRIST is the soul's object. Holiness becomes not self-complacency, but "*holiness to the Lord*." He who can say: "to me to live is CHRIST" cannot be unholy. While he who says, to me to live is holiness, will miss it in living religiously to himself. It is only he who can say "to me to live is *Christ*," who will also be able to say: "I can do *all* things through CHRIST which strengtheneth me." (Phil. i. 21; iv. 13)

Beloved, "He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." How many are self-righteously mourning over themselves, because they sought to be something, and find they are nothing, when they should be thanking God rather, that He could suffer nothing to rob them of the rest which is only found in gazing into the face of CHRIST, enjoying and glorifying Him.

"HOLDING THE HEAD."

(Continued from page 110.)

IN considering the question as to the way in which CHRIST is head of the Church, which is His body, it becomes necessary to distinguish between that which CHRIST was by incarnation, or while on earth, and what He now is, as risen from the dead and exalted at God's right hand in Heaven. As born into this world of the Virgin Mary, and called JESUS as the destined Saviour of His people, we find Him spoken of 1st, as "the Son of Man," "the seed of the woman," that should bruise the Serpent's head and deliver man from his thralldom. By this title He is in relationship with *all men* as the Son of man, come to seek and save the lost. He is the Heir of the world, and the One into whose hand all judgment is put as Son of man. (John, v. 27) 2d, He is the son of Abraham, heir of David's throne and "born King of the Jews." In this light He is exclusively in relationship with Israel. He comes to seek and save "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," and dies distinctively for that nation. 3d, He is "the only *begotten* son of the Father," the Son of God born in this world of the HOLY GHOST. In this character He is revealed to Peter, who proclaims Him as "the CHRIST the Son of the living God," the one prophesied of in the 2d Psalm. It is in connection with this latter title, that we have the LORD Himself in replying to Peter (Math. xvii.) giving the *first* intimation of the Church, but only as a *future* thing which he would build. It was not then in existence, and hence in connection with His then position on earth, He had no relationship to it. Yet, as Son of GOD He was at this moment GOD's gift to the world, "that the world through Him might be saved." Such the Samaritans discovered Him to be—"the Christ," His headship over Israel, and "the Saviour of the world." (John, iii. 42.) In all this we have been speaking of what CHRIST was as man, above and outside all of which, He was of course the LORD (JΕΗΟΥΑΝΗ), the Eternal Son of the Father, and "GOD over all blessed forever," in His own person. They did well to call Him "LORD," for so I am, He says, and Thomas falls at His feet, adoring Him as "my LORD and my GOD." Blessedly as the soul might know Him under these various titles of grace and glory,—and many did know Him thus more or less fully,—we look in vain for anything like a head of a body, or any knowing Him in such a character.

It is clear, then, from *Scripture*, that during the LORD's life

on earth, whether before or after resurrection, there was no such thing as a Church, nor any reference to His being head of such a Church as His body—while on earth as risen from the dead He had life and righteousness to give to lost sinners, and “all power in Heaven and earth,” is given to Him, a kingdom if you like, rich and full with blessings for man, but no body of which He was head, supplying it with life and nourishment, as flowing from the one to which it was united. Do what you will, such a thought can in no way be found in any of the records of CHRIST as given us in the Gospels, even though they reach to His place in resurrection, (Mat. xxviii.) and His ascension into Glory at the right hand of GOD. (Mark, xvi).

We must then turn to other Scriptures than the Gospels to learn anything of CHRIST as head of a body, the Church. And here we would ask our readers to prayerfully consider what we have just said as to the Gospels, and to ask GOD to give them the grace whereby they may distinguish things that differ. It is from confounding things which differ, that all the difficulty arises as to the true conception of the term “holding the head.”

The first direct statement as to CHRIST being head of “the Church which is His body,” is in the 1st of Ephesians. The body is referred to in Romans and Corinthians, and so inferentially the *headship* of Christ comes into the mind; but it is not distinctly brought out. We shall refer to these passages when looking at the question of *membership* in the body.

In Ephesians, i. 17-23, the Apostle Paul prays that *believers* may fully understand their place of blessing in CHRIST, “wherefore,” he says, “I also after I heard of your *faith* in the LORD JESUS, and love unto all saints, cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers; that the GOD of our LORD JESUS CHRIST, the Father of Glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him: the eyes of your understanding being enlightened: that ye may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints; and what is the exceeding greatness of His power to usward who believe, according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in CHRIST, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies; far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be *head* over all things to the Church which is His *body*, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all.” This

passage teaches plainly that it is *after* CHRIST has been raised from the dead and set in power and glory at GOD's right hand in the heavenlies, in this place of exaltation as man, that GOD gave Him to be head of the Church, His body. Every title and place of power, which Christ had already as the promised One possessed on earth, and all of which He gave up in death, He of course received back in resurrection in a better way at GOD's right hand. It is thus reinvested with what He had already possessed and glorified above all angels and powers in Heaven, that He has this new headship of the Church given to Him.

So, too, in Colossians, in the verse already referred to, after the statement of His Godhead glory in connection with creation as its head, He is stated to be head of the Church, as *risen from among the dead and victorious over all the power of the enemy*. Nothing, then, can be plainer than these Scriptures as to *the way* in which CHRIST becomes the head of the body,—when the headship commenced and where it subsists. We have now before us in the light of Scripture, this simple and blessed fact, that it was after glorifying GOD on the Cross, as obedient unto death, raised up from among the dead, and set in power at GOD's right hand in Heaven as the glorified man, that Christ becomes head of His body. No body, the Church, there could be, till there was a head, is also clear to a simple mind. The other question that we proposed now comes naturally up, "what constitutes membership in this body?" But perhaps some of our readers will here demur a little at the statement, that there was no Church till after CHRIST was thus glorified in Heaven. Were there not believers and saved persons possessing eternal life before, who loved GOD, and served Him before this? Yes. Will they not, too, be in resurrection and blest in Heaven with CHRIST? Most assuredly. And yet were none of these in the Church? None of them. What *none* of the Old Testament saints, not Enoch or Elijah, or even the thief to whom CHRIST Himself said, "To day shalt thou be with *Me* in Paradise,"—are none of these in the Church? Not one of them, if *Scripture* is to be our authority. While on earth they had their place of blessing with GOD, and they will, in the resurrection, have their place of blessing and glory with GOD and CHRIST in Heaven; but in the *Church* they never were, nor will be. Just as in the Millenium, after the Church is complete and glorified in Heaven as the bride, the Lamb's wife, there will be saints again on earth enjoying all the blessings that GOD can bestow during that dispensation, under CHRIST in His kingdom.

(To be continued).

THE LOVE OF JESUS.

In looking at Revelation i., 5-6, we can trace the following actings of love: First, love *thinks* of its objects. This marks the motive in operation to be unaffectedly pure; for when the heart regales itself by meditating on its object, it seeks not to be noticed, to be praised or exalted, for thinking of its object; its reward is found in the very thought itself—a reward, a pleasure with which nothing can compare. Secondly, love *visits* its object. It could not be content with merely thinking; the same principle that leads love to *think* with pleasure, induces it to *visit* its object; and, moreover, we can trace the same purity, elevation, and disinterestedness in the visit as in the *thought*. It does not *think* upon its object in order to please or attract the attention of any one, neither does it visit in order to effect such ends; it has *its own real, substantial* enjoyment, both in thinking of and visiting its object. Thirdly, love *suffers* for its object. It rests not satisfied with merely *thinking* of or *visiting* its object; it must *suffer*. In order to exhibit itself in all its reality and intensity, love must put itself to cost for its object; it must spend and be spent, not because it expects a return, but simply because *it will* express itself in a way not to be mistaken. Love never thinks of what it may reap for itself in thus suffering. No; it simply contemplates *its object* in thinking of, visiting, and suffering for it. Fourthly, love exalts its object. This is the highest point. In the exaltation of its object, love sees the fruit of previous thought, visitation and suffering. Hence, love feels exquisite happiness in exalting its object, for in so doing it reaps the wished-for harvest.

Let us now apply the above blessed characteristics of love to the Lord Jesus, and see how His love exhibited all of them. Did not He ponder in His own eternal mind His much-loved Church before the foundation of the world? Yes, truly, "His gracious eye surveyed us ere stars were seen above." Did He rest satisfied with merely thinking about us? No; He laid aside His glory; He came down into this cold, heartless world, as into a vast quarry, from whence He hoped to hew out stones for the temple. He made His way down into this "*rough valley*" of ours, which had "neither been eared nor sown." "The day-spring from *on high* hath visited us;" but He did not rest satisfied with coming down to look at us in our misery and degradation; He determined to *suffer* for us, to groan, to bleed, to die for us. He hath washed us

in "*His own blood*," which marks the intensity of His suffering for us. What, then, was all this for? Why those ineffable sufferings of JESUS? Why the groans and bloody sweat in the garden? Why the mysterious hour of profound darkness, together with the cry, "Why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Simply that the love of JESUS might *exalt* its object. And He has exalted His object, yea, to the highest point of elevation. "He hath made us kings and priests unto God."

Thus we have seen how the love of JESUS has *thought of, visited, suffered for, and exalted* its object: this is for our comfort. But, then, we should remember that if we *love* JESUS, *we too* will often like to *think* of Him, to contemplate His grace, ponder over His perfection; moreover, we will pay frequent *visits* to the secret of His sanctuary—not to gain a name as persons of much prayer, but simply to indulge the desires of our hearts after Him who is "the fairest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely." Again, we shall be ready to *suffer* for Him; not in order to commend ourselves to our brethren as persons of great energy and zeal, but to express the high estimation in which we hold His blessed Person. Finally, it will be our constant effort to *exalt* Him in every place; our constant cry will be: "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together." Let us earnestly pray for such a deep tide of Divine love in our poor, cold, narrow, selfish hearts, as will make our service, not the mere spurt of imperfect zeal, kindled by the unhallowed spark of human opinion, but the calm, steady, constant flow of unutterable affection for JESUS; that affection which has its primary joy in *pondering* over its object, ere it comes forth as an *actor* or a *sufferer* in *His cause*.

THE COMING OF THE LORD.

THERE is no truth of such *practical* power for communion, walk, and service as that of the coming of the LORD. Declension of heart in its communion, and consequently—"for out of it are the issues of life,"—of walk and service, flow invariably, where this truth has been once known, from its *losing* power in the heart. On the other hand, where the truth of the coming of the LORD, has not been known or received, communion, walk and service have never reached their normal Christian character, and the testimony as to CHRIST and His grace, rendered by the believer to the world, has been proportionally imperfect.

It is clear from Scriptures that the LORD taught His followers to expect His quick return, and that the early Christians, not only walked in great enjoyment of the grace of God, ministered in all its fulness by the HOLY SPIRIT, exhibiting the oneness of all believers in CHRIST as the visible united Church of God, but that they were individually looking out with eager anticipation for the immediate return of CHRIST, so that Paul, when speaking of himself and other Christians, says, "and we which are *alive* and *remain* to the coming of the LORD shall not prevent them that are asleep." It is equally certain that the LORD, in the Gospels, Himself forecasts the declension of this truth, with its consequences in those that once professed it. The Apostles also predicted the same thing, as directly introducing the apostacy of the professing Church. Peter warned the early Christians in such words as these: "Knowing this *first*, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts, and saying, 'Where is the promise of His coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.'" The history of the professing Church has but proved the correctness of these predictions. For upwards of a thousand years the proper hope of the LORD's return was lost to the Church, and where the idea was at all held in the mind, it was connected with the death of the believer, as ushering him into the blessedness of the LORD's presence in heaven. It is only within the last 50 years that God, in much mercy to His people, has fully given back this truth, and revived the "blessed hope" in the hearts of His children.

This revival of the hope of CHRIST's personal return was also predicted by the LORD in the parable of the Virgins in the 25th of Matthew.

We will now turn to the 24th and 25th chapters of Matthew to prove the truth of what we have said, as to the practical power of this truth in connection with communion, walk, and service for the LORD in the world, and amongst His saints.

Without observing the order of Matthew, we will first take up the question of the LORD's return in its relation to the heart, in its communion with Himself. For this the parable of the Virgins will afford us blessed instruction. Leaving out the details of the parable we will just bring into relief the main feature in it. Virgins went forth to meet the Bridegroom, but while the Bridegroom tarried they slum-

bered and slept, and have to be aroused to go forth and meet Him a second time. They had entered into the interest, and joys of the Bridegroom, and in communion with Himself they had gone forth to meet and welcome Him, to light up the scenes of His delights and share in the blessedness that surround Him. The *wise* Virgins truly loved Him, and longed for His return, but while He tarried the *power* of the hope that had led them forth at the first to meet Him, *waned* a little. The strain of expectation was too great; their eyes became weary with looking for Him, they began to slumber and then to sleep. Practically they forgot His coming. They give up the hope of His return, at least for a long time, and go back again into the house, so that at the midnight call they have to *go forth* a second time. Thus has it been with the Church. While the LORD tarried, Christians gave up the practical hope of His return and fell back again into the world, and for a time the knowledge of this blessed hope was lost. The midnight cry has put many on their feet again to go forth to meet Him, but there is still the same danger of slumbering and sleeping and of getting back again into the world. The letting slip the immediate hope of the LORD's return did all the mischief in the past as to the heart's communion with Himself, *and so it does still*. To be truly in communion with CHRIST, and really unworldly, the hope of His speedy return must be *living* in our thoughts and hearts. When the heart is right toward CHRIST, and it can be only so as waiting eagerly for Him, all walk and service will flow along in its happy order and freshness.

In the next parable, we have the daily walk and conversation of the Christian. He trades during his LORD's absence, gets the reward of his labor (doing "everything in the name of the LORD JESUS") at his LORD's return, and enters into His joys in the kingdom. The wicked and slothful servant does not believe in his LORD's quick return; he hides his talent and amuses himself, and when caught by the sudden return of his LORD, to have the account of his life rendered, he maligns his MASTER, and attributes his failure to Him, and the conditions of His service. Had he expected his LORD's speedy return, he would not have thought of hiding his talent, but have gone at once to work on his own individual energy, and found out the faithfulness and goodness of his LORD in every step of his path. So is it now with the believer: if he is waiting, in his daily path, for the LORD, he hides not his talent, and is neither slothful nor wicked. But does the

Christian forget the LORD's return, or put it off, the talent is soon hidden and unused, and he soon becomes both slothful and wicked in the LORD's estimation. Not walking as expecting the return, at any time, of the LORD, is the cause of all failure in the daily walk of the Christian.

We will now take a look at the parable at the end of the 24th of Matthew, and see how, in service in the Gospel, all goes wrong because the servant says in his heart, not "My LORD will never come," but, "My LORD delayeth His coming." This gives time to quarrel with his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken, instead of, with single-eyedness, doing his LORD's will, and watching for His return. What a graphic picture is here given of the present state of the professing Church! Internal dissension and association with the world characterize it, in place of union and unworldliness. There would be no time to quarrel with fellow-servants, and be on good terms with the world, in its pleasures and projects, if CHRIST's return were looked for as imminent. It is when the heart loses the power of the LORD's return that the eye ceases to be single, and the servant, consequently, falls, more or less, under the power of Satan and the world. The feet are no longer shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace, and the blessed work of GOD gives place to strivings after place and power, with every other "evil work." The LORD direct all our hearts "into the love of GOD, and patient waiting for CHRIST," so that our communion, walk and service may be according to the full power of the HOLY GHOST, our constant watchword being: "BEHOLD, I COME QUICKLY!" Amen.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q.—"In Eph. v. 26, 27. does the presenting to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish," give the future aspect of the Church—the result of CHRIST's present work, cleansing "it with the washing of water by the word?" If so, can it be said that the Church is *now*, being still incomplete, in that state of purity? Could the state described in this verse be applied to *any assembly now*?

A.—Ephesians v. 27, describes the state in which the Church will be in Glory, as present by CHRIST to Himself in Heaven. It is the combined effect, in its full result, of the threefold

work of CHRIST, according to His perfect love for His Church. He gave Himself in the work of Redemption for her,—to make her His own. As His, the present work of His love, so as to make her fit for His glorious presence, is to sanctify her by the washing of water by the word. It is the moral formation of the object of His love, to be with Him; according to the perfection of GOD Himself, and those Heavenly things of which CHRIST is the centre in Glory, of which the word is the expression. Thus morally perfected, according to the perfection of Heaven, the third and last great act of His love is to put forth His power, and present her to Himself, all glorious and faultless, with exceeding joy. Such a state as this, clearly cannot refer to the *present* condition of the Church as a whole, much less to that of any local assembly.

Q.—“Is the believer warranted in assuming that his sin or failure is forgiven at once on confession, or do you not think that GOD uses His word, which is ‘quick and powerful,’ for restoration to fellowship? A case in point seems to me to be Peter’s: The LORD looked on him, and he remembered His word. Confession would seem to follow self-judgment.”

A.—The believer is undoubtedly warranted in assuming that his sin is forgiven upon confession; but confession, if genuine, always *succeeds* self-judgment, of which it is the fruit, and expression God-ward. Self-judgment is the effect in the soul of the *Word of God*, applied by the SPIRIT in answer to CHRIST’S intercession. This leads to repentance and confession, which puts GOD in His proper place before the soul; so that, in virtue of atonement, He is faithful and just to forgive sin, and to cleanse from all unrighteousness; thus restoring the believer to fellowship with Himself in the light.

FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

CHRIST is not only a mediator with GOD, but an advocate or patron with the FATHER. That is, He restores communion, fellowship with the FATHER, when *practically* lost. His advocacy is founded on two things: on *propitiation* for our sins, so that He pleads in grace if we fail; and on *righteousness*, so that this is the standing in which we are before God. It is our place in Heaven, on one side, and the meeting of our need, on the other, on earth.

THE Christianity of the closet, and the Christianity of busy

life, are not, as is often fancied, conflicting things. The man who has fellowship with JESUS in his solitude, knows how to carry the savor of this fellowship even into the most common affairs. There is need of prayer in this matter. For, though we be convinced that there is but one thing needful, we are easily led away, like Martha, to busy and trouble ourselves about "many things." Many things we must needs do and care about while we are in the flesh; but the work to which CHRIST calls us, is to do and care about these things in such a spirit as to make them part and parcel of our great work—the work of *keeping close* to JESUS, and of following Him whithersoever He goeth. If only willing to leave all and follow CHRIST, he would make the Cross not heavy to be borne, but a delight more pleasant than to the miser is his load of gold, or to the earthly monarch are his insignia of power. "For My yoke is easy, and My burden light."

P O E T R Y .

TRUTH.

Thro' smallest atom, usèd,
 Of Truth, to please a child,
 Is living Pow'r transfusèd,
 All pure and undefil'd!
 Transparent, as unbending,—
 More firm than is a rock;
 In vain is tempest spending
 Its force, the Truth to shock!

Her pow'r she thus maintaineth;
 She ne'er a slave would bind!
 'Tis only where she reigneth
 That free can range the mind!
 In light, and peace, and gladness,
 She setteth up her Throne;
 And darkness, chains, and sadness
 Without her must be known!

All error is inflated;
 Like bubble, out 'tis swelled;
 All Truth is concentrated
 The more she is beheld.
 Her glorious rays are beaming
 Still brighter and more bright,
 As star by star comes gleaming
 From out the Infinite!

THE THOUGHTFULNESS OF DIVINE LOVE.

1 John iv.

I HAVE seen a short article on the above chapter in SOUND WORDS, and I should like to give the contents of the passage a little more fully.

It is one of much beauty and comfort to the earnest and lowly soul, for it presents to us GOD, thinking of us from our state of utter sinfulness on to judgment itself, and displays His love from beginning to end.

In general, the epistle presents us Divine life, that eternal life which was with the FATHER, and was manifested here below in the person of the LORD JESUS, communicated to others, that thing, as it is said, which is true in Him and in us.

The Gospel of John, besides the doctrine of the Comforter, presents to us GOD manifested in the SON, and life in Himself; the Epistle, life communicated to us, and that life known in its fruits of love to the brethren, and obedience or practical righteousness.

In the passage before us, love is especially the subject, and first love as partaking of the nature of Him who is love. He that loveth is born of GOD and knows GOD; partakes of the nature and knows Him who is it, as partaker of it.

Possession of a nature, (and without possessing it it is impossible,) makes us know what that nature is, what the being is who has that nature. A mere animal does not know what a man is, his way of thinking, feeling; a man knows what a man is. What an angel is, save as the part of connection with GOD necessarily reveals some elements of his nature, he does not know. He that loves knows GOD, for he is born of Him, being partaker of the divine nature: a blessed truth the spring, righteousness being introduced, of eternal joy and infinite delight.

But when we come to the practice down here, we find difficulty in it. I love the brethren: what coldness after all often, self has come in, and I fail in love. I cannot trust my own heart a minute. Can I really say I am born of GOD and know GOD, when I find so much in a treacherous heart that belies after all what I desire? I hope, I fear, there is no liberty of spirit. And it is so far well. But, therefore, the Blessed Spirit gives us the knowledge of love from another side, and where it is perfect; in GOD Himself, His ways and dealings. In this the love of GOD is *manifested* towards us, in our case. But

let me briefly analyze the passage, that we may seize its completeness and bearing. First in verses 9, 10, GOD's love to the sinner, verse 12, the enjoyment of His love in the saint, and 17, perfected in the boldness it gives us for the day of judgment.

First, His love to us as sinners. The eternal object of GOD's delight, His only begotten SON, was sent in blessing to us, and this with a two-fold object—first, the positive blessing, what is given, that we might live through Him. We were dead in sin, GOD gives us a new life—a divine life. We no longer live through Adam, but through the SON of GOD. He that hath the SON hath life. Our existence, our existence towards GOD is divine life in CHRIST. GOD has thought of our ruin in love and given us eternal life in His SON.

But we were guilty also, as responsible beings before Him. Here His love has met us. He has given His SON to be the propitiation for our sins. It is not the law, nor duty, though it was there, but because it was there, ruin and failure and condemnation. But love is not in that we love GOD; (which is what we have to look for in our hearts if we seek the proof of life there, but then really under law,) that, law required, and surely rightly—but in that GOD loved us, and sent His SON to be the propitiation for our sins. It is not requiring what we ought to be from us, just as this is, but putting away, making a holy propitiation for our sins. We were dead in sins, and He gives us life in His SON—blessed truth and grace. We were guilty, and He has given Him to make propitiation for our sins. He has met our whole case, in both its aspects as sinners. Now, the love of GOD is known, the heart free, the conscience purged, he can exhort us to love one another.

Now, we have to do with a saint, and he has more privileges than being forgiven and having life. No man has seen GOD. How know Him, even if we have a life and nature which capacitates us thereto?—know Him as an object fully before our souls, and so known. Before the world this was in CHRIST personally present revealing Him (see John i., 18), and He was rejected. But in us how? If we love one another *GOD dwelleth in us*, and His love is perfected in us. Here is the saint's privilege, He enjoys the love of GOD, poured out in his own soul. GOD dwells in him by His Spirit, and makes His presence known in infinite and enjoyed love, but as dwelling in the believer. It is not still, that we love Him, but that His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the HOLY GHOST, that is given to us. It is in our hearts, but what is there is the love of GOD,

known and enjoyed by His own presence. If God thus dwells in us, which we know, because He has given us of His Spirit, and sheds that love by His very presence abroad in our hearts, we may well say perfected in love, for what is more perfect than God in love, and what more perfect exercise and display of it in *communication* to us than His dwelling in us Himself, who is it perfectly, and sheds it abroad in our hearts by His presence. But even this looks out, when the proof of it is to be given. We have seen and do testify that the FATHER sent the SON to be the Saviour of the world. You cannot separate the enjoyment of God's love in us by His presence, from that in which it has been perfectly displayed in His own work to His own glory. And this portion of the Christian is not a special or extraordinary proof of progress. It is the Christian state. *Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in Him and he in God.* For God if He dwell in us is infinite, and we dwell in Him, feel surrounded, and are by His goodness, love, power, so that our abode and rest is in Him, and in the fulness of His love. All this may be realized in different degrees, but it belongs to every one that confesses JESUS, the lowly man, to be the SON of GOD. Of course, he does not speak of hypocrites. But again the Apostle carefully brings us back to look at the love as in GOD, as displayed towards us. We have known and believed the love that GOD hath to us. Whatever the enjoyment of the love and realization of it, it is always the love in Him, sovereign love, which He hath had to us. We know GOD. GOD is love, and he that dwells in love dwells in GOD, and GOD in him. Here, though the love is ever the same, what GOD is and what He displays to us, yet the order of thought is somewhat different. I am dwelling in love, the enjoyment and consciousness of this love, and its power in exercise towards others. I dwell then in GOD, for GOD is love; dwelling in this he dwells in GOD, for this is what GOD is. His soul rests, reposes, and confides in Him, surrounded by His goodness, and so as that love is active in his soul, shed abroad and exercised there. GOD is in him, GOD being love, and deigning to dwell in us. First it was the fact, GOD dwells in the saint, and as infinite, the saint in Him. Now as to his enjoyment and privilege he dwells in GOD, and then as to the activity of love GOD dwells in him. The first fact this state, and the double blessedness of GOD Himself, and the activity of His love. All this is simple. Rich and eternal pure life now enjoyed in joying in GOD Himself, and exercised as it was in JESUS, in love to His, and every sinner around.

We now come to the third step in this blessed chain of love. Herein is love perfected with us, that we might have boldness for the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world. Love has looked on from the time of our sin, looked in and dwelt in us by the way, and now tells the tale of its perfectness for that day, when God's judgment calls all in question not the fruit of His love. But how should this meet the day of judgment? Here love is perfected with us, we are as CHRIST is who is the judge; what fear then? Oh how has love thought of us, from the state of sins and death right on to judgment, and given us to stand now "in this world" as CHRIST Himself is before God. Who shall find fault in that? Shall CHRIST whom we are like, or God whose delight is in Him? We have boldness for the day of judgment. No place the Christian is so bold, when he knows his place in CHRIST. When we stand before His judgment seat we shall be perfectly like Himself, and as He is, so are we *in this world*. Many a sincere person, I mean sincere Christian, does not see this their place in CHRIST. They may say, I am a poor sinner, and the cross just suits me. Blessedly true. But change the phrase. I am a poor sinner, and the judgment seat just suits me. That will not do. Yet we must all be manifested before the judgment seat of CHRIST (2 Cor. v., 10). There we must be fit for the judge, a dirty man is fit to be washed, a debtor for one who comes to pay his debts. But a righteous person for a judgment seat; and we have here the measure of this: CHRIST who sits to judge is my righteousness. When I appear there I shall appear in glory, shall be like Him, bear His image, having been *raised* in glory, my vile body fashioned like His glorious body. Here there is no room for fear. Grace has put the believer in CHRIST now, and through His work accepted in the beloved; as He is, so is the believer in this world. How can I fear if I am as CHRIST? Note, it is not as He *was*. He was without sin, knew no sin even when he was down here. If I say I have none, I deceive myself, and the truth is not in me. But my place before God is in CHRIST, not in the flesh. There is no condemnation for them who are in CHRIST JESUS. As He is, now he has finished the work and by Himself purged our sins, having by one offering perfected for ever those who are sanctified, through the offering of His body once for all, and now as He is, so are we in this world, accepted in the beloved. I repeat, what room for fear? Is not this love, perfect, thoughtful love, that in the place of judgment, there we find perfection? Then, I know, I am like the judge, like the

LORD in glory, like my Saviour. Gracious love that has thought of my sins, and spiritual death in them; blessed and blessing love, GOD's dwelling in me; and perfected love in that I am as CHRIST GOD's own Son, so that where surely fear might be, fear is cast out. Love has made me know now, what love has done, and while it makes me enjoy itself now, GOD dwelling in me and I in Him, makes me look back and see it active when I was a dead sinner, a love that flows from itself out to me, so that I reckon on it, yea learn its perfectness when I might fear, and find that love had counsels of infinite wonder, to make me as CHRIST the Son of GOD, a man in glory, and righteousness of divine perfection, even the one before whose judgment seat I shall stand, like Him, His righteousness mine. Love has left nothing unthought of that could make me exalt GOD as infinite in grace, and enjoy His goodness in a righteousness which He has made mine. There is no fear in love. Where shall fear find a place, from my state of death in sins up to the judgment seat of CHRIST. He cannot *love* me too much, but He cannot love me more, and my heart is at rest.

And note here, though we pass through it, and it is very natural that we should, yet *hope* as to the judgment day is not the true feeling of a believer at all. We hope because we see goodness, and know there is such a thing as redemption, and we fear because we see that there is that in us, which cannot stand before the judgment of GOD. We vacillate, ill at ease, and when the thought of judgment comes in, there is torment because there is fear. GOD would not have us so. He would not we should have torment. He would have us walk with Him happy, and in *confidence*. Fear is not confidence. But if we have to be judged, that is, our state decided according to our works in that day, (for we shall all stand before the judgment seat,) we shall certainly be condemned. Enter not, says the heart that knows what sin, and what flesh is in GOD's sight—enter not into judgment with thy servant O LORD, for in thy sight *shall no man living be justified*. But the believer has learned this as to himself before the judgment comes, and has fled for refuge to the hope set before him, and knows that redemption is as certain as complete, and divine righteousness as satisfactory, if I may use so feeble a word, as his condemnation was certain. He does not mix up as his portion judgment for sin, and redemption from sin. He owns fully the one and his own deserved condemnation, and believes fully in the other. He does not destroy the force of both by mixing them together. Judgment according to what he is, would, he knows, have been

certain condemnation. Divine righteousness, (and we are the righteousness of GOD in CHRIST,) is necessary and perfect acceptance. Grace has given it to him, has made it his. As He is, so are we *in this world*, for we have it by faith, we have boldness in the day of judgment, and there is no fear in love, our portion perfected in this. *Raised in glory*; he is manifested before the judgment seat, but glorified before he is there, his vile body fashioned like His glorious body, by that power which can subdue all things to itself. Knowing then as he is known, he looks back from that blessedness, bearing the image of the heavenly, on the countless ways of love, which has brought a poor feeble creature, justified through CHRIST the LORD, all the way along, that he might know himself, and the love which has led, thought of, sustained, borne with, lifted up, and brought there to enjoy and praise, made like the LORD, the love that has done it, and dwell in a holiness where no evil can enter, and which is only joy, and find JESUS the LORD of Glory, the first born among many brethren. We love Him because He first loved us. But Oh how imperfect are all our thoughts of that day. Our part is to dwell in, and think of CHRIST, to serve Him with an undivided heart here.

THE BEAUTY AND HARMONY OF CHRIST'S CHARACTER.

(EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.)

WHAT is all truth but the filling in of "the beauty and harmony of CHRIST's character"? It is what it all really is, and what makes "truth" such a blessed and such an unspeakably solemn thing. CHRIST is "the Truth." He says so. And there is no point of it ever so seemingly disconnected, but is like (to use a poor *simile*) one of those touches of an artist's pencil, every one of which, however it seem in itself meaningless, is needed to give us the full picture of "GOD in CHRIST," which He would have us possess, and which is to be *the power* in our hearts and lives for good. How simple is it thus, "And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified by the truth," and again, "sanctify them by the truth, thy word is truth." How little, if people thought so, could they dispense with one tittle of it, and how grievous one error! The one would go to turning the face of GOD into a meaningless blank, the other would be distorting it. No wonder to find the Apostle so earnest where "truth" was in question, and

that love could dictate even the sentence, "I would they were even cut off that trouble you," or, "If we or an angel from Heaven preach unto you any other Gospel than that we have preached let him be accursed"! To preach another Gospel were to blot out the revelation of God, and with it all that could bless the soul.

We have been brought to God, to know God. Salvation itself, what would it be without that? And we grow in grace, not by self-occupation or self-culture, but in proportion as we "grow in the knowledge of our LORD and SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST." "We all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the LORD, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

There is one thought of what CHRIST was as a man down here, (which is what you mean by the beauty of his character,) which has struck me much, and which I dare say I may have more than once mentioned before. It was His character throughout, and marked His testimony, as He Himself said, as "true," "He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory, but He that seeketh His glory that sent Him the same is true and no unrighteousness in Him." How wonderful that was in Him! The very Gospel thus which gives us His divine glory in the world, brings, perhaps, most fully out this character. You do not naturally expect it to be in *John's* Gospel that that should be said: "My FATHER is greater than I," or "For as the FATHER hath life in Himself, so has He given to the SON to have life in Himself, and hath given Him power to execute judgment also, because *He is the Son of man.*" Infidels stumble at this. We glory in it. It was the unblemished perfectness of true witness. So with His disciples. "When ye pray say Our FATHER, *Thy Kingdom come!*" I blundered so long with others in thinking that was His own Kingdom that He bade them ask for, but the LORD could not so forget: "I seek not mine own glory." And when he takes the Kingdom, beautiful it is to see His thought on it: "And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the SON Himself be *subject* unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all and all."

But what does the FATHER say to this blessed, lowly, self-renouncing path of a "love" that "seeketh not her own?" Why He answers it with equal love. *He* will exalt this humbled One. "Wherefore, GOD also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name above every name, that at the name of JESUS every knee should bow, and that every tongue should

confess that JESUS CHRIST is LORD, to the glory"—mark the beauty of that—"to the glory of *God the Father*." So He was "raised from the dead by the glory of *the Father*." So in a world where *He* was rejected "all that is in the world is not of the *Father*,"—for the FATHER is ever thinking of One—the world's outcast for it—who could say, "I have glorified Thee on the earth."

It is a wonderful thing thus to be admitted, as I remember another saying, into the knowledge of the Divine affections—the FATHER's thoughts of the SON, the SON's of the FATHER, that our fellowship may be with the FATHER and the SON. I was struck the other day with the same thing as to the SPIRIT's witness. He is down here now in the place of the One who has been rejected of the world, and He, too, does "not speak of Himself, but what he *hears* He speaks." It is the self-same character of true witness: He seeks not His own glory, but His who sent Him. Why do we not get prayers to the SPIRIT? it is asked; and it is answered rightly enough, because we pray *by* the SPIRIT. Yes, and as CHRIST exalted not Himself but the FATHER, so does the SPIRIT lead up our thoughts to the FATHER and the SON. This is the perfectness of Divine harmony.

ETERNAL LIFE.

THAT we need life, divine life, is most certain; for by nature we have only a life that can enjoy the things of this world. We have no life to care for, much less to enjoy God, and those things which are His. We need as sinners, redemption from sin, and death, and judgment, and hell, and this we have in CHRIST JESUS; who having died for us and borne all that was against us on the cross, has obtained eternal redemption for us (Heb. ix. 12). We need, however, something more than this—we need life divine—eternal life, whereby we may know God, and hold intercourse and communion with Him. By nature we have none, and unless by grace we have life in CHRIST, we can never have enjoyment in heaven.

Now, CHRIST is this life, and he therefore that hath the SON hath life, and he that hath not the SON of God hath not life, whatever else he may have (1 John v. 12). The law cannot give life, otherwise righteousness would have been by the law (Gal. iii. 21). We are dead by nature, and therefore we cannot produce life ourselves. No; life is in CHRIST alone, and He is the life, and therefore we must have personal deal-

ings with Himself, the life, otherwise we shall never be able to know and enjoy God, or anything that is His.

Eternal life is not the amelioration, the improvement of human nature. It is not the reformation of man's state as a sinner born into this world. No doubt education may make a man a better member of society and more useful in the world; no doubt teetotalism will make the drunkard a sober man and a better citizen; but neither the one nor the other, nor anything else, whether prayers, almsgiving, religiousness, or such like, can produce life. CHRIST alone is the life, and we must be born again by the power of the HOLY GHOST, otherwise we have no power to know GOD. Nicodemus was one who was doing all he could to make himself fit for God's presence. He had tried hard to keep the law, but that law having entered that the offence might abound, made him more and more conscious of his sinfulness, and taught him that in him, that is in his flesh, dwelt no good thing. Nicodemus thus had done his best to make himself holy, just, and good, but found no rest, no peace, no satisfaction. Hearing, however, of JESUS, he came to Him, who at once told him that that which was born of the flesh was flesh, and that if a man would see the kingdom of God, he *must* be born again of the HOLY GHOST (John iii). Just like what lately happened in Scotland. A poor woman had been keeping the usual fast-day as a preparation for the reception of the Lord's Supper. She had done her best to prepare and make herself worthy to partake of that ordinance, but all was in vain; the more she tried the worse she saw herself to be, and so, in utter despair, she gave up all her efforts, and came to CHRIST, in whom she found life and peace and joy, wisdom and righteousness and holiness. It is life eternal, and not self-improvement a sinner needs, and this life is God's SON, and is communicated to every one who believes on the LORD JESUS CHRIST by the power of the HOLY GHOST. He that believeth on the LORD JESUS CHRIST *hath* everlasting life. He who has truly confessed the LORD JESUS, and believed in his heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, can say with the Apostle Paul, "I am crucified with CHRIST, nevertheless I live; yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me" (Gal. ii. 20). There is no condemnation, but he has passed from death unto life. It is not, then, the education of the old man, but it is a transfer from one state to another—separation from the old man, the first Adam, into CHRIST, the new man, the last Adam. A transfer from a state of coldness and stillness and corruption of death, to a state of warmth

and movement and freshness of life. Once more let it be repeated that CHRIST is the life, and by the power of the HOLY GHOST all who believe in JESUS are linked to Him—that man in the glory who is at GOD's right hand: Himself the resurrection and the life. The believer is created in Him who is the Head of the *new* creation—the beginning of the creation of GOD. Old things have passed away, and all things have become new.

Eternal life—salvation—is a transfer from a state of death and stillness to a living activity, a well of water springing up into everlasting life. It is not a stagnant pool, it is not a still fountain, but it is a springing well, having all its springs, its resources in CHRIST who is the life. All our springs, our fresh springs are in Him. The maintenance, too, of the activity and the springing is dependent on Him who is the fountain of life—the living water, and as he lived by the FATHER, so we who are alive in Him must live by Him (John vi. 57).

It is indeed needful that the well be kept free from all that will clog and prevent the free flow of the living water. There must be the judging of self, and there must be the removing of all that which offends. It is needful to be always having the staves of judgment keeping the well free from all hindrances. It is, however, equally needful that we feed on CHRIST, not only the giver, but the sustainer of life. He is the bread of life, and it is as we feed on Him that the water of life is kept fresh and springing. It is possible, and alas! we often find it is so, that believers get the well so clogged, and there being no feeding on CHRIST, the well becomes still, and so much so that it is difficult to say whether there is life or not. How often we hear it said of such that we trust there is just life, but there is so much of the world and so much of the flesh working that all we can say is we trust there is life. How sad! how deplorable! when the HOLY GHOST has given us wells of water in us which should be springing up into everlasting life. The LORD grant that we may be more and more alive, feeding on CHRIST, the great life-sustainer.

It must, however, be most specially noted that it is CHRIST and Him alone, a man in the glory, on whom we are to feed. Many feed on meetings—others on feelings, joy and peace; others again on prayers, and others on truth. Now, all these things are important and most blessed in their place, but they are not food. Truth even is only nourishment as it is in connection with CHRIST. One may get quantities of truth and at the same time starve. There is nothing that will strengthen

and nourish apart from the LORD JESUS. It is as we go on with Him that we reflect His image, and become like Him, changed into the same image from glory to glory.

THE VALUE OF CHRIST'S DEATH.

LET the reader remark, that "without the shedding of blood there is no remission"—the declaration that He must often have suffered if He was to offer Himself often, as the High Priest with the blood of others, but that it was once, in the end of the world, He appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. "So CHRIST was once offered to bear the sins of many." Let him turn to Chapter x., where, in contrast with daily ministrations, "this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down." Was the way into the holiest to be opened? It was, through the rent veil—that is to say, His flesh. Indeed, if we examine the value of the death of CHRIST, what do we find attached to it in Scripture?

Do I need redemption? We have redemption through His blood, an eternal redemption, for "neither by the blood of goats nor of calves, but by His own blood, He is entered in once into the holy place," having obtained eternal redemption for us.

Do I need forgiveness? That redemption which I have through His blood is the forgiveness of sins—yea, without shedding of blood is no remission.

Do I need peace? He has made peace through the blood of His Cross.

Do I need reconciliation with God? Though we were sinners, yet now hath He reconciled us in the body of His flesh through death, to present us holy, and unblameable, and unreprouvable in God's sight. When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.

Do I desire to be dead to sin, and have the flesh crucified with its affections and lusts? I am crucified with CHRIST. Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be destroyed; for in that He died, He died unto sin once, and in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. This is my deliverance, also, from the charge and burthen of the law, which has dominion over a man as long as he lives.

Do I feel the need of propitiation? CHRIST is set forth as a propitiation through faith in His blood. The need of justification? I am justified by His blood.

Would I have a part with CHRIST? He must die; for except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone; if it die, it brings forth much fruit.

Hence, unto what am I baptized as the public expression of my faith? As many of us as have been baptized into CHRIST have been baptized into His death; for what, indeed, has broken down the middle wall of partition, and let in the Gentiles, slaying the enmity, and reconciling Jew and Gentile in one body to God? The Cross. How have we boldness to enter into the holiest? By the blood of JESUS, by that new and living way which He has consecrated for us, through the veil—that is, His flesh; for till that was rent, the HOLY GHOST signified by it that the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest.

Hence, it was a lifted-up CURIST that was the attractive point for all. "If I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men unto Me."

In the power of what was the Great Shepherd of the sheep brought again from the dead? Through the blood of the everlasting covenant. How was the curse of the law taken away from those who were under it? By CHRIST's being made a curse for them, as it is written, cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree.

How are we washed from our sins? He has loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood; for His blood cleanseth from all sin.

If I would be delivered from the world, it is by the Cross, by which the world is crucified to me and I to the world.

If the love of CHRIST constrains me towards men, in the thought of the terror of the LORD, how is it so? Because I thus judge that if He died for all, then were all dead, and they that live should live not to themselves, but to Him who died for them, and rose again. Hence, the Apostle knew no man after the flesh—no, not even CHRIST. All was a new creation. If I would live in Divine power, it is always bearing about in the body the dying of the LORD JESUS, that the life of JESUS may be manifested in my mortal body. If He would institute a special remembrance to call Him to mind, it was a broken body and shed blood. It is not less a Lamb as it were slain, that is found in the throne.

All was love no doubt, but do I want to learn it? Hereby we know it, that He laid down His life for us, and that even of GOD, in that He loved us and gave His SON as a propitiation for our sins. It is to the sprinkling of that precious blood of

CHRIST that we are sanctified and to obedience; and through the offering of the body of JESUS CHRIST, once (contrasted with the many Jewish sacrifices) sanctified and perfected for ever; so that there is no more offering for sin; for having offered one sacrifice for sins, He is set down forever at the right hand of God. Do I desire, therefore, my conscience purged? It is through the blood of CHRIST, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God. For it is by *means* of death that there is the redemption of the transgressions which were under the first covenant, and in that view He became Mediator. Indeed, a testament could have no force while the testator lived.

Do I seek the destruction of the power of Satan? It is through death that He destroyed (the power of) him that had the power of death.

What do I find to be the central object of CHRIST's coming—the groundwork of His glory as Man? We see Him made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor, that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man. And even the purifying and reconciling all things in heaven and earth depends on this. (Heb. ix. 23; Col. i. 20.)

Would He sanctify even the Jewish people to Himself? It must be by His blood, suffering, rejected, without the gate. No remission for us—no privileges of the new covenant for us, nor establishing it for them, without this blood—redemption is not without it. The living sinner, as such, cannot be presented to God, nor a living CHRIST offer that by which the sinner must draw nigh. The veil remains unrent, the conscience unpurged, the propitiation unaccomplished.

THE CHURCH, AN HABITATION OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT.

Ephesians ii.

THERE are two great ideas in this Epistle, as regards the saints. The grand thought all through it, is the grace of God towards them; but as regards the saints, there are these two ideas about the Church: 1st. Its hopes; 2dly. What it is now, meanwhile.

It looks at it, on the one hand, as having a certain place in glory, and as enjoying the inheritance; and, on the other, there is this second point, what it is even now, before it gets

there. And this last gives it, in a certain sense, a higher character of communion and fellowship in blessing than is contained in the glory itself which it expects, though, doubtless, the other will not cease. You will see these two things in considering the prayers of the Apostle (Chap. i. 3). We shall be in glory, before Him, as children (that is the expression), to bring out the glory of His grace, who has predestinated us according to the good pleasure of His will—"holy and without blame before Him in love." And here we have, "in whom ye also are builded together *for an habitation of God through the Spirit*"—before Him in glory, and God dwelling in us.

We will just consider a little how it is that the Church becomes thus the "habitation of God." It is of the deepest importance to us. I said that the blessings connected with this are, in some respects, superior to what might properly be called glory. And this is important, because we find that even *now* this blessing is brought to us. In glory we shall be able to enjoy it better; but we *have* it now.

At the end of Chap. i., where the Apostle has been speaking concerning God's purpose about the saints, the thought is, the "exceeding greatness of His power," and he prays in accordance. (Sec v. 18-23.)

At the close of Chap. iii., we have a prayer founded upon the other point I have spoken of (sec v. 14-21). The character of this prayer is higher, and it goes further, than the former.

There are two titles given to God in this epistle. In the one, He is called the "*God of our Lord Jesus Christ*," because CHRIST is looked at there as the *glorified Man*, who has been down here, suffered, died, and been raised again. In the other, he is called the "*FATHER of our Lord Jesus Christ*," because CHRIST is not thus looked at as the risen and glorified Man, but as the *Son of God*.

Now, the prayer in Chap. i. is founded upon the first of these titles (v. 17), and is connected with the glory of the *risen Man*. In Chap. iii., the Apostle bows his knees unto "the *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named," and therefore He looks more at intimacy of communion, and to our being "being filled with the fulness of God." It is not God giving us knowledge of the inheritance, but God filling us with *Himself*.

We find these subjects, and the distinction between them all through. In the one, the LORD JESUS is considered as

Man, whom God has raised from the dead, and there the Church is looked at as the "fulness" (complement) "of Him that filleth all in all." In the other, as the SON of the FATHER in the power and unity of that relationship, and so of the Divine nature; this latter point being more especially connected with our being the "habitation of God through the Spirit."

There are two points in this expression—one, that of our being the "habitation of God," and the other, that it is "through the Spirit." He is not speaking of our dwelling with God, although that is true, but of our being an "habitation of God." He says: "Ye are builded together," &c. And this is evidently a different thing. It is a different thing our having glory together with Him, and God's dwelling with us. That is, I repeat, evidently a most peculiar and special blessing.

God came down to talk with man (Gen. iii.)—man already fallen—and "they heard the voice of the Lord God, walking in the garden in the cool of the day." But God then had no "habitation on earth."

God's Spirit had dealt in power, in various ways, in the history of man; but the moment the people (of Israel) are called out, it is "the Lord is my strength and song, and He is become my salvation: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation" (Ex. xv. 2). This is the first thing we find in the song of Moses.

David had the same thought, (2 Sam. viii.) He would not dwell in an house of cedar, whilst the ark dwelt within curtains. But the Lord answers him and says: "I have not dwelt in any house since the time that I brought up the children of Israel out of Egypt, even to this day, but have walked in a tent and in a tabernacle."

"But Solomon built Him an house." Having settled His people in the land, the "habitation of God" was built—a carnal, wordly temple; but it was the "habitation of God."

And then, when the Lord Jesus came into the world, this truth applied properly to His person. He says: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." He is regarded as the temple of God. Therefore, God was then dwelling (in Him) with man, in the midst of the sorrow and evil into which man had fallen.

It is touching to see the place which God takes (referring to the passage which I have quoted about David's thought of building a house), according to the state of His people. God always takes the place that *suits* His people. A marvellous

thought, but a most gracious thought on His part. If His people are enslaved under burdens, as in Egypt, He becomes their *Redeemer*. If they are a journeying people, and in tents, He dwells there in a tent Himself. He takes the same place as His people; for He is to be the centre of their blessing, and leads them by the cloud. This He did up to Solomon's time. When Joshua comes in and has to fight with the Canaanites, He presents Himself as "*Captain of the LORD's hosts*," (Josh. v.) When the people are settled (settled as far as they could be in their fleshly condition), under Solomon, in fulness of peace and in blessing, God builds a *settled* house. And God dwells among them. Whatever the circumstances His people are in, God takes a place suited to them.

The place that God takes to dwell in now (until His people come into the rest) is, properly speaking, a tent or tabernacle. It is surely just as blessed, but, so to speak, more moveable. In glory it will not be so. While we are on our journey, it is a tabernacle, not a temple; but still God dwells among men. His own grace has built an *habitation* for Himself. I am speaking, let us remember, not at all of that place of glory into which we are to come before God, but of that other thing, that God will come and dwell down here upon the earth. When JESUS was in the world, God's presence was there. And it was that which was the centre of all blessing.

They gathered around Him. Well now, it is the same thing with regard to the Church: God dwells upon the earth in the Church, as a "*habitation*," though not visibly, not in manifested glory.

And this comes to be of the last possible importance. If it is really true that God dwells on the earth in a "*habitation*," evidently the "*habitation*" wherein He dwells must be of the greatest importance. And this remains always true. Failure though there may be, still the Church is His dwelling-place. Until CHRIST came, or, at all events, until the *Lo-Ammi* was pronounced upon Israel at the Babylonish captivity, God dwelt there, and the blessing of the people, and the guilt of the people, was in respect of God's dwelling. If it were a question of idolatry, "*they have set*," He says, "*their altars by My altar*." So when He is going to judge the people in Ezekiel, He goes on and shows the people what they were doing *in the temple*. It might be the ancients of the house of Israel in the chambers of imagery; or women weeping for Tammuz; or the men at the door of the temple

of the LORD, between the porch and the altar, with their backs towards the temple of the LORD, and their faces towards the east, worshipping the sun; but it was *in the temple*. That was the place to which sin referred itself.

(To be continued.)

FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

EPHESIANS i. 9, 10. The *Mystery* refers not only to the "body" and its relation to CHRIST, but also to the fact that GOD will gather together (head up) in one in CHRIST all things both in heaven and earth. CHRIST associates the Church with Himself in this headship, sec. v. 22, 23.

This was as much a mystery as the body, seeing it never was revealed before Paul's time. Prophets spoke of blessing upon earth—millennial, but never of heaven and earth being gathered together in one, and under one head, and that head a man.

Paul gives us both the sphere of blessing and those who are to fill it. A new creation, and CHRIST and the Church, other redeemed ones occupying a blessed but subordinate place in the scene.

It is not man's *will*, but his wants that lead him to seek God, as we see in the prodigal Luke xv. His *will* carried him off into the far country; when he had spent all, his WANTS drove him back again.

. . . "If acting faithfully, to every step of faithfulness the LORD will surely add more light; only it behoves us to take counsel of the LORD at every step. Peace with Gibeon only deprives us of victory, and brings upon us other wars and troubles; for the presence of what is not of God, always opens the door to Satan. This, perhaps, is not so much felt when all is in vigour in the soul; but when there is decline, then the evil and consequence is felt. In the days of David there was a famine, three years; it was for Saul and for his bloody house, because he had slain the Gibeonites. All this arose from the little act of not taking counsel with God. When all was war, it appeared a convenient thing, a blessing, to find some peace and recognition from those who said, 'The LORD your God.' It sounded like Rahab's believing voice; and, *in appearance*, with these far distant travellers there was nothing wrong in peace—they were not of the forbidden and accursed land and

race. But they asked not counsel of the LORD; and it turned out they were of the accursed race, and it went nigh to separate between Joshua and the people. So cunning is the enemy, it is almost as bad, or worse, to lean for one's wisdom on the ways of GOD as on one's own strength for the battles of GOD: peace with Gibeon and war with Ai end in defeat, or in confusion and shame."

In John xvii., 17, 19, we have two distinct characters, and means or sources of sanctification, the difference of which is full of interest and instruction. CHRIST is the word and the truth (*i. e.*, He expresses GOD, and tells the truth of everything), as coming from GOD and revealing Him. The disciples were not of the world, as He was not; disciples, they had the communication of what CHRIST revealed of GOD, all the FATHER said to Him, and their moral nature too. He prays, as to the form of this, that they may be sanctified through the truth: the FATHER'S word was truth. This makes the sanctifying power, the revelation from the FATHER in the person of CHRIST. But in verse xix, it is not what CHRIST is, as revelation of the FATHER, but what He is as *model*, set before the FATHER in glory in Heaven, and this as man. There the truth revealed this too, and thus sanctified them. So that the first part is the revelation of GOD through CHRIST, the Word and Truth; the second is the true communication of what He is as man before GOD, according to His thoughts and counsels in glory. This gives a very remarkable fullness and reality of character to our sanctification through grace. We are really set apart to GOD in conformity to these two aspects of CHRIST; we are formed after them in our nature and walk.

"That which was from the beginning," denotes that the *life*, though in its source eternal, was looked at as in man a new and absolutely original thing. This is very important. As to its nature, the life, which is our life (as Christians), is an entirely new, original thing as regards man; for it was with the FATHER from all eternity. But it began in itself in JESUS, as shown down here. It is no *modification* of the first Adam.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q.—What is the meaning of Baptism with fire in Matt. iii. 11.

A.—By referring to verse 12 it is plain that judgment is

meant. Fire is frequently used in this way: A familiar instance is that in 1 Cor. iii. 13. "The fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is." Here, of course, it is more works, and so a person's work may go for nothing, as not standing the test of God's judgment, and yet he himself be saved, "so as by fire." But in Matt. iii. it is more persons, still the fire is judgment all the same.

The point is this: John could present to the people an open door to take new ground by the Baptism of Repentance, in view of Messiah's coming, of whom he was the herald. But he received those who came without discriminating between true and false, unless there was plain evidence of insincerity, as in Luke iii. 7, 8. But the One of whom he spoke had authority and power to make the separation, and to bring full blessing for His own, or on the other hand, judgment for those who were false. The Baptism of the HOLY GHOST for those *truly* His disciples, and that of fire for those not so.

Q.—"All they which are in Asia be turned away from Me." 2 Tim. i. 15. Thus, if all the Churches had apostatizingly turned from the Apostle's teaching, as the Gentile master builder, except the Church of Thessalonica, would that still have remained a Church of CHRIST?

A.—The passage referred to does not imply that those in Asia had given up CHRIST and Christianity, although they had backslidden in heart, and lost the energy of faith so as to have turned away from the one who, in days of declension, was seeking to "press towards the mark." They had not the courage of faith necessary to go on in the face of the enmity of the world, or lost heart for CHRIST, and so chose a softer path.

But they had not ceased to be owned by CHRIST, as we see that, thirty years after, the LORD JESUS addresses them a letter—Rev. ii., iii.—in which He seeks to arouse them from their stupor. Of course, they might have got into such a state that the LORD could not own them, nor the faithful among His people either. Whether the Apostle could have gone on with them, as if nothing were the matter, is a question. The case of Thessalonica is quite clear. If they held their ground, they could not cease to retain their title to be owned as His.

P O E T R Y ,

"According to the word that I covenanted with you when ye came out of Egypt, so my Spirit remaineth among you: fear ye not."—(Haggai ii. 5.)

In solemn stillness of the soul,
 (The silence of the flesh before Thee,)
 We feel Thy Spirit's strong control,
 And, LORD, in holy awe adore Thee!
 Closer and nearer would we press,
 Jesus! to Thee in sweetest union;
 Assured that Thou Thine own wilt bless
 With more of conscious deep communion.

We know the covenant of Thy word
 Stands fast, as when at first 'twas spoken;
 As when o'er Egypt's darkness, LORD,
 Thy light of love in hope had broken.
 We know Thy Spirit still remains
 Among Thine own in power unchanging,
 Thine "household" cleansed from sin's dark stains,
 Who ne'er may fear thy love's estranging.

LORD! on our watch-tower we would stand,
 With every thought in meek subjection,
 To wait and hear what Thou'lt command,
 Banner'd beneath Thy love's protection;
 LORD! in obedience forward still
 Would we press on 'mid man's declining—
 The victory Thine o'er human ill—
 And Thine the smile for ever shining!

Give us Thine help to "walk," O LORD!
 Now "in the light" where Thou art dwelling,
 That we in "fellowship's accord"
 May *here* Thy choral strains be swelling.
 And while that mournful tale is told
 Of failure in Thy "churches seven,"
 Grant that we may with John behold,
 The visioned glory ope in heaven.

CHRIST'S CROSS AND GOD'S DUE TIME.

Rom. v. 6—8.

IN the last verse of this chapter, we have, in part, the summing up of the great principles and ways of God's dealings with man, in this principle of the Gospel, "grace reigning through righteousness unto eternal life by JESUS CHRIST our LORD."

The result of what the Apostle has been speaking of as to God's dealings, dispensational and personal, is, all is *grace*. "When we were yet *without strength* in due time CHRIST died for the *ungodly*" (v. 6). "God commendeth His love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners CHRIST died for us" (v. 8). It is grace that did everything. "By one man's disobedience many were made sinners," and they may have gone on sinning and setting aside the authority of God, but by CHRIST's obedience "shall many be *made righteous*." "Where sin abounded grace did much more abound." And, in the sum of the whole matter, *grace reigns*.

That which gave the Apostle so much confidence in this was, that it was consequent on the discussion of the whole condition of *man*, as looked at in every way and in every shape. The blessed result was not something that came in, and the discussion after; but after the discussion of the whole condition of *man* having been gone through, God takes His own place, and manifests *what He will be, and is*, towards the *sinner* in CHRIST JESUS. Now that is, properly speaking, the Gospel. The Gospel is not what man is, or what God requires from man, but what God is after He has thoroughly revealed what man is. When received in simplicity it leaves no possible question in the mind. It is the revelation of God, made after He has estimated all our need. The Gospel, we repeat, is the revelation of what God is, when what man is has been thus fully revealed. "When we were yet without strength, *in due time* CHRIST died for the *ungodly*. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth His love towards us, in that *while we were yet sinners* CHRIST died for us."

Peace of soul is constantly hindered through our not supposing that God has taken full cognizance of what we are. The Gospel begins consequent upon His having made a full estimate. He knew from the beginning what man was, and would be; but after, *in his history*, He had brought out and demonstrated in ways and conduct what man was under all the

possible circumstances in which he would be placed, when He had showed him to be entirely lost, and that He could not trust him in any way, or in any measure, He begins and says: 'I cannot trust in you, you must trust in Me.' Hence the reason why there is often a long and painful conflict, because of our not being brought down in conscience to the point where the Gospel begins. A man may acknowledge himself to be *ungodly*, but then he hopes to *cease* to be ungodly: and God, perhaps, lets him struggle on thus for some time, until in his own soul he is brought to the place where the Gospel begins. It is not that the Gospel is not simple, but that in conscience we are not in the condition where the Gospel sees us. The work must be in the conscience. We read (Matt. xiii.) of a man "hearing the word, and anon with joy receiving it," yet, of his not having "root in himself"—no work evidently in the conscience, it is not that he is insincere, but it is only in the intellect, he has never been brought in guilty before God, "for," it is added, "when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by-and-bye he is offended," whereas, if he knew that his own soul was *lost* without CHRIST, surely he would say with the disciples, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life!" It is a great deal harder to believe that we are "*without strength*" than that we are "*ungodly*." Many a soul believes the one, that has not as yet been brought to believe the other. God has given us His history of the world, from Adam to CHRIST. There was a "*due time*" for the death of CHRIST, a "*due time*" that is in the history of the world. So is there the due time of the individual heart; not that the same feelings pass through the minds of all, but each must be brought to the results given us by the history of man.

It is true many a person admits himself to be *ungodly* that has not been brought to feel the full meaning of the word. It is wonderful how our moral distance from God has rendered us incapable of judging of this. If a man say that God is holy, and that he is a sinner, as judged of by his natural conscience, yet not admit that he is shut out from the presence of God, but reply, "O, I hope not," he has not the power of apprehending his presence. On the one side, God is of "purer eyes than to behold iniquity;" on the other, he is a sinner, but he has no sort of consciousness that he is in the presence of God. There is not a single individual that would not put off being there. Our consciences can never naturally bear it. In one sense we are always in His presence, but I speak now of being

brought there in conscience. A man may be living absolutely without God, and yet be accounted a very good man after all. If he hurts his fellow-man it is another affair. In judging of right and wrong in the world, God is always shut out. There is no surer proof of the way man has cast off God, than his judgment of right and wrong; he calls *wrong* that which injures man, but the Divine presence and claims are shut out. It all shows this first great truth, that men are "without God."

But there is another truth stated here—they are also "*without strength.*" When a man is really brought to himself it is always a question of present standing. An ungodly man will think (it is the natural thought) of meeting God *some time*, of what He will be *in the day of judgment*. But is His presence revealed to the heart, it is His presence *now* that occupies it. Whilst there is merely the thought of going to God, there is another question, man thinks about how he can make up with God—time is before him in which he can make his peace with God. He is either unconscious of the state he is in, or is looking to something by which he hopes, at a future day, he may be able to stand before God. He has no real thought of God, but as a Judge. Now, hoping for mercy so is no more than saying, and may mean nothing but this, that God is not of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, that He can let a little pass.

As to the first point, the state of the Gentiles was thorough *ungodliness*. Rom. i. The Apostle, after looking at man in every way, proud as man is of himself, brings all in guilty. But men have a natural conscience, and they are afraid to do in the light what they do in the dark. And Christianity (the profession of it I mean) makes men ashamed to do in the light what they did before in the dark. But being in this condition, his own lust the spring of action—the slave of Satan and of his own lusts, gratifying his mere natural, wicked inclinations, that was a clear case. It did not become a holy God. It was plainly ungodliness.

But besides this, there was another thing. God singled out a nation, to which He showed great kindness, and gave them, as His people, a rule. And then the question was, whether there was strength in man to walk by this rule. He spake the Ten Commandments with His own voice on Mount Sinai, and added, "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the book of the law to *do them.*" After all, the *will of man* was that which wrought in his heart, and he was a *breaker of this law*.

But this went much further. I may have my mind open to see and estimate the spirituality of the law, and not be merely a carnal Jew—where does that bring me? Into the consciousness, not merely that I have failed, and broken the law without, but of a principle *within*—“a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.” Rom. vii. 23. If I am put under a law, the better that law, the worse my case. It may be said, “Why, then, did God give the law?” “It was added,” we are told, “because of transgressions, till the seed should come, to whom the promise was made.” Gal. iii. 19. To what end? “The law entered (perfect as it was) that the offence might abound.” What *could* the law enter for, to man, already a sinner, and having this law in his members, but that “the offence might abound, that by sin the commandment might become exceeding sinful?” Rom. vii. 13. This was the way GOD took to convince man that he was “without strength.” And in that sense it was mercy. What is more difficult than to convince man of this? The judgment right and the affections right, still there was this law in his members, and the law, while it discovered and brought out this, imparting no strength, added to the character of the sin, for it made every act which was the result of this evil of our nature, “*transgression*”—*a thing done in despite of His authority*. “Sin by the commandment became exceeding sinful.” Rom. vii. 7. Now clearly, a thing that makes sin “exceeding sinful,” is not the way to make me, a sinner, have any righteousness before God!

What is man *without* the law? What *with*? Man without the law, is *out of the presence of God*, lawless in unrestrained evil. With, he has failed in responsibility, and is a *breaker of the law*. And when JESUS came, the patient witness of the *goodness* of God, he *rejected Him*. Man has been tried in every way, and found utterly wanting. Wherefore? Was GOD ignorant of his condition? No; it was for the discovery of it to himself. God is now bringing home to his conscience, that which He knew from the beginning. Rom. iii. 19.

A word here as to the triple form the law took. First, there was the *perfect standard* of what man *ought to be*; secondly, the *prohibition* of what man was *disposed to*; and as a third thing, an adjunct of certain ordinances and ceremonies “imposed until the time of reformation.” Heb. ix. 9, 10. What did God do all this for? On the one hand, to show that] man was not] righteous; and on the other to point out

ONE, who (holy and righteous) should "suffer the just for the unjust."

What did man do? He took, to make out righteousness for himself before God, the thing God had sent in to prove him to be a sinner, and then sought to eke out his righteousness through these ceremonies, types, and prefigurings of Jesus, the substitute for the sinner.

The moment there is spiritual understanding, when grace is not understood, the only effect is to make the soul miserable—it finds no strength. The more it understands the law to be what it should be, the more it feels justly condemned, and incapable of fulfilling it, or of delivering itself from its condition. "O wretched *man* that I am!" is its cry, and "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death." Rom. vii. 24.

All that is merely the question, What is man? Man is ungodly and without strength, and his history is summed up in the death of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

Well, now, have we been brought to the acknowledgment of the result of this history? Had we simplicity to receive by faith what God shows us man to be, we should have no thought of his being under *probation*. For 4,000 years man was under a state of probation, and as the result of the trial, no good is expected from the bad tree. The Gospel is come on the ground of man's being no longer under probation of God. He has given up looking for fruit. "A sower went forth to sow," &c. Matt. xiii. The natural thing was for Jesus to *seek fruit*, but there was none there.

Man having been put to the test, now *God* comes in.

It is quite evident, that unless it be for everlasting condemnation, we must give up the thought of appearing before God as a Judge. Rom. iii. 19, 20: "Enter not into judgment with Thy servant, for in Thy sight shall no man living be justified." The more I know of myself, the more I know that. The love of CHRIST only puts me into a darker judgment of myself. Is God to pass by judgment, as if there was no difference between good and evil? Impossible! There is just the beginning of wisdom. We cannot stand before God—what is to be done? A man must in that sense have done with *himself*. I cannot trust God in any thing I ever have been, or can be; God cannot trust in me; and now can I trust in God? What God is, was before sin. If I begin to reason, I am under law; I cannot reason about God being *grace* to me. If I could reckon on it, it would not be *grace*.

Where shall I find the revelation and testimony of what God is? In CHRIST. What was this blessed Witness for GOD here? Never any thing but grace. With the Pharisees He showed that their righteousness was only the adding of the sin of hypocrisy to their other sins. But, whenever a man was before Him, without any pretence to righteousness, let him be the vilest of the human race,—a thief,—an adulterer,—a woman of the city, who was a sinner,—whatever else, He was grace, and nothing but grace for them. I want to know what the God, with whom I have to do, *as a sinner*, is—and what is He? Grace. Perhaps, I say, If I go to Him I shall find Him gracious; but that is not all the testimony. *Jesus came to us.* “In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God *sent* His only-begotten SON into the world, that we might live through Him. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and *sent* His SON, to be the propitiation for our sins.” 1 John iv. 9, 10. In the coming of the SON of God, I have the positive certainty of what God is to me (assuming that I believe Him to be the SON of God), I have the perfect certainty of His love. “When we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us.” From His mouth, if I am to take His testimony, I shall never hear any thing but, “Thy sins be forgiven thee, go in peace.” If I am in the *truth of my sins*, I shall find CHRIST in the *truth of His grace*.

GOD has a right to be Sovereign, and there is the reign of grace (v. 21). But GOD is righteous, and therefore, grace is “to reign *through righteousness*, unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST our LORD.” In the grace of GOD reigning, He has given His SON to be the proof of His love; but then GOD is righteous, and could not introduce the sinner in his sins into His presence, and therefore He gave His SON to bear the sins. GOD's righteousness is displayed in all its truth and power. CHRIST died for the ungodly. He was obedient at all costs. He bore all that was due to sin, and went down into the dust of death—man's hatred, GOD's desertion, and Satan's power—we find Him there at the cost of every thing. Every thing that was against us, was taken away. By one Man's obedience many are made righteous.

GOD's righteous wrath against sin has been exhibited. Where do I learn it? In the Cross of CHRIST. Was it in holily sparing His SON? No! I see the wrath of GOD against my sin executed in that Cross. The judgment of GOD against sin, the thing I dreaded, is now my salvation; “out of the eater has come forth meat, and out of the strong

sweetness ;" the head of Goliath, so to speak, has been taken off with his own sword. The LORD JESUS CHRIST has risen again, as having borne the judgment. But more; He stands in living righteousness before God. Righteousness is there, for ever, under the eye of God.

The Blood of CHRIST, shed in death—death as the wages of sin, is ever under the eye of God. I do not say that it is ever under *my* eye, but it is under *God's* eye. He is the Judge. Never shall we feel about it as we ought. But sure I am He feels about it as He ought. He sees the blood. "When I see the blood, I will pass over." The blood is of infinite value with God. But there is another thing, He Himself is there—"JESUS CHRIST the righteous." He, who has obeyed, who has accomplished all, is there. There may be chastening from the FATHER (Heb. xii.) and a great deal of painful discipline, for our good; but righteousness is ever there, the righteous One in the presence of God *for us*.

The HOLY GHOST was to convince the world of righteousness, because JESUS had gone to the FATHER (John xvi. 7, 10). Righteousness is to be found in the presence of God, and it is He who has borne my sins.

And let us remember that this cannot be a question of *hope*; my soul may be looking to JESUS and hoping that He will speak a word of peace, but I do not hope that CHRIST will die for me, I do not hope that CHRIST will rise again for me and accomplish this righteousness; I *believe*. It is a simple question of the Blood, and Person, and Work of the LORD JESUS CHRIST.

As to the Christian life, the first thing is to begin our conduct with God. Do not let us talk about what we shall be. If we come to God with our present in our hand, the first question is, What are *you*. Man is a sinner, and no present in the hand of a sinner is accepted.

Where there is really truth in the heart, the conscience takes notice of its present condition and will never dream of putting off. It is—I have seen thee, what shall I do? Job was a godly man, but a reasoner; yet the moment he sees God, he says, "I have heard of Thee with the hearing of the ears, but now mine eye seeth Thee, wherefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." He sees God and that ends the whole question.

There is another point. It is not merely the efficacy of the work as regards the past, so that I stand before God without fault, but *I am there*, in CHRIST. I bless God for

many means in helping me on in my walk, but as for my standing with God, were there anything whatever needed, it would be saying, I was not already perfect in CHRIST. Faith says, CHRIST has presented me in the presence of God, according to the mind of God, and I have nothing to seek. This is what the Apostle means by "holding the Head." Col. ii. 19.

Another thing flows from this. As grace reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD, realizing my position by virtue of being linked with Him, the life in which I am one with CHRIST will show itself down here, in my living to Him. The principle of the Christian's position is just this: you have died with CHRIST, and are to be living as those who are "alive from the dead;" you cannot have a single principle in common with the world. I am one with CHRIST, if a believer, and consequently as CHRIST before God, "I am crucified with CHRIST, nevertheless I live, yet not I, but CHRIST liveth in me, and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the SON of GOD Who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. ii. 20). So again: "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the LORD JESUS, that the life also of JESUS might be made manifest in our mortal body." 2 Cor. iv. 10. It is not the demand of a certain amount of human righteousness, or the removal of certain evils that hurt the conscience and offend society, it is the living display of what CHRIST is before men. We should never be content when we fail to display CHRIST before men; as CHRIST is righteousness for me before God, so is He the example and standard of righteousness before men—as CHRIST is for me before God, so ought I to be for CHRIST before men. This is the way for a Christian to judge of right or wrong. We may be humbled because of failure, but we must not lower the standard.

THE CHURCH, AN HABITATION OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT.

(Continued from page 157.)

HAVING stated this general truth, I would just see here, how this "habitation is brought about."

All the first chapter of the Epistle, as also the beginning of the second, is taken up with the other point of which I spoke, *i. e.*: that God has raised up CHRIST from the dead, as it is

said, "according to the working of His mighty power, which He wrought in CHRIST, when He raised Him from the dead," &c. God is here stepping in in power, (not merely as a judge having satisfaction, but stepping in, in His own power, for the accomplishment of His purposes,) to deal with man, looked at as under the consequences of sin. It is not only man in evil that is looked at in this Epistle, responsible to God, and having to find that which meets his state in the Cross, (we see that in Romans, Hebrews, and elsewhere, it is not specially treated of here,) but it is God acting in power, when man was on this ground in utter ruin, for the deliverance of man. CHRIST takes this place. He descends into the lower parts of the earth, making Himself responsible for the consequences of sin, He descends into the place where sin had brought man. He comes down from the throne of God, in the perfectness of Divine love, humbles Himself, takes upon Him the consequences of sin, where man had brought himself. Marvellous and blessed truth! Where we were looked at, as sinners "dead in trespasses and sins," CHRIST has gone down into death, for our trespasses and sins. And in the cross and death of CHRIST is where Faith first sees the full consequences of sin—in CHRIST drinking that cup. Sin was fully matured, man had behaved lawlessly, without law—the law had been broken—CHRIST slighted and rejected, and He then enters into this place of death, taking the responsibility and being made sin for us, and undergoes what was due to it.

We see Him brought down into the weakness of man under the power of death—Satan's power, (though He could not be holden of it), and under the wrath of God—into the "dust of death."

All that which CHRIST felt and suffered is told out wonderfully in the Psalms; whether it be from the hiding of God's face, or from His enemies surrounding Him, or from Satan's power, or from God's waves and billows going over Him; all is freely expressed there. Occasionally we find this breaking forth in the Gospels, but it is more especially given in the Psalms. What the Gospels present to us, generally speaking, is the perfect walk of CHRIST through all—of Him, who by virtue of His living by the FATHER, and His perfect obedience and love, was always towards man, what man needed in order to approach God. All that man could see, while His thoughts about that which pressed upon Him were hidden within His own heart. "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" His soul was

straitened amongst men, until that work was accomplished which enabled grace and love to flow forth unhindered, to sinners. There was no straitening in His bowels; all was grace and love; but the love was driven back into Himself by the hard heart of man.

He showed forth the great principle of the offering up of Himself as man to God. He had power to take that place, and He took it. Though without sin, He suffered all the consequences of sin, even to the "dust of death;" He went down into it. But there He could not remain.

Having thus perfectly glorified God, it then became a question what God should do for Him. And we read, He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenly places," &c. "He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens that He might fill all things." "Having descended, in the perfectness of love and obedience, to the dust of death, He went thence back to the throne of God in righteousness, and is set above all. And thus, whatever exercises of heart there may be, or whatever the evil and rebellion of unconverted man, *Faith* knows perfectly, that from the throne of God, down to the full bearing of the consequences of sin in death, and from the consequences of sin, up to the throne of God, CHRIST fills all things. There is not one thing, to the eye of faith, from the throne of God to the dust of death, and from that up to the highest point of glory, that is not filled with the redemption power of CHRIST. The love of God has come down into the place of the sin and ruin of man; and *faith* rests in that love, and in the full accomplishment of redemption, as shown out, in that He who went down into the dust of death, is now at the right hand of the throne of God: "He that descended," &c. Woe be to those who reject this; but that is what *faith* knows about the work of CHRIST. He has gone down into the dust of death, and the "exceeding greatness of God's power has raised Him from the dead."

That is the redemption power of God. The results, it is true, will be brought out afterwards; God is waiting, and souls are being gathered unto CHRIST; but *that* is the redemption, in the power of which we stand.

Well, now, the consequence of that is seen in this second chapter, "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins;" and then, too, (because God has done it *for us* in CHRIST,) "and hath raised us up together and has made us sit together in heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS." The

great result of this salvation will be, our being *with* CHRIST in the glory by-and-bye; but even now, by faith, we can see ourselves "*in* CHRIST JESUS" (not *with* Him, as has been observed) there. I know that the redemption power which has visited me, and taken me up, when I was dead in trespasses and sins," I know that that has not stopped short of the throne of God itself. It has united me to Him, who is at the right hand of God, and has, therefore, placed me there "*in*" Him, as having the same life, the same righteousness—God's righteousness, now; and hereafter, the same joy, and the same glory. The Spirit is given to them that believe, that they may know they are in this place, and what is theirs in it.

This would have been true if there were but one saint. The apostle goes on to show that, looked at according to the largeness of God's purpose, Jew and Gentile (whatever the distinction between them, and that of God, in the flesh,) were on one broad platform of ruin—among whom we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh," etc. Having taken that ground, he says, 'remember where you *are*.'—"He is our peace," etc. See v. 14-17. "Peace" having been made, the dealings of God with man down here, on the ground of redemption are begun.

CHRIST sat down on the throne of God, having completed the work—the peace being made—redemption accomplished. He could not go further than the throne of God. He has carried the "wave-sheaf," the first fruits of redemption-power, in His own person, up to the throne of God.

Well, on that work too, the "peace" that is "preached" is based. And here I would just for a moment notice *how* it is that He preaches peace. He does not come and say to man, 'You have to make *your* peace with God.' He preaches *peace*. He does not preach a peace *to be* made—a peace that is not made. He preaches peace—a *made* peace. *He has made peace, through the blood of His cross.* Having sat down at the right hand of God, the whole work being accomplished, so that He is "expecting until His enemies be made His footstool" (Heb. x.), He comes to Jew and Gentile, no matter to whom, and *preaches peace*—not a progressive work, but a peace completely made. The soul may be a long while struggling under the sense of unanswered responsibility, it may cling to the law, it may mistake the work of the Spirit for the work of CHRIST, be looking for results in itself (we naturally look to our own righteousness, and even the saints often mistake holiness for the ground of peace), and the like—all that

may take place in a soul, but it does not at all touch the perfectness of the work of CHRIST, or alter the strain of what CHRIST preaches, as being at the right hand of God. Blessed thought! It is simple enough, and there is nothing more suitable. For, as we shall see (without the thought of holiness having anything to do with the ground of peace,) holiness flows forth as the consequence of peace. *Wherever there is simplicity of faith there is peace.* This is the first point—perfect peace, independent of anything in ourselves. No matter what we were, Jew or Gentile, sinner or honorable in the earth, it is a peace that has been brought to us in CHRIST.

The next thing (and that as a consequence) is, that “through Him we both have access by one SPIRIT to the FATHER,” v. 18.

“Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners,” etc., v. 19–22. CHRIST having wrought this redemption, having ascended to God, having sat down at the right hand of God, having gathered us together, makes us, thus gathered together, “an habitation of God through the Spirit.” It is not merely God acting in certain men, it is God dwelling in the Church down here, as gathered through the word of the Gospel. The Church is the place of God’s presence on the earth. He has set us in redemption, and He comes and dwells in us. When the disciples were gathered together, with one accord in one place, at Pentecost, the HOLY GHOST came down and dwelt there, the result of the accomplished work of JESUS. And this is a real thing. I am not speaking now merely of gifts, but of the presence of God Himself.

Now it is quite clear that the presence of God down here must be of the last importance. His “habitation” is that which He possesses, which belongs to Him, and there nothing that does not recognize the fulness of this blessed cost of salvation can be. It is those who are His redeemed ones, brought together by the peace which CHRIST preaches, those who have through CHRIST, access by one Spirit unto the Father, that comes to be the place where God dwells.

There are many places in which the SPIRIT of God could act. We find the expression, “the eyes of the LORD” (2 Chron. xvi. 9). “The eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong in behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards Him.” If we turn to certain dealings of God as assuring the work He established by His SPIRIT, for instance the laying the foundation of the temple by Zerubbabel (Zach. iii. iv), we there find mention of

these "eyes of the Lord." So in Ezekiel's throne (Chap. i. 18, and x. 12), the operations of God in His governing power in the world. So too Rev. v. 6. All this is the activity of energy of the SPIRIT of God, it might act in glorious power, or it might act in silent energy, but in all it is the activity of energy of the SPIRIT of God, going out and dealing in the world. But that is quite another thing. I am not speaking of that. We are "an habitation of God through the SPIRIT." In grace to us it may be a tabernacle, but still it is "an habitation of God,"—the place where he dwells, where He lives, so to speak, where He has taken up His abode, where he can have around Him the things that suit His presence, that in which he delights. This is what we are; we may have dishonored it, but that is just what we are made, and in this world—the place where God dwells.

Now to take a simple example of the effect of this; I said a simple example, and yet it is a very important one. Let us look at the case of Ananias and Sapphira (Acts v). That was not a question of gift. Peter said, "Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?" God was there; there was no gift exercised at all, and Ananias and Sapphira fell down dead. They had had the folly and madness not to understand that God was there, and, therefore, when they came and brought only a part of the price, lying to God (it was not to Peter and John they were lying), God showed the indignation of His presence, and they fell down dead. There was wonderful effect in this; we read, "And great fear came upon all the Church, and upon as many as heard these things." The fact was known that God did, "in very deed (as Solomon speaks at the dedication of the temple) dwell with men." It was the real presence of God—the Church was there, having God dwelling in it, and acting in it, by the HOLY GHOST,—and He proved it, His presence sanctified the place.

(To be continued.)

"HOLDING THE HEAD."

(Concluded from Page 133.)

HAVING thus cleared the ground as to how, and when CHRIST becomes head of the body (the Church), we will now endeavor to show how the body is formed, and what constitutes membership in that body. In John xi. the groundwork for the formation of the Church is laid in the Cross

itself, not in the light of redemption, though of course every one in the Church is personally redeemed, but as that which should gather together *in one* those who were already in relationship with God as children. Thus, in verse 52 it is distinctly stated that CHRIST would not only die for the nation of Israel, but that by His death "also He should gather in one the children of God that were scattered abroad." In accordance with this aspect of the Cross, the LORD Himself, in John xvii. 20, 21, says: "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word; that they all may be one, as Thou, FATHER, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may *be one* in us; that the world may *believe* that Thou hast sent Me." According to this prayer of the LORD, the oneness of believers in Himself was to be realized and manifested on earth, so that the *world*, beholding it, might *believe* that CHRIST had been sent. A united, visible Church was to be a witness for CHRIST to the world during His absence. The Church will also be united and manifested in glory, but this the world will *know*, because it will see the Church with CHRIST in glory, that the saints have been loved by the FATHER as CHRIST has been. (John xvi. 22, 23.)

To carry the Cross, as thus *gathering* believers, into effect, and in answer to CHRIST's prayer, the HOLY GHOST descends at Pentecost and brings them together *manifestly* in the LORD's name, so that "the same day there were added about three thousand souls, and they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers; . . . and they that that believed were together, and had all things common." (Acts ii. 42, 44.)

So again a few days after the presence of the HOLY GHOST makes itself manifest in the same way, "They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the Word of God with boldness, and the multitude of them that believed were of *one heart and of one soul*; neither said any that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." (Acts iv. 31, 32.) The Church was now an existing fact. The LORD had begun the building of His Church in accordance with Matt. xvi., and, as we read Acts ii. 47, "The LORD added to the Church daily such as should be saved."

The *doctrine* of the saints thus gathered by the HOLY GHOST being united to CHRIST in heaven as His body, was not as yet brought out, though the body existed, and Paul, on his way to Damascus, learns from the very lips of JESUS Himself this

blessed truth. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" (Acts ix. 4) arrests the persecutor, and to his amazement he finds that in persecuting the believers in JESUS he was persecuting JESUS Himself, so intimately were the members on earth united to the Head in heaven. The fact historically learnt here, he formally teaches and elaborates in his epistles. This is very fully done (1 Cor. xii.), where, in connection with the presence and working of the HOLY SPIRIT he institutes and carries through a comparison between the natural body of man and the Church. "For, as the body," he says, "is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is *the Christ*." He then shows how this mystical CHRIST, as a head in connection with a body, is formed; "for by *one Spirit* are we all baptized into *one body*, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into the *same Spirit*; for the body is not one member, but many." Having developed the mutual dependence of believers one on the other as members in this body, and their necessary association in suffering or in honor, he concludes by saying: "Now ye are the *body* of CHRIST, and *members* in particular."

From this Chapter it is clear that it is not as quickened, redeemed, and saved through faith, that believers are constituted members of the *body* of CHRIST, but as being *baptized by one Spirit*; and thus that union with CHRIST as Head of His Church is by the *indwelling* of the HOLY GHOST, not *by faith*, as it is often put. The disciples had faith in the LORD JESUS when he was upon earth. They were quickened, redeemed, and saved. In relationship, too, with GOD as FATHER (John xx. 17), but they were not *united* to CHRIST as members of His body, for the HOLY GHOST was not yet descended from Heaven to baptize them into that body. A very slight consideration of the points and facts here brought into view will make this clear to a simple mind.

The Church, then, began at Pentecost with the descent of the HOLY GHOST, and *believers*, being already saved persons, were formed into one body by His power and indwelling, so that it could now be said that "he that is *joined* to the LORD is *one spirit*," the body of the believer being the "temple of the HOLY GHOST." (1 Cor. xix. 19).

The consideration of how "the body is formed, and what constitutes membership in that body," thus brings into great prominence the person and presence of the HOLY GHOST in the Church and in the believer. And it will be readily seen how

the not entering into the true import of "Holding the Head" has led to great dishonor to the HOLY GHOST Himself, as entirely overlooking the fact of His presence and power in this connection.

Did all believers in the LORD JESUS but believe and realize that they are members of the body of CHRIST because, united to Him, the *head*, by the personal indwelling of the HOLY GHOST, how vast a change of thought and action would be the result! We desire to press, then, upon all our readers, the solemn importance of the fact that, as *members* of CHRIST, the HOLY GHOST does personal dwell in them, and that it is *this* alone that constitutes that membership. How fraught with blessing for the soul is such a thought, and what grave responsibilities flow from a truth like this. Surely, where this is acknowledged, the believer's walk ought to be in every way the expression of the power and presence of the One that dwells in him, whether he be viewed individually or in association with others. This thought leads us to another truth, namely, that the same blessed SPIRIT that unites the believer to the Head, unites him just as intimately to his fellow member; "we being many, are one body in CHRIST, and every one members one of another." (Rom. xii. 5).

Enough, we trust, has been brought forward to show the Scriptural significance of the expression "Holding the Head." Whether this be looked at in reference to the place that CHRIST holds as the head, or the portion the believer has in Him as a member of His body, being by the personal indwelling of the HOLY GHOST united to Him in association with others as "the Church, which is His body."

In another paper, the LORD willing, we shall hope to take up the question of Ministry in the Church, and show how important the right understanding of "Holding the Head" is in this aspect also, and how impossible it is for the Ministry of the Word to be truly effective in blessings to souls, unless the one who ministers, in his own soul, understands and realizes its proper significance.

"GOD AND I,"

FAITH sets a man with GOD, and as an individual alone with GOD. Abel acted as an individual; Enoch walked alone with GOD; Noah found grace in His sight; Abram was called out from all, and was the friend of GOD. Joseph and Moses, and Samuel and David, and Daniel, and all the worthies of

Faith's household, each found his springs to be in God—and his guidance to be from God.

How individual, and solitary too (not only on the ground of His being the only sinless, the only perfect One, but also in *the mode* of His walk), was the Blessed LORD! "Lo! I come to do thy will O God." "The cup which my FATHER hath given me, shall I not drink it?" These were the mottoes of His life here below.

How beautifully, too, in the thief upon the cross do we find his faith (divinely taught) setting him *alone* with God—able to condemn, not only his own past course, but all that the religious of that day were doing; and able to give to CHRIST a title true of Him *alone* from among men. "This man hath done nothing amiss." He adds, LORD! remember me . . . in thy kingdom. And the LORD's word to Peter is to be noted, "If I will that he (John) tarry till I come, *what is that to thee, follow thou Me.*"

The secret of all practical holiness in a believer is found in this individual walk with God—a walk which, as it keeps him in the light, where CHRIST is at the right hand of God, keeps in humble self-judgment, because he sees the contrast between CHRIST and himself—yet in firmness, because he has to do with God, and acts *for* and *from* God.

Directly I can say, God's word proclaims a thing to be unholy, I am to cease from it *at once*. It is unholy to *me* at least, and to tamper with it would be defilement. Every godly soul (that knows even Rom. xiv.) would assent to this: every godly soul must say, "Obey God rather than man; obey God according to your light—and do not go beyond it."

I have been asked (alas for the askers!) when so acting, "Are *you* infallible? are *you* going to lord it over the conscience of others?" My answer is simple; I walk with God, and judge *myself*; not an inch for me on the road God's word seems to me to prohibit; right onward where the word enjoins me to go forward.

'Tis replied, "How do you know *you* are right?" I answer, "While walking in dependence upon God alone to lead me to see His mind, that I may do it—do you think He will not be faithful to Himself? (John vii. 17.) And as to the conscience of others, I lord it over no soul. Let each walk with God; but only let each remember that if my walk is with God, alas! for him whose walk is not in the same pathway; be he before me or behind."

There is no holiness in communion, no "communion of

saints," apart from this solitary walk with God—of the saints as individuals.

The restless disquietude of many around convinces me *they* are not walking with God.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER.

I FIND a great difference, both as to the application of the word, and as to the prayer for ourselves and others, between being *in* the sanctuary or *without*. I can apply the word honestly to my ways and comfort, as being *here*, and pray for my wants and the wants of others, as here, and it is all quite right, but I may be *within*. The word comes down from above, reveals God and in grace; it does give me light *down here* in fact, but it can also take me *up there*, and from my heart, and desires, and spirit, and joys, too, with what is there, and so my prayers. If in there, what a place, and kind of place they have in my heart! They are clothed with *CHRIST'S* love, with His character as what they ought to be as for His glory, and theirs, too, indeed, and my prayers flow from seeing them in that, that they may be brought into it. The spirit, and character, and love of the place I am in, will be in my prayers. Oh! it is a great privilege, a great blessing. I do not write as if I could do it much, for it is the very thing I have to judge myself in, how little real power of intercession I find in myself. But I see the difference. It is anything but carelessness as to walk, called charity, but charity about the walk. Though I admit the difference of dispensations, yet I see the identification of the people with God's glory *above*, was the spring of Moses' prayer, and the same thing made him faithful to cut off his neighbour and brother *down below*. Ours is the one in grace and dependence, be it so; but there is a principle which shows it is not taking evil lightly.

FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

It is a miserable thing for a Christian to be acting *for a testimony*. God may make that which I do turn for a testimony. Whilst all the frankincense (Lev. ii. 2) was burned on the altar to the *LORD*, those around smelled the sweet savor. But a testimony is not my object. Those who set up for a testimony will soon make a show of themselves.

How far, in the constant intercourse we have with the world,

is it found that the SPIRIT of the world is kept out? Many and many a thing to which we were dead a while since, we may not be dead to now. It is always by truth that the LORD works. If GOD has brought in great and blessed truths, and refreshed souls by them, there comes to be the bearing of this on every-day practice of life, and the soul is brought to prove, when the enjoyment of truth declines, whether it has got the faith that will last. We shall find that faith is not so much put to the test in making great sacrifices, as by patient continuance in well-doing. If Abraham had been mindful of that country from whence he came out, he might have had opportunity to have returned. (Heb. xi. 15). So Paul, "I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win CHRIST." (Phil. iii. 8). Now, truth will not do *that* for a man, unless he has CHRIST as an object; he will soon not be able to say, "This one thing I do," etc., (v. 13).

THE Gospel of GOD'S SON is good news: good news of His person: blessed expression! All until the Gospel was a *claim upon man*. A claim can never be *good news*. The Gospel never alters the claim of GOD upon man, but maintains it; and shows that all is over with man because he never can meet that claim. But the Gospel brings in the *power of GOD*: power on behalf of man: not power to *help* man to meet the claim of GOD upon him. But it reveals the righteousness of GOD, consequent upon man being altogether without strength. Thus peace flows into the soul, when it ceases from everything else, and submits to the revealed righteousness of GOD, which is upon every one that believeth. While a person is looking for *help*, he is under law, and has *never been in GOD'S presence*. The thought of help may be held while a person is looking forward to some future meeting with GOD; but if I am in the presence of GOD now, *help* will not do. I am lost. I want righteousness and pardon; and I want it *now*. And the soul will not have solid peace, until it is in the presence of GOD, righteous and pardoned. The apostle says, "The Gospel of CHRIST is the power of GOD unto salvation, because therein is the righteousness of GOD revealed." A righteousness which is declared unto all, to Jew and Gentile, yea, to every creature, and is *upon all them that believe*.

THE saints have often very imperfect thoughts about the *Christ Himself* being theirs. When GOD tells Abraham, "I am thine exceeding great reward," Abraham asks, "What will Thou give me?"

P O E T R Y .

THE world is under judgment! every one
 Is guilty of the death of God's dear SON;
 But such the greatness of His matchless grace,
 He brings forgiveness to the very place
 Where CHRIST was murdered; and the wretched slaves
 Of Satan's Kingdom He in mercy saves.
 God welcomes sinners—not imputing sin—
 And waits your answer! Will you enter in?

Yes, waits in patience on a guilty world,
 O'er which the banner of His love's unfurled.
 A sovereign pardon and salvation sounds
 In sweetest accents where'er sin abounds.
 A friendless wanderer why longer roam,
 When GOD so graciously invites you home?
 The blood is sprinkled, and the veil is rent;
 He waits an answer to the message sent!

Be not deceived! the LORD will surely rise,
 And vengeance take on all who Grace despise;
 No falling mountain, no! nor secret way,
 Shall hide the sinner in that dreadful day.
 But grace is reigning!—and the tidings run,
 That GOD, who freely gave His blessed SON,
 Still welcomes sinners—not imputing sin—
 And waits your answer! Will you enter in?

"THE RESTITUTION OF ALL THINGS."

I BELIEVE that a serious hindrance in the minds of many to the reception of much important truth, lies in misconception of the Scripture doctrine of "restitution." Thus the expression which I have put at the head of this paper, and which is, as we know, a simple quotation from Acts iii., 21, conveys to many at the present day the idea of a restoration to a kind of Adamic state. This is argued to have been evidently God's original thought, which he would not let the entrance of sin set aside. Or else, it is contended, Satan would really have got a victory in compelling Him to change His plan begun in Eden. This thought has been carried so far in the minds of many, that the "new earth" has been supposed to be indeed a "Paradise regained," in which generations of men would, in the ordinary way of nature, but without death, replace each other to all eternity.

I mention this, not to reply to it, save as the general line of truth of which I desire to speak, furnishes reply; but to show how rooted it is in the minds of many, that Adam in Paradise was really God's first thought, instead of being merely a first step towards the accomplishment of what was really His first thought. Thus "restitution" becomes necessarily a getting back to a supposed Adamic state. And in this way both the state of Adam in Paradise is unscripturally exalted, and the work of CHRIST and its consequences really, though unintentionally, degraded.

Now, if the reader will turn with me for a moment to one of the Old Testament types, he will see at once that God's idea of restitution is not merely what we should call so. I refer to the trespass-offering, Lev. v., 14—vi., 7. The grand significance of this, which is, of course, as all others, a type of CHRIST's work, has, I am persuaded, been too much passed over, even where understood. The grand thought in it is not merely of sacrifice for sin, nor should it be confounded with the sin-offering. It is that of compensation for wrong-doing, and that expressly in the double character of wrong done to GOD (ch. v., 14, &c.) and of wrong done to man (ch. vi., 1—7). "He shall *make amends for the harm that he has done*," is that which really distinguishes this offering from every other. It is not here simply "the sin committed must be atoned for"—its guilt must be met—but "the *injury* done must be compensated." This is indeed, if you take it in another way, what is absolutely ne-

cessary to true atonement in the sight of God. He must have restitution—reparation. And notice how far His thought of restitution goes: not only must there be the "estimation" of the injury, and the value brought in "shekels of the sanctuary"—pure money and full weight—but also "*he shall add the fifth part thereto.*" Thus the one wronged should be gainer by the wrong done him. Mere making up would not do for God. And it is blessed to see that. For thus I judge the poverty of the thought that GOD would not suffer Satan to prevail to set aside His plan. True, as that of course is, Scripture teaches us to go beyond it, and to say, "He would not suffer sin at all if He could not have got glory by it." He would not suffer Satan to come in and mar His "old creation," merely that He might show His skill in restoring it, but that He might, *IN THE RUINS OF IT*, get the material of a "new." In the language of the Old Testament, "He maketh the wrath of man"—not to be of no effect, but—"to praise Him, the remainder of wrath shall He"—not make of no effect, but—"restrain." Even so would He have restrained Satan's working, could He not have brought out of it a harvest of blessing and of glory; and instead of being content with the patching up of what Satan had marred, the word of Him who sitteth upon the throne is, "Behold I make all things *new.*" (Rev. xxi., 5.)

Now, CHRIST is He who restoreth: "I restored that which I took not away," is what is prophetically said of Him. He is the offerer of this trespass-offering. He is the One who has overpaid God (if I may say so) for all the wrong that sin has done Him. He is the One, also, who has to man (to as many as receive Him) more than restored all that sin had taken away.

But let us inquire a little how He has done it, and what the restitution is. And here we shall find the consequences of the work of CHRIST to be really *contrasted* with what would have been the consequences of Adam's continuance and of the old creation with him.

In men's minds the fruits of CHRIST's work have been mixed up with what would have been the fruit of Adam's continuance, and serious mischief ensues. The original creation is taken as the perfection of what was in the mind of Him who created it. Thus (without a word of Scripture for it) Adam is considered to have been a creature made for Heaven, to whom it was secured by covenant that he should gain it by well-doing; and the Ten Commandments are carried back 2,500 years before they were given to be the measure of what he was required to

fulfil. Thus, too, when he failed, CHRIST is supposed to have taken up the broken contract, and to have gained for us, by His fulfilment of it, what Adam lost.

It may startle some to be told that this is all theory, not only apart from Scripture, but in opposition to it. Yet so it is. And its plain tendency is to rob CHRIST of His glory, by reducing His work to almost the level of what simply a perfect man could be expected to perform. For manifestly if the law be the measure of what Adam ought to have done, and what CHRIST did do, no more was asked of one than of the other. And yet this is what is being more and more insisted on in (so-styled) "Evangelical" writings.

To answer this, let the pregnant figure of the trespass-offering speak. Plainly, had man in that case fulfilled the law as regards God and his fellow, there need have been, and would have been, no offering at all. If CHRIST had merely taken up Adam's broken contract to fulfil it, death would have had no place in that work, because death was the penalty of the breach of it. If He could have fulfilled the work for Adam, and given to God the obedience in which Adam failed, and in Adam's behalf, the punishment of the breach of it could not have been required from him. What was wrong would have been set right without shedding of blood. "If righteousness come by the law then CHRIST is dead in vain."

But furthermore, in this matter of the trespass-offering, after the injury inflicted had been duly estimated and made up, still restitution, in God's thought of it, was not complete, until there had been added to it a fifth part more. Thus the person who offered the trespass-offering did more than could have been required had the trespass not been committed, and the injured person was now a gainer to that extent. But here, as ever, the antetype goes far behind the type. God and man are both gainers by CHRIST's work; but not only so—the work of CHRIST, and any work that could be required of Adam, differ essentially from each other, as, for example, the righteousness of God manifested, differs from human obedience performed.

People's attention is so fixed upon what *they get* by the work of CHRIST that its real value, which can only be at all properly seen from the Divine side of it, escapes them, along with much of the the truth of what they do get. Let us try and look a little at the Divine side of CHRIST's work, and see how a moment's glance there upsets poor human thoughts.

What *did* God gain (to speak humanly) by CHRIST's work?

What *would* He have gained by Adam's ?

Is it not plain that the first need in order to answer these questions in any measure depends on our estimate of the worker in each case ?

Just as the altar sanctifies the gift, so does the glory of the Person of the SON of GOD set His work apart from all mere human work, and give it another value.

What was the "first man, Adam ?"

Not (if I am to take Scripture) a being framed for Heaven, but, in express contrast with Heaven (1. Cor. xv. 47) "of earth, earthy." If I open Genesis, I find no promise of Heaven held out to him, no idea of being raised above the estate in which he was created. I find no works enjoined, for which he was to be rewarded ; one prohibition only of a thing, which would have had no moral character attaching to it, if it had not been forbidden.

Created "very good," he was to keep his first estate, not seek a new one. Nor until sin had made our estate evil, and only with fallen man, do we find one thought of a creature quitting its estate, except as sin. Thus "the angels which kept not their first estate," of whom Jude speaks. Not made to toil at working out a righteousness, but to enjoy the bounteous goodness which had provided richly for him, one test of obedience alone was given. If he ate of the tree he died.

What did GOD gain by such obedience ?

Save as one of the countless creatures He had made whose happiness bore witness of creating goodness and wisdom,—none. Had he obeyed, what marvel ? Had he obtained witness that he was righteous, it would have been creature righteousness, not Divine. With Eliphaz we might have asked : "Is it gain to GOD that thou makest thy ways perfect ?"

And had he been obedient, as angels were, would the fitting reward for it have been a place in the glory and at the right hand of GOD ? Would he have inherited all things ? Would he have been where CHRIST as man is, and have shared what the saint shares now as joint-heir with Him ?

Simple questions, yet needful. For if the work done were to be the same, and CHRIST fulfils the broken contract and obtains the forfeited reward, some such conclusions follow as these questions suggest.

But Adam fell. That wrong was done to GOD of which the trespass-offering speaks. Sin had spoilt the old creation, and (again to speak humanly, as we must) raised the question of

GOD's character. What would He do? Cut off the offenders in righteousness? Spare them in love, how could He, and be Holy? Slowly and patiently was the question answered. CHRIST was that answer. Not simply the taker up of man's cause. Not the worker out of human righteousness. But the brightness of the FATHER's glory. The wisdom and the power of GOD. The fulfiller of Divine *righteousness*, and the revealer of Divine *love*.

Hence, the glory of the Gospel of CHRIST is, not that it saves man merely, but that it reveals GOD. No longer shut up in the thick darkness, as in Israel it was declared at the very time of their magnificent Temple being dedicated, "He is in the light." (1. John, i. 7) The glory of GOD is in the face of JESUS CHRIST. There we see it. If the entrance of sin into the world had in any wise raised a question about GOD, not only are such questions at rest for ever, but the way in which it had been dealt with in the Cross of the SON of GOD becomes the very way in which His attributes shine out. CHRIST is not merely "the LORD *our* righteousness:" He is "the righteousness of GOD." Could Adam have been that, or wrought it? We are in another sphere altogether plainly. And there, amid the sin which might have seemed to compromise His glory, there is wrought a work in which He is glorified as never beside. Inseparably connected with man's worst wickedness is the display of GOD's righteousness, and not in wrath, but through which He justifies the ungodly.

I ask again, if GOD had merely meant to restore (in our mode of speaking), would not the question rise, then, why suffer the fall? But if the fall were to be the background upon which He could display Himself in such a character as should reveal Him in His glory to the adoring gaze of His creatures for eternity, what then? Ah, might not the angels well repeat that "glory to GOD in the highest," when they could link it through the CHRIST born in Bethlehem, with "on earth peace, good pleasure in men!" Did not the arms of love which were stretched out around men, encompass angels also? As it is written, "that in the ages to come, He might shew forth the exceeding riches of His grace"—how?—"in His kindness toward us through CHRIST JESUS."

Thus CHRIST's work is different in its character and results God-ward, from anything that could be of Adam, asked or had. It was one such as the "Only-begotten SON which is in the bosom of the FATHER" alone could accomplish. Peerless in His person and work, the place which He has taken as the

result of it with God is one suited not to the first man, "of the earth, earthy," but to "the second man, the LORD from Heaven." Taking His seat at the right hand of God, He is become Head of a "new creation," not Restorer of the "old." He is not the first Adam set up again, but a second Adam, and He is "the beginning of the creation of God." All things are restored, but not to the primitive condition before the fall. They are "made new." The old condition of things is done away.

Let us see how this affects us as Christians; how to us also the fifth part is added; how CHRIST has restored to us, not the primitive condition of unfallen Adam, but all things in a higher way.

1. As to *position*, we are "in CHRIST," a "new creation, old things passed away, and all things became new." As to what we were as men in the flesh, "dead with CHRIST," "our old man crucified with Him," so that we are "not in the flesh," not "living (alive) in the world," not "of" it, carnal if we "walk as men." To give us boldness in the day of judgment, we are told that "as CHRIST is, so are we," even "in this world." Hence, "there is no condemnation to them that are in CHRIST JESUS," for we are "accepted in the Beloved," and already "seated together in Heavenly places in CHRIST JESUS."

Thus the position of men in the world is completely passed away, and we are in a new place before GOD, as and what CHRIST is; "made the righteousness of God in Him."

2. As to *nature*, we are "born again," "born of GOD," "partakers of the Divine nature," "have eternal life abiding in us," that eternal life that was in the SON of GOD through the *back* eternity, therefore truly "eternal," not mere existence or Adamic life. And though we carry the old nature, the flesh, still about with us, it is only as an enemy and to be destroyed.

3. As to *inheritance*, "we are heirs of GOD, and joint-heirs with CHRIST," begotten to "an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us," where CHRIST is, in the "many mansions of a FATHER'S house," that we may be "ever with the LORD."

But I must close. Even for the earth comes surely, as promised, the restitution of all things, but beyond the fires in which the elements shall be dissolved, such a scene as never Adam knew. My purpose however is but to give the thought, not work out the details. In eternity alone shall we "fully

know" what our "fifth part" beyond Adam blessing is. Meanwhile we know enough to bow our hearts in adoration, and to echo the song :

"Unto Him that loveth us, and has washed us from our sins in His own Blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and His FATHER."

"To Him be glory and honour forever. Amen."

THE CHURCH, AN HABITATION OF GOD THROUGH THE SPIRIT.

(Concluded from page 173.)

WELL now, that is always and constantly true. As I have said, we may have grieved the Spirit, dishonored the house, and been unfaithful, (that, alas! is but too true), but God's dwelling in the Church depends upon the redemption that is in CHRIST JESUS. What is the consequence of redemption? It is not merely that I have peace individually, nor yet, that we are heirs together of glory, nor yet, that we have access by the Spirit to the FATHER; besides all this, it is the ground on which God dwells down here. It is in virtue of the accomplishment of redemption by the LORD JESUS CHRIST, that God can come down here, and make His "habitation," that He can comfort and strengthen those within (not merely act in power without), that He can be at home in the midst of His people. This, His being at home in the midst of His people, practically sanctifies us; it involves great responsibility, His house should be according to His holiness, "Holiness becometh thy house for ever," but, at the same time, it becomes the source of our power and blessing.

Suppose, for a moment, God was here, and all the Saints of God that are in the world, is it not quite evident that the eye, the ear, all would refer to that, the every movement would be consequent upon God's being there, the presence of God governing, and stamping its character on the whole? Again, if that were the case, and we could say God was there, and all the enemies in the world were raging about us, would not the one thought be, that God was there, and that that was God's concern? He would be the strength, the help, the confidence of the soul. Yes, and that was so beautifully shown when the Jews came back to Jerusalem, and were in fear of their enemies. The first thing they built was—what? a high wall? No, *they built an altar*. GOD was their confidence and strength.

Well, we are "builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." And see what a blessed truth is connected with this. On what ground could God come into our midst and dwell with us? It is not on any uncertain ground. It is upon the ground of God's perfect and entire *complacency* in the Church—His perfect delight. It is not God coming down to call us, as He did Adam after the fall, in order to find out that he was lost. Neither is it God's coming down, as He did to Sodom and Gomorrah, to see whether the cry that has gone up is such as it seems to be. Neither is it God's coming down, as He did to Israel, to put to the test whether He can stay. He comes down on the ground, and in consequence of completed redemption—of peace having been perfectly made. His presence is the witness and evidence of accomplished redemption. He says, as it were, I have so accomplished this redemption, I am so satisfied because of JESUS, that I am come to dwell with you, to make my abode with you, you are to be my "habitation." What a character does this give to the Church! What manner of men ought we to be!

But then, there is another thing. If we are the habitation of God through the Spirit, "the consequence is, not merely the favour of God, but all the consequences of this favour. The HOLY GHOST comes down as the witness and testimony of the fulness of the FATHER's delight in CHRIST, and of our joy in Him." Howbeit when He, the Spirit of truth, is come, He will guide you into all truth: for He shall not speak of Himself; but whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak; and He will show you things to come. He shall glorify me: for He shall receive of mine and shall show it unto you. John xvi.-13, 14. He ministers (I am not now talking of the instruments) to us these things. He has all "the goods (as it is expressed in Eliezer, Gen. xv.) in His hand," to minister the comfort and strength of what belongs to us as the bride of CHRIST, the true Isaac, unto whom the FATHER hath given all that He hath. And this is the case in the midst of numerous difficulties and trials, in that sense more blessed than if there were none. This is one of the present special blessings of redemption, redemption is so perfect, that before we get into glory, God by His Spirit can come and dwell with us here, in the midst of our weakness, and because of our need.

As the Apostle speaks in the Philippians "What then? Notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, CURIST is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will

rejoice. For I know that this shall turn to my salvation through your prayer, and the supply of the Spirit of JESUS CHRIST." Paul was tried, persecuted, taken as a prisoner to Rome, and they were going on preaching CHRIST of envy and strife, supposing to add affliction to his bonds. Well all this (he says) "will turn to my salvation. His soul being thus fed and nourished by the Spirit, everything in which he found trial and exercise of heart, became but the means really of working out of him that which was contrary to God, in order that His sympathy might have free course, and his soul joy only in CHRIST.

Again, in speaking of the sympathy of the Spirit of God *with* the saints, and *in* the saints, amidst a groaning creation. He says: "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities." Rom. viii. 26. Here I find the HOLY GHOST taking notice of certain trials, sorrows, weaknesses, difficulties, and the like, of everything in short that can press upon the heart of a saint, and that even when it "cannot be uttered," and "groaning" is its only expression. It is the groaning of the Spirit of God in such a poor feeble heart, that it does not know how to express it. But it is said, "And He that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He maketh intercession for the saints according to God," v. 27. That is what He has found there—"the mind of the Spirit." It is not merely that *human* feelings are brought out, but that the things—the very trials and sorrows, that would have produced *human* feelings, have now produced, if I may so say, *divine* feelings, "*according to God*," which go up to God, and which God can answer; so that they become the means by which He pours into the heart all the fulness of His consolation, not perhaps taking them away, but showing that He Himself is the sufficient blessing of the soul, because He dwells with it, and makes Himself the portion of it. Now, if we look at the way this meets us where we are, and as we are, this is how it works. He comes down into all our circumstances, and for a poor trifle of affliction, I get to find (not the thing set aside, but) God Himself taking the place of our sorrow.

In the prayer in chapter iii., the Apostle loses himself, as it were, and no wonder. After he has said, "I bow my knees unto the FATHER of our LORD JESUS CHRIST," he adds, "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man; that CHRIST may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, being

rooted and grounded in love (that is, what God is, the Divine Nature), may be able to comprehend *with all saints* (taking in the whole unity in which the HOLY GHOST dwells) what is the *breadth, and length, and depth, and height.*" He has now got into the infinitude of all GOD'S thoughts and purposes of blessing, and he cannot say of what. Just as the groanings could not be uttered, so the thought could not be uttered. It is GOD that has come in, and CHRIST fills all things, according to the power of redemption. Paul could go to no place but there he found *infinite* love and *infinite* power—the love that brought CHRIST down, and the power that took CHRIST up again.

This meets all the exercises of the heart, and is the result of the dwelling of the HOLY GHOST down here consequent upon redemption, accomplished by CHRIST. The HOLY GHOST can come and bring peace to our souls, and the effect of that peace to our souls is to make us pass through all the evil around, "according to the power of God." As the Apostle, speaking to Timothy, says: "Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel, *according to the power of God.*"

Where shall we stop? The soul rejoices in that which must be the joy and gladness of the heart that knows God has come down to dwell in it, the immutable blessedness of God's presence. Then, whatever the circumstances in which we are placed, if they be only those of sorrow and trial, what is the consequence? God ministers of the fulness of the sympathy of His love to our souls; and thus they become, so to speak, as a door or a chink, *to let in God.* All riches, "the unsearchable riches of CHRIST," are ours. And CHRIST fills everything. There is not anything we can think of but we find there of the fulness of CHRIST. If we think of *death*, we see CHRIST there; of *sin*, we do not know sin fully until we see CHRIST "made sin"; of God, it is only in CHRIST we can know God; of man, it is only in CHRIST we can see man raised to the height of his blessing; *peace*, it is through CHRIST we know the peace of God; *life*, CHRIST is our life; *glory*, it is all in CHRIST. There is not anything, no matter what we think of, whether in creation, or above it, or between God and man, but we must think of CHRIST in it all. We can turn our thoughts to no one thing in which we do not find the fulness of CHRIST; and by the power of the HOLY GHOST, our souls are brought into the joy of this fulness, as that to which we are, through living union with Him, everlastingly and perfectly united.

There is another point which I have not touched upon, the practical effect of this. What would the effect be upon our souls if we really felt we were "buildded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit"? If we realized that, in the whole world, Christians were, in truth, the *dwelling-place* of God? What a thought should we have to act upon as to everything? That by which the Church of God has been corrupted, ordinances and the like, would disappear as clouds before the presence of the sun. And what thoughts of glory should we have—what thoughts of holiness—what peace as to practical circumstances—what jealousy of grieving the HOLY GHOST—what love towards all saints—what joy—what confidence—how we should (not in pride, but in the sense that God was there) mock at all our enemies (Is. xxxvii. 22, 23)—how live and act among men, as "sons" and "heirs" of God! What power for everything, in short, would be ours, if we remembered the completeness of redemption, and fully realized that God was dwelling with us!

This is our portion, and whatever our weakness and infirmity (and, alas! it is very great); whatever our failure, still it remains true, we may grieve the Spirit, we may weaken the consciousness of our joy, but still God *is* with us. The HOLY SPIRIT dwells among us.

May the LORD give us to know and to own what this presence of God in the earth is, and that with men, by reason of the redemption which is in CHRIST JESUS.

HOW TO KNOW THE WILL OF GOD.

"If therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."
—Matt. vi., 22.

If a child has been habitually heedless of its father, and taken no pains to get acquainted with his thoughts and wishes, one can readily foresee that that child, in presence of a difficulty, would be in no position to understand what would please its father. There are things God leaves in *generalities* for the testing of *individual* condition of soul. Suppose, instead of the child just referred to, the question to be one of a wife in relation to her husband; would not a wife, with the feelings and mind of a wife, be able, in all probability, without a moment's hesitancy, to know what her husband would desire; and that even, though he had never expressed a will on the subject? Now, you cannot escape this testing, and God, more-

over, will not let His children escape it. "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light."

As for an easy and comfortable way of knowing God's will, as one might have a receipt for this or that, there is no such thing, of knowing it I mean, without reference to our own state of soul.

Again, we are frequently of vastly too great importance in our own eyes, and deceive ourselves in supposing that there is a "will of God" at all, in such or such a case. He may have nothing to say to us about it. The evil is in our having set ourselves to work. God's will may be that we should quietly take a less prominent place.

Again, we are searching at times after "the will of God," desiring to know how to act in circumstances, when, *that we should not be found in them at all*, is His only will; and when, were conscience in exercise, its first effect would be to make us get out of them. Our own will has placed us there; and yet we would enjoy the comfort of having God's guidance in a self-chosen path. This is a very common case.

We may rest assured that, if near enough to God, we shall not be at a loss to know His will.

It may happen sometimes that God, in His love, does not always, just at the moment show us His will, and this, in order to make us realize our dependence, when there is the disposition to do our own will; nevertheless, "if thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." Hence it is certain when the whole body is not full of light the eye is not single. You will say, "A poor consolation that." I reply, "A rich one to those whose sole desire it is to have the eye single, and walk with God"—not, so to speak, to avoid the trouble of learning His will in an objective way, but whose desire it is *to walk with God*. "If any man walk in the day he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no light in him." (John xi., 9—10.) Still the same principle, "He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life." (John viii., 12.) We cannot get from under this moral law of Christianity. "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that you might be filled with the *knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding* that ye might walk *worthy of the Lord* unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing by the knowledge of God." (Col. i., 9—10.) The connection of these things, the

one with the other, is of immense importance to the soul: we must know the LORD intimately in order to "walk worthy" of Him; and so shall we grow in the knowledge of His will, "And this I pray that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment; that ye may approve things that are excellent; that ye may be sincere and without offence till the day of CHRIST." (Phil. i., 9—10.). Finally, it is written, "He that is spiritual judgeth *all things*, yet he himself is judged of no man." (1 Cor. ii., 15.)

It is, then, the "will of God"—a blessed will—that we should not be able to discern His will otherwise than according to our own spiritual state. In general, when we suppose we are judging as to circumstances, GOD is judging our condition. That which we have to do is to keep near Him. He would not be good to us, were He to permit us to find out His will otherwise. It might be convenient, in the way of having a director of consciences, but we should thus be exempted from the discovery and correction of our moral condition. So that, if we are seeking to know the will of GOD apart from that, we are *seeking* wrongly. And this is of daily occurrence.

One Christian is in doubt, in perplexity; to another more spiritual than he, the thing is as clear as the day; he is astonished—where can there be any difficulty, there is none to him; and it ends in the discovery that the difficulty lies altogether in the condition of soul of the other.

As to *circumstances*, I believe that a person may be led by them. Scripture has settled that. But this is what it calls being "held in by bit and bridle." (Ps. xxxii., 9.) "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." Such is the promise to, such the privilege of, him who has faith. Near enough to GOD to comprehend through one look of His, GOD, who is faithful, has promised to direct him thus. He warns us against being "as the horse and the mule," which have no understanding of the will, the thoughts, the desires of their master. They must be "kept in by bit and bridle." Without a doubt, that oven is better than stumbling, or falling, or jostling against Him who has us in charge, but it is a sorry condition to be in. And there we see what it is to be *directed by circumstances*. It is merciful on the part of GOD to do it; but it is very sad on *ours* to require it.

Here, however, we need to distinguish between forming a judgment as to what is right for us *to do* in certain circum-

stances, and our being *directed* by them. He who allows himself to be *directed by them*, is ever acting blindly as to the "will of God." There is absolutely nothing of that which is moral in it—that which influences us is from without. But it is very possible that I may have no judgment arrived at beforehand as to what I should do: I know not what circumstances may transpire, and consequently, my mind is not made up. Yet, so soon as the circumstances are there, I judge, with a full and divine conviction, what is the path of the will of God, and of the intent and power of the Spirit. This requires spirituality. It is not being guided *by* circumstances, but being guided by God *in* circumstances, through being near enough to Him to judge at once what is right to be done when the circumstances are there.

With regard to impressions, God may suggest them, and as fact, it is certain that He does suggest a thing to the mind, but then the suitability of that which is so suggested, and its moral character, will be clear as the sun at noon-day. When we are in prayer, God may free our hearts from certain influences, the which being removed, other and spiritual influences are allowed to have all their own place in the soul; or He makes us feel the importance of a duty which has been entirely, it may be, lost sight of, through the pre-occupation caused by some engrossing object.

This may occur between two individuals. A person may not have sufficient spiritual discernment to find out what is right, whilst he may assent to the truth at once, when it is pointed out to him by another. Everybody is not an engineer, but a simple waggoner knows a good road when it is made. Thus those impressions which are from God do not always remain simply impressions. But they are usually clear when of God. I have no doubt, however, that He often makes them on our minds, when we are walking with Him and listening to His voice.

A Christian acting without the knowledge of God's mind, is a case that ought to have no existence. The only rule that could be given is, never to *act* when we do not know the will of the LORD. Acting in ignorance of it, we are at the mercy of *circumstances*; God making all turn, nevertheless, to the good of His children. But why act when do not know God's will? Is there at all times such an exceedingly pressing necessity for action? If I do a thing with the full certainty that I am doing the will of God, it is clear that an obstacle then is nothing more than a test of my faith, and ought not

to stop me. We get stopped perhaps, through lack of faith; because if not walking sufficiently near God, in the sense of our own nothingness, we shall lack faith to *accomplish* that which we have faith enough to *discern*.

When we are doing our own will, or are careless as to our walk, God, in His mercy, may warn us through an obstacle, which arrests us if we gave heed to it, while the "simple pass on and are punished." (Prov. xxvii. 12.) When there is a good deal of activity, God may allow Satan to raise up obstacles, in order that we may be kept in dependence on the Lord; but he never allows Satan to act otherwise than on the flesh. If we leave the door open, if we get away from God, Satan may have us; otherwise it is but a trial of faith, to warn us against some danger or snare—something which would have the tendency to exalt us in our own eyes. It is a means for our correction. That is to say, God allows Satan to afflict the spirit, and make the flesh suffer outwardly, that the inner man may be preserved from evil. If it is something else than this, then it is probably our "buts" and our "ifs" that are stopping us, or the results of our carelessness which has given an "open door to Satan to trouble with doubts, and seeming difficulties between God and ourselves, through our not seeing more clearly. "He that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not." (1 John, v. 18.)

In a word, the question is wholly *moral*. If a question presents itself which, on first looking at, we are unable to determine, we shall very often find that there would be no such question at all were our position not a false one, had we been previously in a good state of soul, had a genuine spirituality kept and preserved us. All we have to do in such a case is, to humble ourselves about the whole matter. Then let us examine if Scripture does not furnish us with some principle suited for our direction; and there, it is evident, spirituality is the essential thing, is all.

"Do that which Jesus would have done in such or such a circumstance," has been given as a rule—an excellent one, *where and when it is applicable*. But are we often in the circumstances in which the Lord would have been found? It is frequently useful to ask one's self, *Whence* have I such a wish? or the thought of doing this or that? That, in itself, would settle more than half of the perplexing cases in which Christians find themselves involved. Two-thirds of the remainder result from our rashness or from former sins.

If a thought is from God, and not of the flesh, we have only to look to God as to the manner and means of putting it in practice, and we shall soon get guidance.

There are cases where one has need of being guided not altogether apart from motives, as, for instance, where I hesitate as to a visit, or the like. A life of more fervent charity, or charity in more intelligent exercise, or called out in drawing near God, will make plain the motives of charity, on the one hand or the other; and we may frequently discover that *ours* was only egotism.

Do you say, But what if the question be one neither of charity nor of obedience? Then, I answer, you owe a reason for *acting*; for if it is only your will, you cannot make the wisdom of God bend to your will. Here, again, we have the source of a numerous class of difficulties which God will ever solve.

In such cases, He will teach us, by His grace, obedience, and make us see how much time we have lost through our own activity. "The meek will He guide in judgment, the meek will He teach His way."

Let us remember that the wisdom of God leads us in the path of the will of God. If our own wills are at work, God cannot accommodate Himself to that. This is the essential thing to discover. It is the secret of the life of CHRIST. I know not of any other principle on which God could act, though He pardons and makes all work for our good.

He guides the new man which has no other will than CHRIST; He mortifies the old; and in this way purges us that we may bear fruit.

It is the place of a door-keeper to wait at the door; but in doing that, he is doing his MASTER'S will.

Rest assured that God does more *in* us than we *for* Him; and what we do is only for Him, just in so far as it is Himself that works it in us.

FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

The history of CHRIST'S humiliation was looked at by Paul through the HOLY GHOST—not in the touching detail of CHRIST'S individual life, but as one immense fact, and a cardinal one, in the vast scheme of God. This was exactly in its place, and in keeping with the service for which he was employed. John gives us the Divine nature—Paul the Divine counsels—Peter the walk of Him who has a lively hope

through the resurrection of One whose walk he had known and followed in its bright display on earth, towards the heaven into which resurrection is meant to introduce us; all founding the accomplishment of blessing on the redemption which He has wrought out for us.

Death and Resurrection are the two great principles of Divine Grace: but antagonistically, Human Energy and Combination are those in which Human Nature, since its fall, delights.

By the Death and Resurrection of the LORD JESUS, life, peace, and hope, were found for our souls; by practical fellowship therewith, through the Spirit, our life and service are moulded and sustained;—while it is the realizing this which maintains our recognition of God, as the end and object of our being—"whose service is perfect freedom."

Human Energy and Combination have no power to emancipate from Satan—neither can they raise to the level of Divine thoughts;—of the nature which fell in Eden, they will constantly be found to be roots of bitterness to the people of God—and through Satan subjects of pride to fallen man, his great implements in the last scenes of the coming apostacy against God and His CHRIST.

As regards the coming of the LORD, the purpose of God is *evidently* to make saints always wait for it as a present expectation; and this is shown in never telling them the moment. Nothing can be more explicit than Scripture on this head. St. Paul then made no mistake in expecting the speedy return of CHRIST from heaven. He waited for GOD'S SON from heaven, and taught others to wait for it continually. He never prophetically announced the time. In each He was perfectly guided by the Spirit of God. That this was the LORD'S mind as presented in Scripture, the following passages show: But "let your loins be girded about; and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their LORD, when He will return from the wedding; that . . . they may open unto him immediately . . . and if He shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants . . . Be ye therefore ready also; for the Son of Man cometh at an hour when ye think not." So again, "If that evil servant say *in his heart*, my LORD delayeth his coming . . . the LORD of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for Him . . . and shall

appoint him his portion with hypocrites." Yet in the very same discourse, directly after, the LORD says, "while the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made," &c. That is, if the heart counted on delay, it betrayed its wickedness; yet the bridegroom would delay, so trying the faith of his own. Yet, adds Peter, the LORD is not slack concerning His promise, as some men count slackness; but is long suffering to usward, not willing that any should perish . . . for the long suffering of our LORD is salvation. That is, the delay is not slackness in His promise to us, but GOD'S patience with men, prolonging the time of grace and salvation. But the same Apostle warns us that there would be scoffers, saying, "where is the promise of His coming?" The Apostle then, taught of the HOLY GHOST, acted in the spirit of CHRIST'S directions to His disciples in the early, and joyful sanctifying, yea, energizing constant hope of His coming, and yet never predicted the time which He had put in His own power, who had said, "Sit on my right hand till I make thine enemies thy footstool."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q.—What are we to understand by perfect love that casteth out fear, as expressed in 1 John iv. 8?—a part of Scripture often quoted by those professing entire sanctification, or perfect love in this life.

A.—The application of the passage by those referred to in the above question, is founded on an entire misapprehension of what "perfect love" is. Instead of its being our state that is meant, it is GOD'S acting toward us according to His own nature, for GOD is love. Perfect, refers to the character of the display of what He is, as meeting fully our need. In v. 9, 10. of chap. iv. we have the love of GOD as manifested towards us, and that as sinners, meeting our need by giving us eternal life in His SON, v. 9, and making propitiation for our sins in v. 10. That is a new life given and all the sins of the old state put away. This is the way GOD'S love toward us has been manifested. Then in v. 12, we have His love perfected in us. If we love one another, we are acting according to the Divine Character, which cannot be, except by GOD dwelling in us, for no such thing is found in man, a ruined sinner. The way I know that GOD dwells in me is given in v. 15, "Whosoever shall confess that JESUS is the SON of GOD; GOD dwelleth in him, and He in GOD." Love to

the brethren is the external evidence of this. But notice that in v. 12 it is, "*His love is perfected in us*"; so also in chap. ii. 5. "Whoso keepeth His word, in him verily is the *love of God perfected*." That is; keeping His word, and loving the brethren is the part of God's love being perfected in us. Then in iv. 17, "Herein is *love with us made perfect* (see margin) that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as He is, so are we in this world." What has made us *now* like CHRIST, and so gives us boldness for the day of judgment? This perfect love of God. He has given us a new life, and put away our sins, so that we are in a double way clean. CHRIST is our life, as born of God, and expiation has been made for all our sins; so that as to present and eternal standing and acceptance before God, we are like CHRIST, "as He is, so are we, in this world." Now, in doing this for us, and meeting all our need; as sinners, first, giving us life and forgiveness; and as saints, God dwelling in us, and in view of the day of judgment making us "as He is," and that "in this world," love has been displayed—perfect love. But whose?—not ours surely—but God's. In that love we are to be perfected, daily more, if things are right with us, but the perfect love is His, not ours. In that we rest, our hearts assured of the love that has thought of all our need, in the past, for the present, and the future, and met it fully out of His own resources. Perfect love casteth out fear, for fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

The unhappy misapplication of this passage keeps souls who are honest and upright in fear and bondage, because they are thinking of themselves, and trying to get their spiritual condition right, in order to be assured of their acceptance with God; thus practically slighting the Cross and all its glorious work, as being at once the full display of His love, and what meets our case fully, and to which God always points us for peace and acceptance with Him. Those who say they have attained to this 'perfect love' in themselves, only show that they are in perfect ignorance of themselves, and have got into a state of morbid self-complacency and a hardened conscience. They are practically on the ground of the Pharisee. They can say with him: "God I thank thee that I am not as other men are," etc. They cannot say with Paul: "I know that in me, that is, *in my flesh*, dwelleth no good thing." They know nothing of the "flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other, in order that ye might

not do the things which ye would." Not surely that the flesh ought to be allowed to act, or excused when it does so, far from it, but it is there always, even in Paul who had been caught up to the third heaven, unchanged in its nature and proclivities, and ready to show itself in any moment of unwatchfulness. He who does not know this is in darkness as to himself and the very fundamentals of Christianity.

P O E T R Y .

THE SERVANTS' PATH IN A DAY OF REJECTION.

SERVANT of CHRIST, stand fast amid the scorn
 Of men, who little know or love thy LORD ;
 Turn not aside from toil; cease not to warn,
 Comfort, and teach. Trust Him for thy reward.
 A few more moments' suffering, and then
 Cometh sweet rest from all thy heart's deep pain.

For grace pray much, for much thou needest grace ;
 If men thy work deride—what can they more?
 CHRIST's weary foot thy path on earth doth trace.
 If thorns wound thee, they piercéd Him before;
 Press on, look up, though clouds may gather round,
 Thy place of service He makes hallowed ground.

Have friends forsaken thee, and cast thy name
 Out as a worthless thing? Take courage, then,
 Go tell thy Master, for they did the same
 To Him, who once in patience toil'd for them :
 Yet He was perfect in all service here ;
 Thou oft hast failed: this maketh Him more dear.

Self-vindication shun: if in the right
 What gainest thou by taking from GOD's hand
 Thy cause? if wrong, what dost thou but invite
 Satan himself thy friend in need to stand?
 Leave all with GOD; if right He'll prove thee so ;
 If not He'll pardon, therefore to Him go.

Be not men's servant: think what costly price
 Was paid that thou mayest His own bondsman be,
 Whose service perfect freedom is. Let this
 Hold fast thy heart. His claim is great to thee:
 None should thy soul enthral, to whom tis given
 To serve on earth with liberty of Heaven.

SOME CHARACTERISTIC FEATURES OF THE INSPIRED BOOKS.

THE OLD TESTAMENT.

It may be a truth yet new to some who will read these pages, that God had distinct design in the division of Scripture into different books. Chapters and verses are a mere human arrangement for convenience of reference and little more. Answering that purpose as they do, the marks of human infirmity are manifested in them, so that he who reads by chapters merely will suffer from their artificial character. Take as an example, Micah. iii. and iv., where the latter part of the third chapter has been (rightly) referred to Israel, the first part of the fourth (wrongly) to the church. Take in the New Testament the division between Rom. vii. and viii., as another example. But the division into books is the work of the Divine Author of them, and shows none of this confusion. On the contrary, it is the careful portioning out of the truth of God into distinct subjects, as I may say, the separate truths contained in each being found in the most perfect connection with one another, and each in its relation to the central truth or truths which the book unfolds. Thus if I take up the Gospels as one of the plainest instances of what I mean. They are not a human *collection* of divinely inspired *narratives* of the incidents of our Lord's life and death. The selection and arrangement of the materials are as perfect as the narratives are themselves. In each there is one central truth or more, to which all this is subordinated, and with which every other has relation. Thus in Matthew we find, according to the first chapter as "Son of David, son of Abraham," CHRIST in his dispensational relation to Jews and Gentiles, in Luke, as son of *man*, His moral link in grace with man as such; in John again, His Divine glory, though manifested in flesh. How plain it is thus, why in Matthew the genealogy is carried no further back than Abraham, in Luke on the other hand carried back to Adam; why Matthew gives us the Gentile wise men coming up to worship the King of the Jews, while Luke shows us the vision of angels, who to simple shepherds in the field announce a SAVIOUR; why John again omits His birth in the world and the circumstances of His infancy, to speak of One who in the beginning was with God, and was God.

And so it is in every part of these books, and in all the others. And what light this sheds upon many passages of

Scripture will be plain upon reflection, plainer still by an example, perhaps. Take then the LORD's words, Mark. xiii. 32: "Of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, *neither the Son*, but the Father." Here to understand those words, "*neither the Son*," only found in Mark's Gospel, we must ask in what character is He speaking. The answer is, in that in which Mark constantly presents Him,—"*Son of God indeed, but in servant-prophet character.*"* Now, "*the servant knoweth not what his LORD doeth.*"

He "knows" only thus what lies within the sphere of His service.

I do not dwell on this further, because every page of what I am writing will, it is hoped, furnish fresh examples. I only add to this now, that it surely is of importance to study truth in the order and connection which God has given it in His Book, as well as from the side of our own need or experience. Surely we shall find that He has consulted that need in the *mode of His presentation* of truth, as well as in the truth presented. Let us humbly enquire if be not so.

We will now try and get some general idea of the Old Testament as a whole, before we take up the separate books which compose it.

"The law, the prophets, and the psalms," seems to be our LORD's own division of the Old Testament. If under "the law" we class all the historical books, and under the "psalms," the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs, we have, I believe, the simple and natural arrangement. The first division is thus historical. The "psalms" give us *man's voice*, the utterance of thoughts, the wants, and even complaints of his heart, together with experiences, doubtless of Divine goodness and love, and this often in perfection as under the enlightenment and guidance of the Holy Ghost, but often also the mere broodings and imaginings of a heart groping in the darkness, as we find so much in Job and in Ecclesiastes. While in the "prophets" GOD's voice is heard in answer, challenging man's condition, but to one broken under the divine hand, speaking in gentle tones of peace and sweet assurances of loving mercy.

These three divisions, distinct as they are from one another, have yet one general character, as belonging all to the Old

* So much so that in all this Gospel He is never called "LORD," by His disciples, nor by any save in two places, vii. 28, ix. 24. He does assert His own title where needed, and is called so by the inspired writer.

Testament (or "Covenant," as the word means)—"the law" in a wider sense. This sense we find in Rom. iii., 19, where quotations from the Psalms are followed by the words: "Now we know that what things soever *the law* saith."

In this way it is needful to mark the distinguishing features of the Old Testament books. Taking them in their plain and literal meaning they are addressed, not as the New Testament to believers, children of God by faith in CHRIST JESUS, but to a nation in the flesh, a people owned as God's, but as one of "the families of the *earth*." (Amos iii. 2.) Hence we find the direct reverse of New Testament thought. God saying "I am a father to *Israel*," (Jer. xxxi. 9,) "the adoption" pertaining to them (Rom. ix. 4) and not to those "born of the Spirit," as of course all believers ever were. Thus there was no Spirit of adoption, no cry of Abba, Father, at all on the part of the true Saints, who were scattered among the mass of the unbelieving nation.

With this nation God was in covenant by the law, by which He was testing in them the condition of men at large, looking for righteousness and finding none, proving the need to which CHRIST was to be the answer. But for this very reason the answer could not plainly yet be given. God was shut in behind the veil of the holiest. The way in for man was not made manifest. (Heb. ix.) None could see God and live. The thick darkness in which God dwelt had also for man that "life and incorruption" which are now "brought to light by the Gospel." To man trying to prove himself righteous according to law the gracious heart of God, with all its wealth of blessedness, could not be opened.

Hence we find no "inheritance reserved in heaven" of which souls could speak, no "mansions of a Father's house" waiting to receive them in. They did not long to depart and be with CHRIST. A good old age was what even an Abraham looked forward to.* Blessings of basket and of store were theirs as the rewards of righteousness, and the golden days of which prophets prophesied, were days in which the earth should yield her increase, and as the years of a tree should be man's age, so that the child should die a hundred years old.

This was upon the face of things. The secrets of men's hearts I do not touch. What gleams of light broke in at times

* Heb. xi. speaks of Abraham's expectation of a heavenly country, and that there was light in some beyond the positive teaching of their law, traditional or otherwise, may be allowed. But I speak here of the Old Testament teaching alone.

upon their darkness is a question we have little power to determine by the Old Testament itself, and this is what I speak of. No doubt the Psalms give us a more cheering picture than we should have imagined of practical experiences of joy and faith, which yet oftentimes, under the pressure of need, were changed for the saddest of forebodings and distress. Death was a shadow to all. With Hezekiah, when they thought of it, they chattered like a swallow or a crane. And though more and more plainly the hope of resurrection did come in, still the dread question yet unsettled was, "*But how shall man be just with God?*" Upon the basis of such a question left unsettled little solid confidence could be built.

I speak of the direct and positive teaching. If we look at 1 Pet. i. 10-12, that may tell us how little of what was most blessed in that was practically known at all. As at a former time, the one who wrote it, with divine faith in a CHRIST come, yet ignorant that He must die to accomplish redemption, as Matt. xvi. 22 tells us, may further teach. 'The dispensation of law involved this. Like Moses with a veil over his face, the glory which was really there lay hid under a covering of type and shadow. It was the time of man's trial, not of the revelation of God. Of this trial the Cross has been the full end. The wicked hands that nailed the SAVIOUR to the tree, broke the last link of GOD with man in flesh. Henceforth, the world judged, man's righteousness set aside for ever, the hour of man's utter ruin is become the hour for the display of God's grace in all its fulness. Out of that guilty world lying under judgment, He takes up a people, justified by grace, and brought into nearest relationship to Himself, in CHRIST JESUS, children to whom He can tell out His thoughts, giving them fellowship with Himself, all veil removed.

And what then do we now see? Surely nothing that will rob even the letter of the Old Testament of its interest and importance to us. The lessons of the old dispensation abide for us. The promises of an earth plucked from the grasp of Satan, and restored to Him to whom it belongs, remain full of the sweetest consolation. Moreover the ways of GOD with His people are the ways of One who is not changed from what He then was, but only known now, as He was not then. While the wondrous system of types and shadows, to which CHRIST is the key, are a crown of beauty to the whole. Every New Testament truth is thus reflected, not only in the institutions of the law, but in the history of the people also, as 1 Cor. x.11. (marg.) shows. Thus types are not good for fancy, nor pictures

to delight the imagination merely, but "written for our admonition," and we are enjoined after this manner to "hear the law," by one who expects us to bow to the authority of an "allegorized" history, as if it were the plainest statement (see Gal. iv. 21, 22.)

Let us then get a glance, however mere a one, at what in this way the Old Testament gives. We shall find here the truths of the Church, the second Adam and the new creation, with many kindred truths nowhere in its pages, but under the veil now done away for us in CHRIST. It is moreover chiefly in the first division of the historical books that we shall find these. Where God as Governor of the whole so shapes the record of man's actings and His own, as to bid the shifting scenes of a few hundred years tell out the story of transactions of far more mighty and enduring significance.

Let us look now, before I close this paper, at the "central truths" of the first seven books, which form a little series in some sort by themselves. In Genesis, we have God the Life giver, and the fruits of the life He gives.

In Exodus, God the Redeemer, redemption *from* Egypt, the sphere of the old man, and *to* Himself, who takes His place in the midst.

In Leviticus, God the Sanctifier, and what suits His presence who is with us in the sanctuary.

Then in Numbers we learn how to walk with Him through the wilderness of this world.

In Deuteronomy, the rules of His government of His people, to which they must conform in order to blessing.

In Joshua, our laying hold even now of what is ours in heaven, and the warfare with spiritual wickedness in heavenly places, as Eph. vi. 12.

While in Judges we are called to mourn over our practical failure in this heavenly ground, which brings in the failure of the Church at large in her place of responsibility, and revivals under his gracious hand who alone does not fail. But this leaves us looking on, in hope and need, to David and the Kingdom.

(To be continued, if the Lord will.)

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

IN a previous paper we have endeavoured to clear in the minds of our readers the true significance of "holding the head," in contrast with the popular religious idea which this

term conveys. It will be our view now, shortly to show from Scripture the importance, in connection with Christian Ministry, of the right understanding of that truth. In the verse from which the expression is taken (Col. ii. 19), we read, "and not holding the Head from which *all* the body by *joints and bands* having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." We have seen that the *body* is formed, and united to the *Head* by the HOLY GHOST, by which believers are all baptized into one body, and which dwells in each individual believer. In the Scripture before us a further thought is given us, and we learn that this body so united to the Head, is as a body nourished and compacted together in the grace which flows from the Head, by *joints and bands*. In other words by *gifts* in the body, that are the channels of nourishment and the agencies that practically edify and bind together the members of the body as the Church or assembly on earth, in living union with its Head in Heaven. In this light, we see that all true and effective ministry amongst *saints* has for its aim, not only the nourishment and comfort of the saints individually, but also the *binding of them together* practically, as gathered to their LORD and Head outside the world. Such ministry not only truly blesses the saints, but it *concentrates* them round *Christ* Himself, and for His glory, as visibly gathered to His Name. We say ministry amongst saints, because it is not here the aspect of gifts for the testimony of God in the world, and the conversion of the sinner. We are not looking at the Evangelist, in his work of preaching the Gospel to the converted for the purpose of bringing souls to CHRIST, but as that which in the Church acts to nourish and maintain those already brought to CHRIST, in the unity of the SPIRIT, so that the whole *body* increaseth with the increase of God.

But this verse only shows us *how* in connection with the Head, these gifts work to nourish and knit together the members of the body, and it becomes important now to see from Scripture how they are *set* in their sphere of service. This is very clearly taught in Eph. iv., where the Apostle having stated the *general* truth of the blessing of saints as flowing from the three great spheres of divine unity and glory (verses 4, 5 and 6), all of which brought home in power to the soul, agree to form all believers into one body in the world, so that no one can be properly a Christian, without being *one* with all others that are such, turns to that which is individual and special in the way of gift.

In the 7th verse he says: "but unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of CHRIST." This does not refer to the common standing in blessing which all believers have in CHRIST, where all are one and equal, but to that which they have separately in their path of service—sovereignly according to divine wisdom as He sees fit, CHRIST Gifts individuals for the work which He is carrying on in the earth for GOD'S Glory, and the blessing of man.

It is not as GOD, though He be GOD in His own person, that CHRIST bestows these gifts. It is as we are. Nor is it as man incarnate on earth as He did to His disciples before the crucifixion, but as man ascended to the right hand of GOD in Heaven, after having by His death wrought eternal redemption for man, and destroyed the entire power of Satan over man, so that in a righteous title of blessing for man, He could receive gifts in man, thus victorious over him that once had dominion over man, according to the just judgment of GOD, in consequence of sin. Three things are stated of CHRIST in the 8th verse, as showing the place He holds *now* for man's blessing. "He has ascended on high, He has led captivity captive, and He has received gifts in man," is as a man in this place of exaltation.

The Apostle quotes from the 68th Psalm and 18th verse, but only so far as to show CHRIST in His place of exaltation endowed with gifts for man's blessing. He does not go on to connect this with man's place of blessing on earth during the millennium, which the Psalm treats of, but turns to the present action of CHRIST in giving gifts for the edifying of His body, the Church; that of which no Psalm or prophecy ever spake—the mystery "which in *other* ages," says He, "was *not* made known unto the sons of men, as it is *now* revealed unto His Holy Apostles and Prophets by the SPIRIT." (chap. iii. 5).

In order that we may get clearly before the mind, the teaching of the Apostle as to the bestowal, and relationship of gift in the Church, we will quote the whole passage, "and He gave some Apostles; and some prophets; and some Evangelists; and some pastors and teachers; for the perfecting the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the *body* of CHRIST; till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of GOD, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of CHRIST; that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but

speaking the truth in love, may grow up into Him in all things, which is the *Head*, even CHRIST: from whom the *whole body* fitly joined together, and compacted by that which every *joint* supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part maketh increase of the *body* unto the edifying of *itself* in love."

Two things stand out in great relief here. One that CHRIST gives the gifts, *persons* endowed with gift, directly and immediately. The other, that the aspect of all these gifts is towards the *body* for its edifying. It is not man's blessing simply, but his blessing in *connection* with CHRIST and others as a body. CHRIST as Head, and believers as His body, are entirely before the mind of the Apostles. He speaks here of gift exclusively in this relationship. CHRIST having received gifts as Head of the body, He is the channel of their communication to others, and these in their place become the channels of the communication of His grace to His *body*.

We find *here* nothing of laying on of hands by man to bestow gift; nor any hint of appointment to office by man. All is from CHRIST, and from CHRIST immediately.

In vain, too, shall we search here for anything like the setting of gift over *particular* Churches, whether by appointment of others in power, or by the call of a congregation, according to its own selection.

It is CHRIST bestowing and appointing, and *the whole Church* receiving and enjoying. Every joint is in its place, connected on the one hand with the Head, and on the other with the body. It works only for blessing according to CHRIST's glory, when this double link is practically maintained. As for the simple part or member, so for the gifted joint, there is only practically "holding the Head," when CHRIST and his *entire* body are before the soul, giving it its true place for blessing, as a member of that body, in separation from all that contradicts this blessed truth, the believer being *manifestly* gathered to the name of the LORD JESUS by the power of the HOLY GHOST in confession of this oneness of the body. The LORD's table is the *visible* centre of Saints as the *body* of CHRIST, where in Communion they express this truth in taking the LORD's supper together, according to i. Cor. 16 and 17, "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? For we being many, are one bread (loaf), *one body*; for we are all partakers of that *one* bread (loaf)."

Thus, when saints "break bread" together, they not only express the great and blessed truth of redemption, and the forgiveness of sins, by the work of the Cross, which they commemorate, but they set forth the *fact* that the redeemed, in virtue of that same Cross, are gathered to CHRIST as His *body*, being *united* to Him by the HOLY GHOST. All ministry, then, should have the effect, not only of making saints know and enjoy their place in the body as indwelt by the HOLY GHOST, uniting them to CHRIST in Heaven, but of bringing them round the table of the LORD to exhibit this truth, and show forth the LORD's death till He come.

The Apostles and Prophets are the foundation of the *Church* ministerially, the Evangelists go out into the world to gather in the elect members of that Church, and the Pastors and teachers work together to maintain the Church so formed, in the practical enjoyment of the blessings, which as a *body* it receives from CHRIST, the Head in Heaven, according to the power of the HOLY GHOST. The connection of Ministry with the presence and power of the HOLY GHOST on earth, in the midst of the saints, we shall reserve, if the LORD will, for another paper.

ROMANS VIII., 1-4.

WHEN forgiveness of sins alone is known, only one half of the Gospel has been received. Enough has been learned and believed for salvation, and the person who has advanced no further is as secure as the work of CHRIST can make him. The sprinkled blood has sheltered him from the deserved judgment of GOD, and peace is known, as secured by the expiatory death of CHRIST upon the cross. Blessed news, indeed, to quiet the guilty conscience. "Through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins, and by Him all that believe are justified from all things," &c. But whilst the soul rests from its fear of judgment for its guilt, in the testimony borne by the HOLY GHOST to the value and efficacy of the death of CHRIST, as putting away sin by the sacrifice of Himself; yet more is needed to bring one into liberty of heart before GOD.

We find, therefore, in Scripture, that the Cross has done more for us than merely putting away our sins, and there is another aspect of it, as developed in the Word, equally needful as that which procures for us the forgiveness of our sins.

If I take up what man is, I find that he has not only been

guilty of committing sins—those under law being law-breakers, and, therefore, having transgressions, and those without law being found in all the guilt of lawlessness, and the unrestrained will of the creature—but I find, too, that he has a nature that is bad, from which all this springs. As the LORD JESUS says: “Make the tree good and his fruit good; or, the tree corrupt and his fruit corrupt.” The *tree* is known by his fruit.

If God begins to deal with me about my state, what first strikes me is, what I have done; but I have to learn another thing, and that is, what I am, that I not only have sins, but I have a nature that is evil, I am a sinner, root, branch, and fruit. Now, clearly God's way of dealing with these two features of my condition is different, and yet really one and the same, for it is the Cross which has dealt with both, but different in the character of the testimony borne to us about that work, in relation to these two points. For instance, if I speak of my sins—of what I have done—I can say, I am forgiven. Can I speak of my nature—what I have the consciousness I am in myself, in this way? Clearly not. God *can* forgive sins. He has done so. His Word assures me, when I believe, but God cannot *forgive* sin in the flesh—that is, the nature which is opposed to Himself in every way. So that with the discovery of what I am in nature, forgiveness of sins is not enough to set the heart at liberty.

Now, it is just this question that lies at the root of many of the difficulties a Christian meets with, and the apprehending it is the key to practical holiness and walking with God. How many an one has spent almost a lifetime in fruitless efforts after something better than they are enjoying, and in longings after more practical conformity to the will of God, who yet have found that no progress hardly has been made, and it looks as if God would not hear their cries to Him. Surely, He is anything but deaf to the prayers of His own. But God has no way of sanctifying His people apart from His truth, as the LORD JESUS says, in John xvii., 17. Sanctify them by Thy truth; Thy *Word* is truth. He sends us to the Word to get our difficulties settled, and that, instead of working out experiences in ourselves—a fruitless work indeed—we may learn the settlement of every question that can rise in our poor hearts, and find His Word supply the very answer that we need.

As has been said already, for my sins, no matter how many or how great, I have forgiveness, and this, not merely as to the past, but forgiveness is my state. “In whom *we have* redemption, through His blood, the forgiveness of our sins.”

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. The moment I take the place of one who, before God, confesses his sins, I have the solemn assurance of God's forgiveness, I am in the light, where the blood is on the mercy seat, and in that blood I find what fits me to be even there. Again, blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered, and to whom the LORD *will not impute sin*. He has imputed it for judgment to CHRIST, He never can or does to me, as believing. "When He had by Himself purged our sins, He sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high." So that is a settled question—for ever settled at the Cross, between God and CHRIST, for me, to the praise of His grace.

But now comes the other difficulty, the flesh in me, a nature that is bad—bad without law, bad under law, and under grace unchanged in evil. How is this to be dealt with. I have tried to get rid of it; it is still there. One side of its propensities may come out at one time, another at another. It may be religious at one time, and think very well of itself, and full of lust at another. Whatever phase of it appears, it is always evil, and gives me no more rest, when self-complacency takes the place of conscious evil, than when its lust is working. The trouble is, too, that it is myself—what I am—I may be struggling against it, only to find that the good which I would I do not, and the evil that I would not I do. I may try to rule it by the law, but it will lust against and break it. It would sin in spite of God's judgment, and spit in the face of CHRIST when He came in grace. It can find no delight in God's truth or ways, but any trifle in the world can attract it. Such is the flesh in saint or sinner, it is man in his fallen state of hopeless ruin as to himself.

But how is it to be dealt with when it cannot be forgiven, though its fruits may? The answer is: It must be judged, because it is hopelessly bad, and God can get no good out of it. And that is just what He has done with it. At the cross He has not only put away sin, but condemned sin in the flesh, and there I learn, not only that there could be no forgiveness for me apart from CHRIST, taking the judgment of my sins upon Himself and so putting them away, but that all I am as a man—my moral self, so to speak, was proved to be unfit for God, sin in the flesh was condemned.

Now it is just the application of this truth, that gives deliverance. If I turn to Galatians ii. 20, I find, that "I am crucified with CHRIST"—not merely my sins put away—"never-

theless I live, but not I, *Christ liveth in me.*" At the cross then, what I am now, by experience, proving the incorrigible badness of, was dealt with by God in judgment. There I learn God's judgment upon the first man and all his race. The sentence of death pronounced on sin, has been proved to be the portion of all men, "for all have sinned," but it has been carried into effect at the cross, as the way of deliverance from the judgment and responsibilities of the Adam state. The head of the new creation—the second man, the LORD from Heaven—comes into the old, ruined as it is by the fall, and in the likeness of sinful flesh, although spotlessly holy in His own person, and taking the judgment which was due to the sins and condition of those who were linked with the first man, and for those who believe, opens up a door through death to life. Faith looks back to the cross and says: "I am crucified with CHRIST." "Knowing this that *our old man* was crucified with Him." There is the end of the whole thing before God, an end of my place as a sinner in the responsibilities of the flesh and all its ruin. "But still I live," the apostle says; "yet *not I*, but CHRIST liveth in me." With Him I was judged and condemned, with Him I died under the sentence of God upon sin, but now I live, that is, He is my life now—a life beyond death and judgment—He lives in me. What a change! passed from death to life, from being in a nature exposed to God's just judgment on account of sin, to be in CHRIST risen out from the dead, and in the eternal peace and rest of the place He has got as a man before and with God now.

But there are two sides to this also, that is; my place is, before God in CHRIST up there, "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with CHRIST in God, God's favour resting on me, *as on Him*, because I am in him—accepted in the beloved. That is my place up there.

The other part is, what I am as to my place down here, and that is, that CHRIST liveth in me. He is my life now, and therefore I ought, as living this life, "to walk as He walked," and the "life of JESUS" is to be manifested in mortal flesh, because He is there living in me.

Now if we glance at Romans vii. we shall see, that the first part of the Chapter shows us to be dead to the law which has condemned and killed us, and that we cannot be under the law and CHRIST at the same time. I would be like a woman with two husbands. The point is that death absolves from the relationship and its obligations. But the law does not die. I die to it and thus am freed from its dominion,

which exists as long as a man lives, and now I am free to be to Him who has been raised from the dead, to bring forth fruit to God. In the latter part, the exercises of a soul under law, but quickened by the Spirit of God, are gone into, ending in the discovery that there are two principles at work within me, the one delighting in the law, the other hating its restraint and compelling me to break it. The question now is; which is me? Is the flesh with its lustings *me*—the thing that I find has power over me, so that I have to say, “the good that I would I do not; and the evil that I would not, that I do.” It is the flesh, but is the flesh *me* before God now? No! for if I do that I would not, it is *no more I* that do it, but *sin that dwelleth in me*. What I own as *me* now, is CHRIST in me, the new man. It is not I that live, but CHRIST liveth in me. Suppose I find the flesh working and too strong for me, my conscience judges it, I long to be free from its power, I take sides in my conscience with God in condemning it. How can I do that? I have a new life, and in this state it is my privilege to say of the flesh: *It is not me*, it is sin which dwelleth in me. And mark the effect of this. If it is me, and I am identified with it before God, I have to say God is against that, and He is against me. But my title now is to say, it is not me, though it was once. I take sides with God in my conscience in judging it, which is what He wants me to do, and I learn that He has judged it at the cross, and there in my blessed Substitute, I was dealt with as a sinner, judged, condemned, put to death, and now I live, CHRIST lives in me, and that is all I own as me now, and so I can say, God is for me against my former self, and I am no longer in the flesh, though *it* is in me to lust against the Spirit, but I am in CHRIST JESUS, where there is no condemnation. I am to reckon myself dead to sin, but alive unto God in Him, and to yield myself to God as one that is alive from the dead, and that in the blessed sense of all this display of His love, which has set me free. Now the Apostle goes on to say, “There is no condemnation to them which are in CHRIST JESUS;” for the *law* of the Spirit of life in CHRIST JESUS has set me free from the *law* of sin and death. Sin and death were the *law* of the flesh—the necessity, so to speak, of the nature, which could do nothing but sin. But I have a new life now, the flesh, though there and often active, is not me, and walking in the Spirit, the *law* of the new man—the Spirit of life in CHRIST JESUS—that is; it acting after its own instinct or *law*, raises me above the power of the other, and enables me to fulfil the

righteousness of the law, which while under it in the flesh I could not do. The law of the one life raising me above the law of the other. There is no way of rising above the power of the flesh, but by walking in the Spirit. To do that I must know the place as mine, and then its fruits are produced, which are, love, joy, peace, etc.; against such there is no law, and they that are CHRIST's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts. Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh.

This is God's way and the only way of deliverance from the power of the flesh, the owning God's judgment upon all that it is, at the cross, reckoning that there I died, but now I live, in a wholly new state. It's not I that live, CHRIST liveth in me, and that to be displayed down here, and I am in Him, where there is no condemnation, and nothing can separate me from His love. God is for me, as the cross proves, even against my old self, and through the Spirit I am enabled to mortify the deeds of the body, and I bring forth fruit to God.

Thus God takes care to insure holiness in those who are the subjects of His grace. Not only putting away our sins, but by the gift of a new life, enabling us to judge the flesh and all its workings, and to find our joy only as we walk with Him. The new man feeding upon CHRIST, and getting its nourishment and strength from Him. The life I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.

CONSECRATION TO GOD.

A FRAGMENT ON EXODUS XXIX.

WE stand in all that CHRIST was to the FATHER, when He said, "Therefore doth my FATHER love me." We stand in Divine acceptableness in Him. Whatever there is of sweetness and excellency in CHRIST is upon us. Every act of CHRIST was in the power of the blood of consecration; His obedience, His service, His walk; and ours should be the same. His devotedness is the standard and measure of our walk with God.

There is no sin-offering before Aaron is anointed, because he typifies CHRIST; but there is before, before his sons are anointed, which shows its application to us. We are never to forget that we could not be consecrated to God, if CHRIST had not died to put away our sins. Still it is not the blood of the sin-offering that is put on the ear, the hand, and the foot, as it

was when the leper was cleansed, and when putting away *defilement* was the question. Here consecration is the question. The value of CHRIST's blood in consecrating us to GOD, not the aspect of putting away defilement. His death is as necessary for the one as the other; but consecration to GOD is here the aspect of it. There must be nothing in our thoughts, acts, or ways, inconsistent with that blood.

The blood and the oil were to be sprinkled on the garments. The death of CHRIST and the power of the Holy Ghost should mark that which appears before the world. The world should be able to recognize that we are devoted to the LORD, though they cannot understand it in its principle and spring. Still it should be visible to men, as it is obligatory before GOD. Christian practice is the fruit of what we are with GOD, and flows from it. *It is what we are* that shows itself in our walk.

All our privileges are the result of our union with CHRIST. The sons of Aaron and their garments are sprinkled with him. Observe they were not sprinkled when they had been washed, but when *the blood* had been applied. The Holy Ghost is not the seal of regeneration, but of the work of CHRIST.

In being consecrated for worship, their hands were filled—but with what? CHRIST in His life and in His death. The one figured in the oiled bread, and the other in the burnt-offering—“the fat.” Every part of the value of CHRIST is thus put into our hands, and offered up before GOD. It is not only that CHRIST is ever before GOD in all His sweet savour, and there for us; but we are to come and present Him afresh in worship—our hands are to be filled with CHRIST. We cannot go to GOD without finding Him already in the full delight of Grace; still we may bring it afresh before Him. Noah's offering was a sweet-savour; and thus the very reason why GOD brought judgment on the world, is given why He would not any more curse them, now that the offering was accepted, “For the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth.”

The daily sacrifice was the provision, on GOD's part, for the sweet savour being always before Him (v. 38.) whether we fail or not in our priestly action. This shows us the meaning of the taking away of the daily sacrifice in Daniel. When this is taken away there is no link with GOD left.

Unless we are willing to be consecrated to GOD, we shall never know the full value of the blood; at least not this aspect of its value. Self-will, however, is not consecration; but the

reverse. There will be failure constantly in carrying it out; but there must be the purpose of heart to live wholly to Him, and not at all to self. Verse 43 shows that meeting God is the object; and this marks our title to perfect peace. For if there was one spot of sin left, God could not meet us. If we are brought to God, sin must have been entirely put away; and that according to his estimate of it. For it is God's estimate, and not ours; both of the sin and of the blood, which gives us our place before Him. "It is God that justifies." It is not *I* that justify myself by my sense of the value of this blood.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Q.—What is the meaning of our Lord's words in Matt. v. 48, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect?"

A.—In order to get at the force of a passage, as a general thing, it is needful to consider it in the connection in which it stands, as that often determines the meaning. The verse under consideration is just an illustration of this. Separated from what has gone before, it may present difficulties, and be used to the hurt and discouragement of many a sincere soul; but by noting carefully the purport of our Blessed Lord's discourse the meaning becomes evident.

We find then by looking back a few verses, that the Lord Jesus has been putting in contrast the teaching of the law, with what He had to declare on earth as revealing God's character to men, and therefore he brings out what goes beyond law, in giving the standard of conduct to which His disciples were to seek to be conformed.

When the law was given from Sinai, God dwelt, as He said, in the thick darkness, He did not show Himself, but merely gave to man a law which was the measure of his responsibility as a creature. As under it, He was requiring righteousness from man, He allowed those in relationship with Him to act upon the same principle. "An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," v. 38, was what law allowed. But law had done its work, and man under it had proved himself perfectly worthless. Man's character had been brought out by it fully, and now God comes upon the scene to show out His character, and so that Blessed One—God manifest in the flesh—develops in His teaching a higher line of conduct as expected in those who claimed to be His followers, and a character consistent

with that of God, as proved in His actings towards them. It had been said of old, "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth;" "I say unto you," says the LORD JESUS, "that ye resist not evil," &c. Again, in v. 43, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you," &c. And the LORD can appeal to what they all know, although they had failed to note its import, that God "maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect," is simply then the exhortation to imitate God's character in this, the more nearly the better, of course, and act in grace towards not only friends, where it was an easy matter—even publicans could do that—but towards even enemies.

A similar use of the word is found in Gen. xvii. i., where God says to Abram, "I am the Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect;" where clearly the perfection looked for in Abram was in trusting God in the character in which He had spoken of Himself as Almighty.

Again it was recorded that Job was a man "*perfect* and upright, and one that feared God and eschewed evil." He is passed through trial and is sifted by Satan, and much of self righteousness is brought out in the process, and in the end, when he gets into God's presence, he confesses he is "*vile*" and abhors himself. Clearly Job was not what some would have us think. God speaks of him as perfect, the consciousness he has of himself in the light of God's presence is that he is vile. Nor does Scripture ever speak of a state of sinless perfection attained to here.

There is abundant testimony to the perfectness of God's loving ways towards us, of the work of CHRIST on the Cross, dying to put away our sins, and in consequence a perfect standing in the results of that work, for all who with the heart believe in the LORD JESUS. As to our walk too, it ought to be perfect, "we ought to walk as He walked." But even if our walk were perfect, which often is far from being the case, and our standing perfect, which it is through His mercy and grace; still the flesh is there to lust against the spirit, though we are debtors to it no longer, to obey it in its lusts, but it seeks to hinder us from walking in the Spirit and from doing the things that we would. The only other sense in which perfection is spoken of in connection with us, is where it refers to full age

—manhood as it were—in contrast with being babes in the faith as in Heb. v., or else, as in Philippians iii., the uprightness of heart with God, in walk and ways, that he looks for.

FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.

God is a living and a present God. If His people on earth (where alone they can) have forgotten GOD, even the FATHER in heaven, and ceased to walk in the light of a risen and ascended LORD, so owning the gracious presence of the SPIRIT, they may, as men, have *wrecked* themselves and their circumstances in time; but God is God still, and in Him is their hope.

And here (I take it) a question arises: *How are we to get on in this state of things?* We cannot walk as though there had been no wreck: the vessel, if not in atoms, or gone even into the separate pieces of which it was formed, is not what it was, or what God made it at first; neither would it become us, as those connected with the sin of marring it, to deny this. Moreover, God is not now walking in *that* path. His testimony is not now in the unshattered Church of Pentecost; but it is in grace and mercy, shown in a people *preserved*, spite, and in the midst, of the wreck. To make the wreck, or the *perception* of it, the centralizing point, were madness and sin. If the mercy of God in preserving in CHRIST JESUS, and entire separation from the sin (moral and spiritual) around, are our solace, “the obedience of faith” will solve all our difficulties.

THE Christian may say, I want nothing before God; I have CHRIST there; and GOD would repudiate anything more. I know that GOD has accepted the person and blood of His SON. GOD rests there, and there I rest, and have nothing now to do but to seek to glorify Him by my life down here.

IN our LORD’s description of His FATHER’S house, there is no word about glory—nothing of jasper and sardine stone—but just that there is room there, and His personal desire to have us there *with Him*. It is His FATHER’S house—our FATHER’S house—and we, as adopted sons, brought into the enjoyment of all the affections of GOD towards His SON.

OUR present path is a very simple one. There may be all sorts of evil here and there; and even God's people are so mixed up with it that we may not be able to say who are His and who are not. "Nevertheless, the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal: The LORD knoweth them that are His." But we have also a word to act upon the conscience: "Let every one that nameth the name of CHRIST depart from iniquity." If you say, I know what I am in is unscriptural, and I am constantly involved in what is wrong; but I see nothing better; I answer, that you must not go on with that: "depart from iniquity." We are told to purge ourselves from the vessels to dishonor—that he who does "shall be a vessel unto honor," sanctified and meet for the MASTER's use, and "prepared unto every good work." Then, it may be urged, you will have to go alone, or lead in some new thing. But not so; I have to "follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace *with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart.*" In these days, however, a great deal of *patience* also may be needed, as, indeed, Paul proceeds to remind Timothy in his day. Jeremiah was indignant at the state of things he saw around him; but he received the word, "If thou shalt take forth the precious from the vile, thou shalt be as my mouth." (chap. xv.) So, at present, one might be provoked to abstain from having anything to do with persons in the sects, etc.; but we have to remember that there are true saints of God in these associations, whose good we are to seek for the LORD's sake, and deliverance from all that is offensive to Him. If it be argued that, in this case, we ought to go with them, the answer is: "Let them return unto thee; but return not thou unto them."

It is an unspeakable privilege to have any work to do for CHRIST; but if He sees in me something tending to exalt my flesh, He must lay me by, and make me to be satisfied with His approbation. He may say, as to Philadelphia, "I know thy works," and then say nothing about them. Are you content with *His* approval? to hear Him say, "I have loved thee"? This is what the heart has to be satisfied with; not from any service in which He may occupy me, but in the calm, settled confidence that *Christ loves me.*"

POETRY.

THE WARNING.

"For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them."—I. THESS. v. 8.

SPEAK not of "*The good time coming*;"
 Say not, "*Happy times draw nigh*."
 Lo! the clouds with terror looming,
 Darken o'er the future sky!
 Undeceive thyself, O mortal!
 To the winds such dreamings give!
 Think upon the fearful purging,
 That the earth *must first* receive!

Rather tell of *wrath* and *vengeance*,
 Pending o'er this guilty race;
 In its shame still glorying—boasting;
 Deaf to all the calls of Grace—
 GOD forgetting—GOD dishonouring—
 Guilty world, thy doom is nigh!
 Fear unknown will seize upon thee,
 When He shakes the Earth and Sky.

Sodom's fall but faintly pictures,
 What thy awful lot will be;
 It had not so many warnings,
 As the LORD hath sent to thee.
 Grace refused makes judgment sorer—
 O what grace hast *thou* refused!
 Guilty world, thy judgments hover,
 All escape for thee is closed!

Yet, as in the case of Sodom,
 Lot departed ere it fell;
 So, the LORD will come from heaven,
 Take His Church with Him to dwell,
 Ere destruction's work commences,
 On *this* Sodom's guilty ones:
 They, the salt, alone preserve it—
 They removed—the judgment comes.

To the Ark and *from* destruction,
 All who'd be preserved, then, haste!
 CHRIST'S *alone* the Ark of safety—
 Come—and full salvation taste:
 Tarry not for reformation—
 (Sinners—JESUS died to save),
 Art thou *lost*? He came to *find* thee;
 Thou, believing, life shalt have.

WAITING FOR CHRIST.

REV. I. 5-7.

IN a day like the present, when knowledge on every question is so widely diffused, it is most needful to press upon the conscience of the Christian reader the vast distinction between merely holding the *doctrine* of the LORD's second coming and actually waiting for His appearing. (1 Thess. i. 10.) Many, alas! hold and, it may be, eloquently preach the doctrine of a second advent who really do not know *the Person* whose advent they profess to believe and preach. This evil must be faithfully pointed out and dealt with. The present is an age of knowledge—of religious knowledge; but oh! my reader, knowledge is not life, knowledge is not power—knowledge will not deliver from sin, or Satan, from the world, from death, from hell. Knowledge, I mean, short of the knowledge of GOD in CHRIST. One may know a great deal of Scripture, a great deal of prophecy, a great deal of doctrine, and all the while, be dead in trespasses and sins.

There is, however, one kind of knowledge which necessarily involves eternal life, and that is the knowledge of GOD, as He is revealed in the face of JESUS CHRIST. "This is life eternal, to know Thee the only true GOD, and JESUS CHRIST whom Thou hast sent." (John xvii. 3.) Now it is impossible to be living in the daily and hourly expectation of "the coming of the Son of man," if the Son of man be not experimentally known. I may take up the prophetic record, and by mere study, and the exercise of my intellectual faculties, discover the doctrine of the LORD's second coming, and yet be totally ignorant of CHRIST, and living a life of entire alienation of heart from Him. How often has this been the case! How many have astonished us with their vast fund of prophetic knowledge—a fund acquired, it may be, by years of laborious research, and yet, in the end, proved themselves to have been displaying unhallowed light—light not acquired by prayerful waiting upon GOD! Surely the thought of this should deeply affect our hearts and solemnize our minds, and lead us to enquire whether or not *we* know the blessed Person who, again and again, announces Himself as about to "come quickly;" else, if we know Him not, we may find ourselves of the number of those addressed by the prophet in the following startling words:—"Woe unto you that desire the day of the LORD! to

what end is it for you? The day of the LORD is darkness, and not light. As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall and a serpent bit him. Shall not the day of the LORD be darkness and not light? even very dark and no brightness in it?" (Amos v. 18-20.)

The second chapter of Matthew furnishes us with a very striking illustration of the difference between mere prophetic knowledge and the knowledge of CHRIST—between the exercise of the intellect on the letter of Scripture, and the drawings of the Father to the Person of CHRIST. The wise men, manifestly led by the finger of God, were in true and earnest search of CHRIST, and they found Him. As to Scriptural knowledge, they could not, for a moment, have competed with the chief priests and scribes; yet what did the Scriptural knowledge of the latter do for them? Why it rendered them efficient instruments for Herod, who called them together for the purpose of making use of their Biblical knowledge in his deadly opposition to God's Anointed. They were able to give him chapter and verse, as we say. But, my reader, while they were assisting Herod, by their knowledge, the wise men were, by the drawings of the Father, making their way to JESUS. Blessed contrast! How much happier to be a worshipper at the feet of JESUS, though with but slender knowledge, than to be a learned scribe, with a heart cold, dead, and distant from that blessed One! How much better to have the heart full of lively affection for CHRIST than to have the intellect stored with the most accurate knowledge of the letter of Scripture! What is the melancholy characteristic of the present time? A wide diffusion of Scriptural knowledge, with little love for CHRIST, and little devotedness to His work; abundant readiness to quote Scripture, like the scribes and chief priests, but little purpose of heart, like the wise men, to open the treasures and present to CHRIST the willing offerings of a heart filled by the sense of what He is. What we want is personal devotedness, and not the mere empty display of knowledge. It is not that we would undervalue Scriptural knowledge; God forbid, if that knowledge be found in connection with genuine discipleship. But if it be not, I ask, of what value is it? None whatever. The most extensive range of knowledge, if CHRIST be not its centre, will avail just nothing; yea it will, in all probability, render us more efficient instruments in Satan's hand for the furthering of his purposes of hostility to CHRIST. An ignorant man can do

but little mischief; but a learned man, without CHRIST, can do a great deal.

The verses which stand at the head of this paper present to us the divine basis on which to found all Scriptural knowledge, more especially prophetic knowledge. Before any one can utter his hearty amen to the announcement, "Behold He cometh with clouds," he must, without any question, be able to join in the blessed burst of praise, "To Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood." The believer knows the One who is coming, because He has loved him; and washed him from his sins. The believer expects the everlasting Lover of his soul. The meek and lowly One who served, suffered, and was emptied down here, will speedily come in the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, and *all* who know Him will welcome Him with glad hosannas—they will be able to say, "This is the LORD, *we have waited for him*, we will rejoice and be glad in his salvation." But, alas! there are, it is to be feared, very many who hold and argue about the LORD's coming who are not waiting for Him at all, who are living for themselves in the world, and "mind earthly things." How terrible to be found talking about the LORD's coming, and yet, when He does come, *to be left behind!* Oh! my beloved reader, think of this; and if you are really conscious that you know not the LORD, then let me entreat of you to behold Him shedding His precious blood to wash you from your sins, and learn to confide in Him, to lean upon Him, to rejoice in Him, and IN HIM ALONE.

But if you can look up to heaven, and say, "Thank God, I do know Him, and I am waiting for Him," then let me remind you of what the Apostle John says, as to the practical result of this blessed hope, "every man that hath this hope *in Him*, purifieth himself, even as He is pure." Yes, this must ever be the result of waiting for the SON from heaven; but not at all so of the mere prophetic doctrine. Many of the most impure, profane, and ungodly characters, that have made their appearance in the world, have held, in theory, the second advent of CHRIST; but they were not *waiting for the SON*, and therefore they did not, and could not, purify themselves. It is impossible that any one can be waiting for CHRIST's appearing, and not make efforts after increased holiness, separation, and devotedness of heart: "Behold, I come quickly; blessed is he that watcheth." Those who know the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and love His appearing, will daily seek to shake off everything contrary to their Master's mind; they will seek to

become more and more conformed to Him in all things. Men may hold the doctrine of the LORD'S coming, and yet grasp the world and the things thereof with great eagerness; but the true-hearted servant will ever keep his eye steadily fixed on his Master's return, remembering His blessed words, "I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." (John xiv. 3.)

THE TOUCH OF FAITH.

"THE LORD JESUS," (writes Bunyan,) "has put Himself under the term of a physician; and the best way for a doctor or physician to get himself a name, is, in the first place, to take in hand and cure some such as all others have given off for lost and dead. Physicians, among us, get neither name nor fame by pricking of wheals or picking out thistles, or by laying of plasters to the scratch of a pin; every old woman can do this. But if they would have a name and a fame, they must, as I said, do some great and desperate cures, and by these they not only get a name, but beget encouragement in the minds of other diseased folk to come for help. So the LORD JESUS forgiveth sins for a name, and so begets of Himself a good report in the hearts of the children of men. And He has also, as physicians do, published His doings, that things may be read and talked of. Yea, He has moreover inserted the very names of persons, the places of their abode, and the great cures that by the means of His salvations He has wrought upon them to this very end. There is Lot, David also, Solomon, Manassch, Peter, Magdalen, and many others made mention of in His book. Yea, here are their names, their sins, and their salvations, recorded together, that you may read and know what a SAVIOUR He is, and do Him honor in the world," Yes, reader, it is so—and that you may know what He can do to the praise and glory of His grace, read this one case:

"A woman having an issue of blood twelve years, which had spent all her living upon physicians, neither could be cured of any."—LUKE viii. 43.

It was a disease that she could not talk about, but it was getting desperate. Daily growing weaker and weaker, the vital stream slowly but surely oozing from her, this woman *felt* herself a-dying. How many readers of this paper may be literally in a similar condition? Incurable disease making

scarcely perceptible, but certain progress, they await the lingering, but inevitable issue. Alas! many a hearty one may outstrip them yet, and get to the grave first. She had evidently shown great faith in her doctors, and had persevered through disappointment and loss to the end of her purse. It would have been a longer story, doubtless, if her "living" and her blood could have held out. But her physicians, however costly, were (like Job's) of no value. "Miserable comforters, were they all," with their advice to do this, that, and the other. She could not be healed of such. But are there not some, however healthy perhaps in body, who are pressed with conscious internal unhappiness, and who long for relief?—anxious ones who have for years been going hither and thither, and hearing many things, but whose conscience cannot be satisfied by all their efforts, "who are nothing bettered but rather grow worse?" Let such learn a lesson from this afflicted one, for she,

"Came behind JESUS and touched the border of His garment; and her blood stanch'd."—44.

Surely this was little faith, the weakest of weak faith in her to push thus slyly through the crowd and in secret touch His clothes. But weak and fearful as it was, there was uncommon beauty in it. "But touch His clothes!" What! not a cry to entreat His ear, not a plea to move His heart? No, the "virtue" to heal such a disease as hers, was not in herself nor in any thing she could do; but it was in Him. And her faith, simple yet real, LED HER TO JESUS. *Great faith in a wrong object is superstition.* The feeblest trust in JESUS is salvation. Dear reader, do you know your dying condition, and, in the midst of many superstitions around you, do you simply and entirely trust in JESUS?

"Jesus said, Somebody hath touched Me: for I perceive that virtue hath gone out of Me."—46.

"And when the woman saw that she was not hid, she came trembling, and falling down before Him, she declared unto Him, before all the people, for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately."—47.

Confession of CHRIST, how important and yet how dreaded! And why? Because though *healed*, this woman knew that she had a nature that "loved the praise of men more than the praise of God," and that if she had a heart for CHRIST, that crowd would be against her. But for her own peace, for her abiding comfort, JESUS would have her confess Him.

Poor, nervous, trembling creature! How could she be expected thus to expose her condition and her ways—she who had not dared to do more than touch the hem of his garment? JESUS tenderly prepared the way. Strength, peace and joy, as well as life, flow from Him. Encouraged by His word, attracted by His grace, emboldened by His command, she falls before Him and “**DECLARES BEFORE ALL THE PEOPLE for what cause she had touched Him, and how she was healed immediately.**” And this simple confession left every one in that crowd without excuse. None could plead ignorance. If any, conscious of malady, desired relief, the Physician was there, able and willing to bestow it, without money and without price. And the confession, too, was a note of triumph in the presence of the enemy. Satan had to listen to another testimony of his defeat, and to the victory of Emmanuel. God was glorified in it. The rights of JESUS, as well as His love, were vindicated by it. It was the gospel to the poor and afflicted. Dear reader, if you are healed, if you have “**peace with GOD through JESUS CHRIST our LORD,**” hasten (if not done already,) to make public acknowledgment of JESUS. God demands it from you.—Rom. x. 9—18), and JESUS has said, “*My grace is sufficient for you; for My strength is made perfect in weakness.*”—2 Cor. xii. 9.

“And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole: go in peace.”—48.

The LORD at once pours the sweetest balm into her soul. He is not ashamed to own her as daughter, the moment that she is made willing to own Him as SAVIOUR. Thus, then, is she healed—thus is she owned in near relationship to the LORD—thus is she sent on her way in perfect peace. Beloved reader, are you believing in JESUS the SON of GOD? Do you confess Him as your only SAVIOUR? Hear His words, “Go in peace.” Yes, go all your days, not only healed from the pains and penalties of sin, but in a new and sweet relationship to GOD, to repose in that love, which (come what may) will be perfect towards you, and will endure for ever and ever.

“And when He came to the house, He suffered no man to go in, save Peter, and James, and John, and the father and mother of the maiden.”—51.

Let it not be forgotten that this woman met JESUS while He was yet on the way. When He arrived at the house the door was shut. Had she deferred coming it would have been

too late. And God says, "Now is the accepted time; now is the day of salvation."—2 Cor. vi. 2. How long now may last, who can tell? Ask of the lately often-repeated warning—SUDDEN DEATH. But now JESUS invites the weary and the heavy laden, saying unto them, "Come unto Me and I will give you rest.—Matt. xi. 28. For "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out."—John vi. 37.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY.

IN previous papers we have looked at *the Church* as the *body* of CHRIST united to Him as the *Head in Heaven* by the HOLY GHOST, the various gifts working together as directly connected with the Head, to edify and nourish this body. But there is another aspect in which the Church or assembly is presented in Scripture, and that is as the dwelling place of God on earth. In the 4th of John, the LORD tells the Samaritan woman that the hour was coming, when says He, "ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the FATHER." By which He meant to tell her that God's presence was not a question of *places*, and His worship would not be confined to *certain localities*, whether this were a mountain in Samaria, or a city in Judea.

The Temple at Jerusalem *had been* God's dwelling place, and thus the only proper place of worship. It was no longer to be so. In the 17th of Acts, the Apostle Paul gives a further truth as to God's dwelling place: "The LORD of Heaven and earth," he says, "dwelleth not in temples made with hands." We have merely given here without further comment the negative facts concerning the dwelling place of God, but we hope to refer again to this subject in connection with what constitutes "Christian worship." Our present object is to develop the question of "Christian Ministry," and we are therefore only so far showing what God's house really is, as the question before us makes it necessary.

We will now turn to the Scriptures that teach us what in Christianity, as in contrast with Judaism, is the *house of God*, and how it is formed. This is clearly set before us in the last verse of the 2nd of Ephesians, where the Apostle Paul tells the Ephesian Christians this fact, in connection with their blessing in and through CHRIST, "in whom ye also are builded together for an *habitation* of God in spirit." Christians, therefore, all Christians, are the habitation of God as builded together for this purpose. How far is this thought from a con-

secrated building of material substances, whether this be a gorgeous temple in Jerusalem, or a "church," so-called, in Christendom.

The same truth is taught in 1 Cor. ii. 16, where *Christians* are said to be the "Temple of God," and that the spirit of God *dwelt* among *them*. In a ministerial way Paul had laid the foundation of this building, JESUS CHRIST, and he warns other servants *how* they built in fresh stones, professing Christians, upon this foundation. The matter, then, of Christian Ministry, in a responsible way, touches very closely here upon the question of God's house, and shows plainly how the one connects itself with the other.

That the Church, the *entire* assemblage of professing Christians, is God's house, we learn in terms from 1 Tim. ii. 15, where Paul is instructing Timothy how to act amongst Christians and order things amidst them until he himself should come; "if I tarry long that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the *house of God*, which is the *Church of the living God*, the pillar and ground of the truth." As the *dwelling* place of the HOLY SPIRIT, the *Church* is "the house of God." As the place where the SPIRIT acts in power in testimony, the *Church* is "the pillar and ground of the truth."

But it is in the xii. of 2nd Corinthians, that the question of Christian Ministry, as flowing from the *presence and power of the SPIRIT* in the Church, is fully gone into. The Corinthians had but recently been converted to CHRIST, and become incorporated into the visible Church of God on earth. Accustomed to spiritual manifestations in connection with idols, really demons, that they had previously been worshiping, they were in danger now that they were Christians, of being again ensnared by Satan, through mistaking the illusions of the enemy for the manifestations of the SPIRIT of God. Evil spirits were seeking to gain entrance among the Christians, and to speak and act in their midst as being the operations of the SPIRIT of GOD. It is this danger that gives occasion for the formal teachings of the Apostle on this subject.

The first thing he does is to give the distinctive marks of the SPIRIT of GOD, whereby they would be enabled at once to detect a false teacher. "No man," says he, "speaking by the SPIRIT of GOD calleth JESUS accursed: "and no man can say LORD JESUS but by the HOLY GHOST." A false teacher is always unsound upon the person of the LORD JESUS, and His relationship to GOD. An unclean spirit never really calls JESUS LORD. Such an one can talk of "JESUS whom Paul preach-

eth," and be answered by another, "JESUS I know and Paul I know" (Acts xix.), but the LORD JESUS is not acknowledged.

Satan has full possession over man outside the power of the HOLY GHOST, and therefore to truly own JESUS as LORD is the distinct witness to the HOLY GHOST's acting. In the same way John warns believers. He tells them "not to believe every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of GOD; because many false prophets are gone out into the world;" and he gives the test for detecting them, in the confession they make of CHRIST. The first evidence then of the HOLY GHOST acting in ministry, is purity of doctrine about CHRIST, so that impressions made upon the mind and feelings by what is *not* of GOD, may not be mistaken for the evidence of His presence and power.

The next point to be noted is, that the HOLY GHOST's presence in gifts like the LORD's table, is in connection with the unity of the body. Personally GOD, and sovereignty present in power, He leads the Saints out in praise according to what CHRIST has done and is, giving them enjoyment together in this as His *body* at the LORD's table. Acting for edification in their midst by a diversity of gifts, but all as flowing from the same source, and by the same power, He connects them with Himself as the *One Spirit* in contrast with many demons, and puts their souls in relation with *one LORD*, so that though separately administrators, there is no independency of will, but entire subjection to CHRIST as the *only LORD*. That too which is wrought, though wrought by Man, and CHRIST as Man who is served, still all is of GOD, and the *same GOD* "which worketh all in all." Then too every Spiritual manifestation, while it witnessed to the presence of *One SPIRIT, One LORD and One GOD*, is for the *profit* of the Saints, not for some, but for all, the Church in general. CHRIST ever thinks of *ALL* His Church and the Spirit ever acts in accordance with *His* heart. A very important truth with reference to the Spirit Himself comes out here, verse 11. It is not only the *same Spirit*, but *One who acts as being GOD Himself*, and divides "to every one severally as *He will*." Though acting for, and under CHRIST in the gifts, He is no *inferior Spirit*; not merely an influence, or a power, but GOD in His own person, and acting sovereignly in the midst of the Church. It is not enough to say all gift is by the HOLY GHOST as to power. All gift is *sovereignly* given, and controlled by the HOLY GHOST, though at the same time He connects the heart and conscience with CHRIST as LORD, and Head of the Church.

It is impossible to overrate the importance of holding all gift in direct connection with the presence, sovereignty and liberty of the Spirit of God in the midst of the Saints. He must not only be acknowledged as personally present, and the source of gift, but *He* must be left *free* to act for edification by whom He will, as is clearly set before us in the latter part of the 14th chapter of this epistle where it is said, that "if anything be revealed to another that *sitteth by*, let the first hold his peace. For *ye may all* prophesy, one by one, that *all may* learn, and that *all may* be comforted." And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets." We do not go further into this part of our subject at present as our desire is to keep prominently in view the connection of gift with CHRIST, the head of the body in *Heaven* on the one hand, and with the HOLY GHOST on *earth* in the *midst* of the Church, on the other, and to show how in this latter connection it is the *entire body* that the Spirit of God connects the gift with. This is very clearly taught in the 13th verse of our chapter. The *diversity* of gift by the *one* Spirit acting in unity, suggests to the mind of the Apostle the figure of the human body, "for as the body is one, and hath many members, and all members of that one body, being many, are *one* body; so also is the CHRIST; for by *one* Spirit are we all baptized into *one* body." Then in the latter part of the verse he connects this oneness in a body of believers by the baptism of the HOLY GHOST, with the LORD'S table which is the visible witness of that oneness; "and have been *all* made to drink into *one* Spirit." By coming to CHRIST, souls not only receive life and refreshment, but it is *One* Spirit that they partake of by participating in CHRIST Himself; and at the LORD'S table there is the figure of drinking in *one* Spirit, so drinking as to receive one, and the same Spirit. Every time the believer puts "the cup of blessing" to his lips as having communion in the blood of CHRIST, he not only says he is redeemed by that blood, but that he drinks into *one* Spirit with others as one body with these in CHRIST. This as to communion. Then if as a gift he drink to minister to others, as the LORD speaks of in the 7th of John, so that rivers of water flow out of his belly, tis as drinking from CHRIST of that *One* Spirit by which all believers are baptized into one body. As a gift then, in connection with the power of the Spirit acting in the midst of the Saints and dividing severally as He will, a Christian minister works only as a member of the body, as the Spirit acts in him ministering to the body of the fulness of CHRIST the Head.

SUFFERING WITH CHRIST, AND FAITH TRIED.

WE do not *only* suffer with CHRIST, or know His sufferings, when we suffer in the way of persecution at the hands of the world. I believe there is a far larger class of sufferings than these, and in some sense deeper ones, in which He suffered, and in which we suffer with Him. For instance, "He suffered, being *tempted*." To His pure and holy mind, in which there was nothing which could find complacency in the briefest instant in what was not of God, what a scene of trial and suffering this world must have been. Not only when He got "hatred for His good will," and man whom He had come to serve pursued Him with reproach and enmity, did He suffer, but there was not a groan of suffering nature out of joint and mangled by the tyranny of Satan but He felt it. The unbelief of His own extracted from Him a groan, which nothing else could, "O faithless and perverse generation how long shall I be with you and suffer you?" Our hearts are at best so callous and so selfish that we can realize little of what the LORD's path was through a world like this; but suppose we were confined to the wards of an hospital in which tortured humanity was before our eyes and its groans in our ears continually; or a madhouse, where merriment was more sorrowful than sorrow, or a jail emptying itself continually by the gallows—not all these together could furnish forth the picture presented to His eye who could penetrate all the smoothness of external appearances and detect the reality of what was there.

And He has Himself pronounced the blessedness of "those that mourn." Not in any particular case I believe, but who are *mourners*: whom that characterizes. He was a "man of sorrows:" not of one merely or some special form, but of sorrow in all its varied kinds. He could feel divinely, yet in the truth of a perfect manhood, every ache and pain on account of which Creation groans. And above all, there was not one pain of those that He relieved but it was the consequence of sin. They were the buds and fruit which grew upon that fatal tree. And the brightness of Divine complacency in which He Himself walked, while it was His strength in passing through, only yet made Him more competent to feel the full extent to which man had departed from Him.

And thus there is not a sorrow which we can feel as the *result of being ourselves nigh to God and in the midst of what is contrary to Him*, but it is the "fellowship of CHRIST's suf-

feringa." The naked evil of the world, the poor Church spoiled of her ornaments and exposed to the contempt of those to whom she ought to have been a light and witness, yea the very sorrows and misery of men in any shape, ought to be our grief who are the vessels of grace and of the riches of Divine love.

But among these things I believe we cannot reckon the things which come upon us as being in the body. The mere suffering from disease is not suffering with CHRIST surely. Aye, but is there no blessedness in it? Ah, yes, for it is the pressing of the grape into the cup, that it may yield its sweetness to the weary.

"We have the treasure in *earthen vessels*," truly. Is there any glory in an earthen vessel? Yes, this,—“that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.” Is that nothing? “We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; always bearing about in the body the dying of the LORD JESUS, that the *life also* of JESUS might be made manifest in our body.” Now, this is where we can see blessedness. Even sickness may make manifest the life of JESUS more. “Death working in us” (other than by persecution) may make the power of CHRIST so manifest that “life” may “work in” others as the result of it. The thorn in the flesh in Paul’s case was not suffering with CHRIST, for *He* could never have needed such a thing; but yet Paul gloried in it as that which manifested “the power of CHRIST;” yea, which *made* it “rest on” him, as a consciously weak one. For our strength is our real “infirmity,” and our “infirmities” are strength: “when I am weak, then am I strong.”

God delights in our “difficulties.” Would that we had faith to do so, too. He delights in shewing what the strength of His arm is, and what the love of His heart. He could have taken Israel out of Egypt by the way of the Philistines; but He would not. He must take them to the sea, and hedge them up between the mountains, and bring Pharaoh and his hosts up behind,—and for what? Did He delight in their fears? In no wise. But they needed the lesson. And what a lesson it was! Our constant one of “love.” “He that feareth is not made perfect in love.” We come into trial and it searches us, and we get afraid. And He says, “Fear not, it is I,”—I am but teaching you the lesson of how you may confide in Me. I want you to be perfect in this lesson of love. And to learn it, is the way to be promoted to teach other scholars. And God

"comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in ANY trouble, with the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God." Should it be hard, after He has left His grapes mellowing for a while in the blessed sunshine, that He should press them into His cup, that their wine may cheer God and man? Cheer God? Oh we do not think of what a Father's heart feels when He is able to say of us, "I can do with him anything I will, and He will not murmur." "That the trial of your faith, being *much more precious* than of gold which perisheth though it be tried with fire, may be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

And faith though tried, shall never be ashamed. We can never count on Him and be ashamed; no not for anything. How sure it is. How simple it ought to be.

COMPLETE IN CHRIST.

It is a great consolation, when weighed down beneath a sense of our own ignorance, weakness, sinfulness, and unworthiness, to think of that text, "*Ye are complete in Him.*" (Col. ii. 10.) It is a good text for the poor and the ignorant, the despised and afflicted. You may be in want of everything, but you are COMPLETE IN CHRIST. You may be ignorant of everything that the self-approving world calls knowledge, but, if you love CHRIST, you are *complete in Him*. You may be despised of the world, and your name cast out as evil, but if you are a child of GOD, the despite of the world cannot harm you, you are *complete in Christ*. Your friends may be all taken from you, or may all desert you, but you are not the less perfect for that; you are *complete in Christ*. Your property may be taken from you, and you may have to beg your bread, or to suffer from hunger and nakedness, but still you are *complete in Christ*; in Him you are perfect and entire, wanting nothing. You may lose your health, may suffer with lingering and painful disease, may be helpless and bed-ridden, but still you are *complete in Christ*.

If you be a child of GOD, and stay yourself on CHRIST, nothing can diminish it. Nor can anything add to it. If you had all the wealth of the Indies, it would not make you any more complete in CHRIST. If you possessed all the thrones of Europe, or could sway the sceptres of the world, it would not add to your completeness in CHRIST. If you had all the learning of the wise, it could add nothing to the perfection of

your character as a child of God; it could not make your robe whiter, or your hope brighter—it could not make you more complete in CHRIST. In Him, and not in the world, are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And ye are *complete in Him*.

Let this be the saint's triumph and independence, that he is complete in CHRIST. Let him say within himself, as the gaudy shows of the world pass by him, Well, after all, what matters it though I be so poor and ignorant? in CHRIST I have all riches and knowledge. What matters it who knows me here, or who knows me not? who cares for me here or who despises me? if CHRIST deigns to know me, I am *complete in Christ*, I care not for anything else. I want nothing else, if CHRIST be made unto me of GOD my wisdom, my righteousness, my sanctification, my redemption.

COMPLETE IN CHRIST! O how delightful is the thought! There is nothing in this wide world that we need, but just CHRIST. We are perfectly independent of the world, in CHRIST. Though having nothing, we are as possessing all things, in CHRIST. In him we have riches, food, drink, light, and life. He is our bread, our wealth, our health, our sun, our shield, our rock, our refuge, our exceeding great reward. Let the Christian go about the world singing, *Complete in Christ!* COMPLETE IN CHRIST!

THE SEVENTH OF ROMANS.

THIS chapter gives us the way in which the believer is delivered from the law, and from the state as in the flesh, to which the law applies; together with the experience of a quickened soul learning what the flesh is in its sinfulness and helplessness, before being *delivered* from the law.

It is a *regenerate* person, using the term to express the possession of eternal life, but one in whom as yet the HOLY GHOST does not *dwelt*. The state is the effect of life, divine life, in the soul, but without the power of the HOLY GHOST giving deliverance from the bondage of sin of death, because still under law in the conscience. Two natures are at work, and in conflict one with the other. An unconverted, natural man, has no such conflict, nor can he *delight* in the law of God. Such an one not only is not subject to the law of God, but he hates God Himself. He may put himself under law to satisfy his pride and self-righteousness, whilst hating CHRIST with all his heart, as Saul of Tarsus did up to the

time of his meeting with the LORD on his way to Damascus; but allow that he is "carnal, sold under sin," he never will. On the contrary, the more really under law, apart from grace working in the soul, the more he justifies himself and judges his neighbor. He despises others, and thanks God he is not as other men are.—(Luke viii.) He trusts in *himself* that he is righteous, and *never* allows that he is "sold under sin," and therefore under condemnation.

It is all-important to distinguish between the possession of eternal life, a quickened soul, and the indwelling, in one thus quickened, of the HOLY GHOST. The evidences, with the effects that flow from it, of the one, are quite distinct from those that accompany the other. In the one case there is, because of life, right feeling, but the most entire bondage, because CHRIST and His work are not fully known; the soul under legal workings is occupied with itself and its doings. In the other, because of the SPIRIT Himself personally present in the believer, there is liberty, for "where the SPIRIT of the LORD is, there is liberty."—(II Cor. iii. 17.) The heart and conscience have now CHRIST and His work in view; consequently, self and its doings are lost sight of.

In the chapter we are considering, it is not guilt on the conscience before God, that is troubling the soul. The blood of CHRIST has met this question, and *sins* are forgiven, but it is the *nature* in its sinfulness, and the inability to rise above its power, and follow, what by the renewed mind is known to be good, is the cause of distress. CHRIST dead and risen is known, and more or less apprehended as to the question of sins and sin, but CHRIST dead and risen as *delivering entirely from the law*, is not known. *Walk* is in question, and the *law* is before the soul claiming on God's part righteousness, and judging sin. The more divine life works, and the conscience is alive under the spiritual work of the *law*, the more intolerable is the misery, for the more complete is the captivity to the law of sin and death found to be.

CHRIST dead and risen delivers from this state by *delivering from the law*. The question then is asked, seeing it is a matter of deliverance from the *law* itself, is the law sin? as if the *law* were something bad in itself. Quite the contrary, is the answer. So far from being sin itself, it tells me what sin is. Looking back upon the state after having been delivered from it, and recognizing intelligently what had been going on, the one speaking says, "I had not known lust, except the law had said thou shalt not covet." The lust was there, but unknown,

and the law only brought it to light in the conscience. Sin was there in the nature lying dormant as it were; the law came, and only stirred up its energies. "Sin," says he, "taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without law sin was dead." Thus he learns that law has only the effect of *quicken*ing sin into action. In his heart till the law came he was alive, and sin was quiet. "The commandment came, sin revived and I died," he adds. Thus by the law sin was discovered and stirred into activity, so that in his conscience he died; was made conscious that death, instead of life, was his state before God. Sin had deceived him and slain him by the law itself. The law was holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good. The question now asked is, "Was then that which is good made death to me?" Such a thought could not be entertained for a moment. Why then had the law been sent? Just for this purpose, that sin might appear to be sin, and working death by a good thing; and that sin might be thoroughly brought out; "that sin by the commandment might become *exceeding* sinful."

The law had been given by God to man to reveal his state to his own conscience as *entirely* a sinner under death and judgment, but never to bring him *out* of this state. Never ordained to give life, righteousness, or deliverance, it could only work in the conscience of a truly quickened soul the sense of sin, death, bondage and judgment. "The law entered that the offense might abound." "The *strength* of sin is the law," and "by the law is the knowledge of sin." This is what the soul *under* law, alone can learn, and the conclusion come to is that the law is spiritual, but "I am *carnal, sold under sin*." The discovery is made, that though there is entire hatred of sin, and full desire after good, the practical state is one of utter inability to follow what is good, and complete captivity to what is evil. The mind is renewed; a new nature is there; life and holiness are working fully in the soul, but it is wrapped tightly around by a thick mantle of darkness. A law of sin holds it captive under the power of evil; the misery is complete, and the agonizing cry bursts forth from the lips, "O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death."

The law has blessedly done its work, and the SPIRIT now takes up the question, and gives the divine answer to the agonizing appeal for help, by presenting CHRIST to the soul, in all the efficacy of His work and person, thus sealing it in

peace by His own indwelling presence. The heart is at once set free, joy and peace take the place of the previous misery, and the believer is able to praise God for *deliverance*. "I thank God through CHRIST JESUS our LORD" is now the outflow of the lips. He is no longer occupied with himself, the I's and me's drop out, and CHRIST and the SPIRIT fill the soul. Intelligent now as to the real state of the case as born of God, he recognizes two natures in conflict with one another, and concludes "so then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin." Delivered from the law by fully apprehending CHRIST through the SPIRIT, he not only understands clearly his practical state, but sees that his standing *before God* is *outside* the flesh in CHRIST, where there is NO CONDEMNATION.

A PROTEST AGAINST INDIFFERENCE TO CHRIST, AND LAODICEANISM.

CONFESSION and humiliation suit, and in a peculiar way, become the children of God, in the present day. Neither the glory of God, nor the honour of CHRIST, nor the presence of the HOLY GHOST, has been faithfully cared for by us; and, the church—where is it? and what is its condition upon earth?

But it is not the wide range of Christendom, or the narrower compass of England, to which I look. Is not confession and humiliation called for from many a one in the narrow circle into which these lines may come?

Humiliation and confession for what? Let each think—let each speak—for God and for CHRIST: and truthfully (according to his own best and eternal interests in the Spirit) for himself, too, in giving the answer. I will do so here for myself; let others see how far they are wide of my mark.

CHRIST gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world. The friendship of the world is enmity against God, and the minding of earthly things is enmity to the cross of CHRIST.

Now, speaking for God and for CHRIST, what shall I say as to myself—as to my brethren in this respect? Are we—have we been *practically*, in heart, and thought, and action, that which *we are in Spirit*—"not of this world, even as CHRIST is not of this world"?

I speak not now of *worldliness*, as the men of the world, or even as men (Christian men) upon this earth speak; but I speak of worldliness according to the sanctuary.

Peter's self-complacency and self-confidence, and the mighty energy of personal love to his master, which (working with mixed motives, and from an unhumiliated heart in him,) led him to use the sword and to cut off the ear of the High Priest's servant, was fleshliness and worldliness when weighed in the sanctuary. There has been this, I judge; to be confessed by many of the best in our day—zeal without knowledge; right as to its object; wrong as to many a thing in oneself as a vindicator; and wrong as to many a means and course pursued: and much of this through self-complacency and self-confidence in our own line of things.

My conviction is, that worldliness and earthly-mindedness have blinded the eyes, and hardened the hearts, to an extent very few of us have any idea of; and that, as a consequence, no case touching upon the morality of the church's walk can be fairly judged by the mass of believers. In cases innumerable which have occurred, the affections to Christ Himself have not been lively enough to make persons indignant at open insults put upon Christ, and determined to stand apart from that which, in its association, was minded to sanction dishonour done to him.

God forbid that we should use worldliness and earthly-mindedness, or the pretence of confessing them, as a cloak to cover up indifference of the heart's affections to Christ, or to gloss over want of zeal, to separate from every association with those that avow and act upon a liberty to be indifferent to His honour.

Yet, while I would clear myself of the conduct which looks like indifference to Christ, and from all associations with those who plead and act upon their liberty to think their own thoughts in this respect, the question will arise,—And what is it, after all, that hinders so many dear to you, and dear to Christ, from seeing that His honour has been assailed? The true answer, I fear, is worldliness and earthly-mindedness—the fruit of our own doings. Now I avow this; for I do believe a more Nazarite walk, on my part, and on that of some others, might have given power to act upon consciences; and some how or the other, to get them separate from a course in which I dare not walk—than walk in which I would rather walk alone the rest of my earthly days. Christ's honour has been assailed; the morality of the church has been assailed—directly by some, and indirectly by others, who do not care so much for their Lord and master as to be willing to separate from association with those who have openly blasphemed Him.

I own that the low, earthly-minded, worldly state of saints, which cannot meet this is a consequence of the HOLY SPIRIT having been grieved and quenched.

I desire to go down as low as possible, bearing any and all blame; but, come what may, never to sanction that which corrupts the morality of the church—never to be tolerant to that which insults Christ; and never to be identified by association with that which cares neither for the glory of Christ, nor for the morality of His church, nor for its unity.

Plymouth, January 23rd, 1857.

THE CONFESSION OF A VERY AGED PILGRIM.

“I HAVE been weaker ever since that illness. You remember the long, long deep slumber into which I sank, out of which none could rouse me: out of which none thought I ever should rouse—until you came: that was a wonderful sleep! As I lay there I saw the vast bundle of my sins; too large for me to lay hold of, or to carry. I was troubled and uneasy; but one said to me, ‘Never fear! the scape-goat with his strong, broad back, has carried them *all* away into a land not inhabited?’ This calmed me. The LORD JESUS is the scape-goat, is He not?”

“FRAGMENTS GATHERED UP.”

WHEN JESUS is testified of to the Saints of God, by the HOLY GHOST, he who speaks, loses sight of himself, and his audience; and his audience lose sight of themselves and the speaker; and the vision of each is filled with the glory of CHRIST. “If we seek and receive honour one of another, and not that which cometh from GOD only,” these blessings cannot be realized. “He that speaketh of himself seeketh his own glory: but he that seeketh His glory that sent him, the same is true, and no unrighteousness is in him.”

POPERY attaches CHRIST to unity, and hence may and does legalize with His name every corruption and evil. Christianity attaches unity to CHRIST, and therefore gives it all the character of grace and truth that is in Him—gives it all His excellence.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

"WE are told, 2 Timothy, 22nd verse, 'to follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the LORD out of a pure heart.' What does it mean, by following righteousness, &c. ? Who are they that call on the LORD out of a pure heart, and how are we to know them?"

A. The Apostle, in this passage and its context, is giving the direction for the individual Christian's line of conduct amid the corruptions of Christendom, or the outward Church, which, having left its first state of holiness, he likens to a *great house* where things are in great disorder and dishonour. He is not to decide who is a Christian, as being really a saved person. "The LORD knoweth them that are His," and this is to be left to Him, but what he can recognize, is evil, be it in whom it may; and the path is clear, it is to be departed from by all who name the name of JESUS. Unable to leave the outward profession of Christianity, the Church on earth, he is, nevertheless, to dissociate himself from vessels to dishonour. Unity is not to be maintained at the expense of purity. To bring the name of JESUS into practical association with evil, for the purpose of securing outward unity, would be blasphemy. But it is not only what is outside himself *in others* that is to be separated from as to fellowship, but he is to flee the lusts of his own heart, and to personally follow righteousness, faith, charity, and peace, so that his own character may be above reproach. Let others do what they may, this is to be his individual path. A general low walk around in the Church at large is no ground for laxity, as involving a necessity for a low walk in the individual. Individual faithfulness is always brightest in a time of general declension, as in Daniel's case. Then, as to association in worship, it is to be *only* with those who are walking in this same path, and whom *he knows* to be pure of heart. If it be asked, How are we to know who are of a pure heart? the answer will be, By their ways; for out of the heart are the issues of life. Out, too, "of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh;" hence CHRIST and His truth will be the outflow of the lips as that in which Communion is to be had. The LORD's presence is pure, as the atmosphere in which the soul lives, so that the life *tells* of communion with Him who is "Holy and True."