

THE  
GOLDEN LAMP;

OR,

Truth in Love

FOR

THE CHILDREN OF GOD.

---

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

*John viii. 12.*

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

*Ephesians v. 8.*

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

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VOL. VIII. NEW SERIES.

JAMES E. HAWKINS, 17, PATERNOSTER ROW, E.C.,  
AND 36, BAKER STREET, LONDON, W.

W. B. HORNER & SON, 27, PATERNOSTER SQUARE, E.C.,  
AND TRACT REPOSITORY, 10, D'OLIER STREET, DUBLIN.

1885.



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# THE GOLDEN LAMP.

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## "THIS SAME JESUS."

"This same Jesus . . . shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."—Acts i. 11.

AT the opening of another year we would recall to our readers' attention the scene on the Mount of Olives on the memorable fortieth day after the resurrection of our Lord. With the faithful few of His disciples around Him He stood there as the One greater than Elijah, who was about to ascend to heaven and to leave them, as Elijah did Elisha, with a promise of a double measure of His Spirit, for had He not said, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father?"

While they beheld He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight; and as they continued gazing up into heaven, two white-robed messengers were sent with another gracious promise, to allay the grief of their burdened hearts.

To understand the full force of the angels' message we must seek to enter into the position of the disciples, and as we do so, these precious words will thrill our hearts, even as theirs were thrilled, so that they went back to the city "with great joy," and continued "praising and blessing God." (Luke xxiv. 52, 53.)

The words we refer to are these—"Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? *This same Jesus*, which is taken up from you into heaven, *will so come in like manner* as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

How forlorn for the moment they must have felt as the parting cloud received their Lord! As He receded from their view—the One with whom they had for three years closely companied, on whom they had leaned, and in whose presence they at length learned that they were in the presence of God—as the last strained look told them He was visible no longer, how lonely and sad must they have been! Again and again He had spoken of leaving them for "a little while;" but they evidently realized it not, for their last question was, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

How sweetly, then, must have sounded the message from the throne of God, sent by the lips of the angels, reminding them that they were not left as orphans, bereft and alone! How blessed for them to be assured that while all heaven was triumphant, and "the everlasting doors" were lifting up their heads to welcome the King of glory, *then* His poor followers and friends who were still in this dark world were not forgotten! In the very moment of heaven's highest jubilee *they* were remembered. This is the way of our God, for while worlds on worlds are waiting His command, His bosom of infinite grace finds room for the very weakest of His own, and the cares and burdens of their hearts are never unheeded.

So has it ever been, and so is it now, though often the distrustful heart is ready to say in its sense of loneliness and desolation, "Jehovah hath forsaken me, and my Lord hath forgotten me;" yet this whisper of the Spirit ever comes back to the soul, "Can a woman forget her sucking child? . . . Yea, they may forget, yet will I not

forget thee." So came the angelic vision to the disciples, telling them they were not forgotten, and were not to be forsaken, for their Lord had said, "I go to prepare a place for you; and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also."

In the message of the angels there are two points that we would touch upon. There is, so to speak, a double identity that is of especial interest; first, the identity of the Person, "*This same Jesus*," and then, the identity in the manner of His departure and return—"shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven."

I. *The identity of the Person.*—How much must the expression "This same" have conveyed to those who had been with Him throughout those three years of His earthly ministry! What precious recollections must have gathered round that sacred Person, whose looks, whose words, whose touch they had observed with such awe and wonder, and how fully each one could have borne witness to the grace, the tenderness, the holiness of the heavenly Master who had just been taken away! As each precious memory came back upon the soul, they would repeat the angels' words: "This same Jesus."

Remembering how He turned the water into wine to meet the lack in the joys of the marriage feast at Cana of Galilee, and how He stood and wept at the grave of Lazarus ere He uttered with a loud voice those mighty words, "Lazarus come forth," they would say one to another, "This same Jesus!" Recalling the glories of the transfiguration, and the sorrows of Gethsemane, they would echo the words, "This same Jesus!" He who took Peter's wife's mother by the hand and raised her up, who took the little children in His arms, who said to the widowed mother "Weep not," as He touched the bier and gave her back

her son—He it was of whom the angels spake, “This same Jesus.” Yes, the same Jesus who wore the crown of thorns, and stood unmoved before Caiaphas, Herod, and Pilate, who on the cross comforted the dying thief, and in His own dying agony cried, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

We also can say, “This same Jesus,” the Jesus of the Gospels of Matthew, of Mark, of Luke and of John; the One who has been with all of us all our journey through; the Jesus of each heart, who soothed us in our trouble; and who helped us in every time of need. And it is “this same Jesus” that we are each one looking for, the Friend of our daily life, the Comforter in our sorrows, the Guide of our pilgrimage, who has been with us all the way, whom we ought to know so well, with whose voice we ought to be so familiar. It is He who is coming again. He who has been taken away *from us* (for *we* seem to have lost Him), “which was received up *from you* into heaven,” as the angels say, will come *for us*.

It were well for us who often sing—

“To Calvary, Lord, in spirit now  
Our weary souls repair,”

if we would repair to Olivet, and there contemplate the ascended Lord received into heaven by the cloud of God's glory. Like the Cherubim of glory in Ezekiel xi., which “went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city,” so did our Lord stand upon that same mountain and thence ascend. And as we read later on, “Behold, the glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east,” so will the Lord of glory “descend from heaven.”

But while the Person is the same, how changed will He be when seen again! John saw Him as He went away, and

again in the Isle of Patmos many years afterwards. He was still the "same," and said, "*I was* dead." But when the beloved disciple who had lain on His bosom at supper beheld the countenance of the glorified Son of man as the sun shining in his strength, he fell at His feet as dead; so true is it that flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God, nor gaze on the glory that comes from the throne of God. Hence, for our comfort, we are assured that we shall be changed into His likeness before we behold Him, for not otherwise could we look, with undimmed eye and undaunted heart, on Him as He will then be manifested! Yet, He will Himself be unchanged; His person the same, His heart the same. He who as the Lamb of God came into the world to save, will be the Lamb still, though in the very midst of the throne, and exercising the Almighty power committed into His hands. May this thought of the identity of the Christ of the Gospels with the Christ of the Revelation so link the past and the future in our minds, that in the blessed Person of "this same Jesus" we may day by day find our joy fulfilled and our peace overflowing.

II. *The identity in the manner of the Lord's departure and return.\**—This second point of identity is full of interest. He went not away in the presence of a crowd. The world left Him in the tomb, which was watched by its soldiers, and when the morning sun witnessed to an empty grave, they circulated the report that His body had been stolen away at night. Nor from that day to this have unsaved eyes looked upon the Son of God. Only those who are of faith can say with Paul in the Hebrews, "We see Jesus." During forty days He appeared to His disciples to whom "He showed Himself alive after

\* Some beloved brethren differ in certain respects from the writer in the interpretation of the Scripture under consideration.

His passion, by many infallible proofs, "speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God;" and so by us He is spiritually seen now, and we hold communion with Him.

A few weeks previously He had led His disciples to Gethsemane, and now He leads "them out as far as Bethany." There He lifted up His hands, and blessed them, and in the act of blessing, He was parted from them and carried up to heaven. The scene was one belonging exclusively to His own. They were with Him, and saw Him as He went away, and they only. His departure was sublime in its simplicity. There were no chariots of fire and horses of fire, and no whirlwind, as in the case of Elijah. Something of the visible might add to the glory of the translation of a man to heaven, but nothing was needed to add to the glory of the ascending of the Son of God, whose hands and feet and side had been pierced; and nothing was allowed to interfere with the calm worshipping spirit of the disciples that centered on Himself. It was His person only that occupied their thoughts; and not till He was out of sight did the two angels appear, as two also appeared in the tomb after the Lord had left it.

In speaking to the disciples, the angels emphasize this fact, that the Lord had been taken away *from them*, for their words are, "This same Jesus, which is taken up *from you* into heaven;" and this beautifully accords with our Lord's language in reference to His return, "If I go and prepare a place *for you*, I will come again and receive *you* unto Myself, that where I am there ye may be also." To this point the fourth chapter of Thessalonians exclusively directs our attention. The meeting in the air is only for those who are Christ's; the coming of the Lord "with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with

the trump of God," is for the saints alone. Those who sleep shall hear and shall come forth, and those who may then be living shall with them be "caught up together in clouds to meet the Lord in the air." The judgment seat of Christ, the marriage of the Lamb, and the marshalling of the armies in heaven, with other events, will intervene before He comes with all His saints "in flaming fire taking vengeance." The Lord's departure and His return thus beautifully harmonize in character, fulfilling the words of the angels, "shall so come in like manner." His coming for the Church will be in marked contrast with His subsequent manifestation as King of kings when, as if fresh from the cross on Calvary, He appears with garments dipped in blood to avenge His death on a guilty world. In His coming as the Bridegroom for the bride there is a quiet homeliness of procedure, in marked contrast with the display of kingly majesty, "pomp and circumstance," with which He comes as the King to destroy His enemies and to subdue His rebel kingdom.

May the Lord, then, keep His people waiting and watching till He shall come to receive us unto Himself, that we may be at rest with Him ere He comes in flaming fire with His mighty angels, to take vengeance on them that have rejected Him, and to be admired in those who believe. Then shall the world know indeed that the Father sent the Son, and that He loves His redeemed ones, even as He loves the Son. The petition, "Thy kingdom come" will then be fulfilled, and the prayer of John xvii. will have its perfect answer. Till then, let our cry be, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

H. G.

---

CONFESSION.—Our confessions do not end aright if they end not in praise. We must not allow our failings to dim our eyes to God's grace.

## THE MIRACLES AT THE CROSS.

MATT. xxvii. 45—54.

THE theme that occupies the souls of millions of saved sinners is expressed in the familiar words,

“ When I *survey* the wondrous cross  
On which the King of glory died.”

And millions more will yet behold that Holy Sufferer with adoring wonder. But others have looked upon Him, and more will yet look, with very different eyes. “ And sitting down they *watched* Him there,” is what is said of the throng of the crucifiers on the hill of Calvary. Yes, they “ watched Him;” but it was with the idle malicious eyes of lovers of sin and haters of God. And what millions, before whom He has been “ lifted up,” have since looked on Him with similar eyes! By means of the doctrine of Christ, professors of His name have in all ages given passing glances at the cross and at Him hanging on it, but alas! neither to trust Him nor to love Him. The cross of Christ has been used simply as a subject for the painted canvas, or as a theme for the mere sounds of music; or, worse still, as a pathetic part of the so-called “ Christian religion,” by which to dominate over the feelings and conscience of listeners, and by which to enhance priestly power and priestly wealth. But let us dwell on what is happier.

It is not so much to our Lord *Himself* upon the cross, or to the *moral* miracles of righteousness, mercy and love, which faith sees in Him in His dying hour that we would now turn, but rather to those external miracles which accompanied His wondrous death. These seem to be given us, as *fingers* from God, pointing all beholders to the infinite value of that holy Offering which caused the rending



asunder of the Son of God Himself—soul from body—when He died for sin.

Crucifixion was fearfully common in Palestine under Roman rule, and the outward and visible part of the dying of our Lord was simply the yielding up His breath, as any other dying one does. The expression in Matt. xxvii. 50, “yielded up the ghost,” is only old English for “gave up His spirit,” and does not in the least imply any hastening of His own death by an act of His divine power. As His blessed head was bowed at that moment, any one of the idle beholders might have said to another, “Ah, the Nazarene is dead,” just as the soldier also saw He was dead before he pierced His side.

But though in appearance like any other dying, how infinitely different was it in its nature and character and value! Hence the need of testimony to its deep and hidden worth. And surely one part of God’s outward testimony to the unparalleled preciousness of the death of His Son is to be found in the recorded *miracles* that accompanied His dying hour.

The signs and wonders in Egypt compelled even the magicians to say, “This is the finger of God;” and well might the signs and wonders at Calvary extort from all who know of them the centurion’s cry, “Truly this was the Son of God!” But, alas, they do not!

In Matthew’s gospel the miracles recorded are three in number.

1st. The three hours’ darkness.

2nd. The rending of the vail of the temple.

3rd. The earthquake by which the graves of sleeping “saints” were opened.

All these could be the finger of God only. They were no part of our Lord’s *living* obedience, as were the miracles of feeding the multitudes or the raising of Lazarus from

the dead; nor were they any part of His dying obedience, for He had already breathed His last. They therefore contribute nothing to that glorious robe of righteousness which Jesus now is before God for the sinner. Had neither of the three miracles taken place, Christ's perfection for us before God would have been the same. Nor is either of them predicted in Scripture, as were even minute details of the cross, such as the piercing of His blessed side.

What, then, was the object of these miracles? Were they not amongst the outward and visible *tokens* of the unspeakable value of Christ's most precious death? They do not constitute its preciousness, but they direct our attention to what that preciousness really was. They are helps to the sinner's faith in Him. They are solemn waymarks, pointing to the sin-bearing Lamb, of God's providing.

Thus considered, they strengthen our faith while they also condemn all unbelief. In this the three are alike, but in character of testimony to Christ's death they differ, and also in sphere of application.

(1) The three hours' darkness was for the *whole land*; (2) the rent vail would be for the *priests* in their deeper sinfulness and malice; for only priests, it may be presumed, witnessed its rending; and (3) the opened graves (for three days) of "saints" would be for the "*little flock*" who had continued with the Lord in His temptations.

But the lessons taught by these three miracles also differ, and on this we may a little enlarge.

(1) The three hours darkness may serve to remind us of that passing "from darkness to light" which is God's *first* mercy to the sinner by the cross, and the saved sinner's first joy.

(2) The rending of the vail tells us of that unhindered and near "access" to God to which believers are called since Christ's death, and which none ever had before.

(3) The opened graves do surely point to that first resurrection of "saints" *only*, at Christ's coming, which is the blessed hope of all who are Christ's. This also was not revealed till the great Head of the Church had died.

The lessons taught by these miracles, it may be observed, embrace the whole earthly course of the believer. (1) Through Christ's death he passed in one brief moment from darkness into God's marvellous light (see 1 Pet. ii. 9); (2) thenceforth during *all* his happy days on earth he is a worshipper, drawing near to God without a veil between; and (3) his link with earth *ends* at the moment of "the first resurrection," when he rises in fellowship with Christ's resurrection. How brief the first and last of these trophies of Christ's precious death; how life-long and precious is that which we are taught by the "rent veil!"

But these events at the "wondrous cross" will reward a closer scrutiny; for they were stupendous miracles indeed.

"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land to the ninth hour." Three hours of darkness from noon to three p.m.; the brightest part of the day, and under the blaze of an eastern sun! What hand but God's could give it? The same Hand that ages before had brought a three-day darkness on less guilty Egypt now brings a similarly awful darkness on far guiltier Palestine; for Abraham's nation was worse than Gentile Pilate or his soldiers. Surely in both instances it was a God-given warning of the doom and the darkness of an eternal hell; and it was thus an arresting mercy from God, to fright them from it. It was as a writing on "the plaister of the wall" in the midst of their godless merry-making over their Victim's death!

Israel's sins are spoken of as a "*cloud*" and their transgressions as a "*thick cloud*;" and truly thick and dark must have been the cloud that covered Palestine for those three hours, summoned there by Him whom darkness

obeys as also does the light. Alas, it was a too correct emblem of the nation's iniquities ! But all was in vain. Israel no more repented at this awful miracle than Egypt or its monarch had done ages before, for

Legal terrors only harden  
All the while they work alone.

But we are told of the *end* of this darkness as well as its coming on. It ceased outwardly at the very hour when Christ's awful cry told that all the doom and darkness due to sinners had filled His mighty, suffering soul, and had come between Him and God. "About the *ninth hour* Jesus cried, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?*" When the three hours' outward emblem of the sinner's dark doom ceased, the awful and infinite *reality* of *God's wrath* was felt in Jesus' own soul. The darkness which externally ceased gathered itself up within the Sufferer's soul. "When Thou shalt make His SOUL an offering for sin." (Isa. liii. 10.) "Thou hast laid Me in the lowest pit, in DARKNESS, in the depths." (Psalm lxxxviii. 8.) Yet neither the darkness, while it lasted, nor its sudden ceasing seems to have wrought any softening in the bystanders; their last act was to mock Him with "vinegar" to drink. But to us who do at all

"Survey that wondrous cross,"

how blessed it is to know that Jesus our Lord Himself passed from His soul's deep darkness to God's own "marvellous light;" and we also have in HIM. In resurrection God's smile and the light of His countenance ended for ever to Jesus that awful darkness; and now He is to us "the *Light of Life*."

But the second miracle of the cross, the rending of the vail of the temple, has its precious teaching also. The temple being at the south-east extremity of Jerusalem was far distant from the hill of Calvary on the west of the city,

but no sooner did death rend the Lamb of God than God rent the ancient vail from top to bottom, spite of its enclosure within thick temple walls, and its top being out of man's reach (some thirty feet high), and its being woven of the strongest materials. This took place also at the ninth hour of the day, which seems to have been a very public hour at the temple (Acts iii. 1), and many priests would be there. All this was surely God's testimony to *them*; but their subsequent lies at the tomb of Jesus too plainly shew how they slighted this marvellous event: and painfully suggest how boldly they would dare to sew up the vail again!

But to us the vail is now *for ever rent*, and we who were born into light out of darkness by a "look at the Crucified One," are now worshippers in the light of the unveiled presence of God and the Lamb. No 'rood-screen' now intervenes; *all believers* are equally saints and priests, and equally brought within the vail by Jesus' death.

These are the New Testament gifts of God to us, and we should sin against God if we denied them; nor should we ignore them by sanctioning with our presence a worship that sets them aside. The moment we do so we begin to bring a *vail over our spirits*, and put ourselves back, more or less, into the place of Old Testament worshippers. But it was to deliver His saints from all 'veiled' and distant worship that Jesus died.

The third miracle recorded in Matthew is that of an earthquake which occurred at the same mighty moment, an earthquake so violent that by it "the rocks rent" (Palestine being a most rocky soil), and yet so God-guided was it that it simply opened the graves of sleeping saints, leaving others' graves untouched. After three days the sleepers awoke when Christ arose, and they entered the "holy city and appeared to many." In previous pages (vol. vii. page 149)

it has been shown how *this* "finger of God" pointed on to the coming *first* resurrection, and the details need not be again dwelt on.

To faith the graves of sleeping saints now lie open, so to speak, and the brief "three days" interval will soon pass, so near is the coming of our Lord, and then, while the rest of the dead continue in their graves, these sleepers will awake, and will enter the "holy city," the "holy Jerusalem" of Rev. xxi. 10, and appear (shine forth) to many; for "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Col. iii. 4.)

H. D.

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### LUKE AND DEMAS.

THREE times are Luke and Demas named in the Epistles of Paul, and each time together. Twice their names are joined in a salutation, first to the saints at Colosse and then to Philemon. The third time they are not joined, but are named in striking contrast: "Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world . . . . only Luke is with me." (2 Tim. iv. 10, 11.) The one name furnishes us with a bright example of faithfulness to Christ and His Gospel; the other serves as a beacon, warning against any departure of heart from Him "who loved us and gave Himself for us." Let us seek to dwell briefly on the little we are told of each.

That the Book called the *Acts of the Apostles* was written by Luke, is universally acknowledged;\* and though his

\* From the similarity of certain expressions found in the Epistles of Paul and also in the Acts of the Apostles and Luke's Gospel, a recent writer, we have just learned, seeks to prove that both of the latter were written by Paul. The way in which the personal pronouns are used in the history in Acts seems clearly to disprove this theory.

name does not occur once in that book, yet he is often before us as we read it. The use of the pronoun in the first person of course intimates that the writer formed one of the company of which he writes. The first intimation we have of his being with Paul is in Acts xvi. 10-17. He seems to have joined him at Troas and to have accompanied him on his journey into Macedonia as far as Philippi. When the apostle went forward to Thessalonica and Berea, Luke was evidently not with him, but he joined him again some years afterwards on his last journey to Jerusalem, to which city he went with him. (Acts xx. 5, 6-xxi. 18.)

This however does not prove that they did not meet in the interim, and there is a passage which implies that they did. In 2 Cor. viii. 18, 19, Paul speaks of sending with Titus "the brother whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches" to receive the contributions for the poor saints at Jerusalem. The supposition that it is Luke who is mentioned in this honourable way is confirmed by the fact, already stated, that he rejoined Paul in that journey which was taken expressly for the purpose of carrying alms to his nation. (Acts xxiv. 17.) He was with Paul at Jerusalem, and, if he did not accompany him to Cæsarea, he followed him, and was doubtless one of those friends who ministered unto him. (Acts xxiv. 23.) In the apostle's perilous journey to Rome as a prisoner, Luke was with him, and was also his companion in his imprisonment there. (Ch. xxvii. 1-xxviii. 16.) It was during this captivity that Paul wrote those letters in which Luke sends salutations, being named once as "the beloved physician," and once as a "fellow-labourer." Whether Paul was set free as he hoped he should be (Phil. i. 24-26), and then imprisoned again, is not positively stated in Scripture, though probably it was so; but it is very certain that some time later he wrote as a prisoner who was ready to be offered, knowing that

the time of his departure was at hand. Here also Luke was with him. One had "forsaken" him and others had gone to various spheres of service, but here is the faithful companion still by the side of the suffering apostle, with whom doubtless he remained to the end.

What a beautiful portrait is this! Instead of following what at that time was a very lucrative profession, Luke evidently gave himself to the service of the Gospel and became the devoted friend of the great apostle of the Gentiles. In this unwearied and loving service his praise was in all the churches, and he was used of God to give us that precious record of the birth and ministry and death and resurrection of Christ that bears his name, and that other record of the mighty works of the Risen One wrought by means of His servants.

That Luke is unnamed in these narratives, that he never speaks of himself, that he says nothing of his movements or service during the periods of his absence from Paul, and that when he has to include himself in the history he is always hidden under the little words "we" and "us," are evidences of a deep and genuine humility which could only be learnt in the school of God, and manifest the true greatness spoken of in words which he records from the lips of the Lord, "he that is least among you all, the same shall be great." (Luke xiv. 48.) He chose the path of lowly service here, and great, we are sure, will be his reward in the day of Christ.

But when we turn to the brief statement with regard to Demas, what a solemn contrast we find! When Paul wrote his letters to the Colossians and Philemon, Demas, as well as Luke, was by his side, apparently not ashamed to identify himself with one who was a prisoner for the Gospel's sake. He also is spoken of as a "fellow labourer," and his name is linked with other companions of Paul. We pass over



a brief space of time and then come to the sad record, "Demas forsook me, having loved this present world [or age], and went to Thessalonica." (2 Tim. iv. 10, R.V.) This does not of necessity mean that Demas renounced Christ, or became an apostate, but rather that he ceased to walk with Paul in his course of single-hearted devotedness to the Lord. Through the subtlety of Satan, it may be, the eye of Demas was drawn from heavenly things to earthly ; and whereas the heart of Paul glowed with love to the Lord, and he held life itself of no account so that he might finish his course, the heart of Demas became absorbed with present things, and Christ ceased to have the place in his affections which He had once occupied. The pathway of the beloved apostle grew steeper and narrower as he neared the end, and it would seem that at some testing point Demas, who had found such companionship irksome, suddenly broke it, and, leaving Paul, took his own course.

There were many, doubtless, who never attempted to walk with Paul ; but how sad is the picture of one so walking for a time, learning something of the blessedness of such a life, and then turning from it to pursue other things ! But if his forsaking of Paul was sudden, we may be sure that the love of the world which led to it was a thing of growth. The word for *world* here signifies *age*, and refers to the moral state of things in the world. Demas had so learnt the truth that Christ "gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this present evil age," as to become fellow-labourer of him who preached it. The cross was planted, so to speak, between him and the age from which it rescued him, and had that cross been kept before the eye "the present age" could never have charmed him. Thus it was with Paul and with Luke ; the consciousness of deliverance from the present world had strengthened them to live *for* the future and *to* the Deliverer. But in the case of

Demas the present re-asserted itself, his affections gradually became alienated from Christ, he could no longer "endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ," but turned aside to the ease and comforts of this age, and possibly to the gain to be found in the great mercantile city of Thessalonica.

This brief description of Demas furnishes a solemn warning that is by no means uncalled for now. It is a sad fact that in by far the greater part of the preaching of the day no mention is made of deliverance from "the present age," and even among those who look to Christ for salvation few indeed profess to know anything of such deliverance. The hope of heaven in the future, as the fruit of Christ's death in the past, is considered by many to be a very good attainment, while a *present* salvation from this "*evil age*" is all but ignored. Sad indeed is this, but it is sadder still to see love of this present world creeping in where once there was the profession of being crucified to it by the cross of the Lord Jesus. It is not now fear of persecution that turns aside, but the attractions of things around engage the heart and lead us to live for the *present* rather than the *future*. The secret of any such yieldingness on our part is our feeble apprehension of Christ and His wondrous work. We enter but little into the reality of His cross in the past, His priestly ministry for us now, the glory and joy of His second coming, and the account to be given at His judgment seat. Then Luke and Demas, and such as have followed in the steps of either, though partakers of the same salvation as the fruit of the atoning death of Christ, will wondrously differ as to the reward that each will receive.

Let us not overlook the force of the word "*present*." This age is emphatically a *present* thing; all connected with it—its joys, its glories, its ease, its luxuries, its gains,

all are present, but not abiding, "for the fashion of this world passeth away." (1 Cor. vii. 31.) We are sent into the world that we may live in it as those who are not of it, that we may glorify Christ, and lay up that which shall abide and be found to our praise in the day of Christ; and His grace is sufficient to enable us to do this.

We have reached the time of year when it is customary with most to think particularly of both the past and the future; and as we review the past many of us must feel that we have been influenced more by the things of "this present evil age," and less by the things which are unseen and eternal, than we could wish. It is a great consolation that God in His wondrous way of grace makes full provision both for recovery and progress. If we are conscious of having lost ground, let us not be content to go back any longer; and if through God's mighty keeping we have not to make such a confession, we shall certainly feel that we have not done all that we might have done, and we may well stir our souls to press onward in the way of the Lord.

The passing from one year into another is a special opportunity given us from God, and is calculated to stimulate us by reminding us how swiftly our brief day of service below is passing. Let us all then seek to yield ourselves afresh to our God, and brace ourselves for obedience and conflict. Let us beware of the alluring influence of the age, let us be on our guard against conformity to it, let us remember that "the kingdom of God is not in *word* but in *power*" (1 Cor iv. 20), and that according to our present sowing will be our eternal harvest.

W. H. B.

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EXTRACT.—No days are lost days in His sight who measures our life by love and not by "labours oft." Bodily affliction is good manure for the soil of love, causing the beautiful plants of patience and long-suffering to bud and blossom. In Grace's prison, the Beloved is our gaoler; He binds us with His golden fetters, and gives us good food.

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

## XIX.

*To a young man desiring to be a missionary.*

“It is my desire in any way I can to be used of the Lord in helping those who are His ; and I now address myself in reply to your note. Are you not impatient of the steady application which is needed for a lawful and honourable business, and therefore think you could find relief by going as a missionary or by travelling ? I am aware that there may be a great deal of excitement in the ministry of the Gospel, but I am sure that it does not arise from a healthy state of soul. If an honest secular calling cannot be well fulfilled without a measure of drudgery, the ministry of the Gospel certainly cannot ; it is aptly compared to the patient labour of the ox, not to the swift running of the race-horse. ‘I therefore *endure* all things for the elect’s sake,’ said one who knew the ministry as a solemn trust, and who yet had his heart in it. One sign of an Apostle was ‘all *patience*,’ and the exhortation to all Christians is, ‘Let us run *with patience* the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus.’ Many a young man leaves a lawful calling, in order, as he believes, to give himself to the ministry of the Word, and afterwards regrets it, and finds it has been to the damage and discomfort of his own soul. Such a one does not count the cost, and when his first energy subsides he becomes dispirited. He finds he is not regarded as he reckoned he should be ; he may have to contend with poverty and difficulties ; he murmurs against others, and frets in his own spirit. The highest of all ministers of Christ worked with his own hands, and lost instead of gaining exaltation among men.

“It is one of the most sorrowful features of the ministry in our days that it is regarded as a *profession*, and a profession which is esteemed incompatible with an honest worldly calling.

The ministry is accredited as an office; but where is the demonstration and power of the Spirit? I am solemnly convinced that the ministry of the Gospel, if it be really of the Spirit, will never lead to exaltation or ease in the world. It will bring a man *down*; so that for real ministry the most solemn conviction is needed in the soul, that it is of the Lord. So far as I can counsel you, I would say, By all means persevere in your present calling. Even to a slave the apostle could say, 'Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide *with God*.'

"I believe you are occupied in an honest calling, and can abide in it with God. You are yet very young in years, and need stability, and whilst your present tendency to restlessness may be partly owing to natural constitution, I have no doubt of Satan's using it as a temptation; and the word is, 'Resist the devil and he will flee from you.' He would divert your soul from Christ, by kindling in you a desire for change of scene, but 'there is no new thing under the sun;' that which is really new is to be found in Christ. 'If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; *behold, all things are become new*.' This is what you need, looking to Christ, living on Christ; and not occupation *with yourself* and your own feelings; and I am confident that until you are delivered from self by being occupied with Christ, you will be in a restless state of soul. The Holy Ghost glorifies Christ, so that he that is born of God sees a new object—even Christ as the salvation of God.

"There is one other point of most serious importance, I mean the *call* to the ministry. I utterly repudiate the validity of human ordination of any kind, neither is it in 'the will of man.' Christ is the direct source of ministry, and the Holy Ghost the only power for ministry; and the only way in which I can recognize ministry is when it is owned and blessed of God. If one goes forth as a missionary, *i.e.*, as *one sent*, he ought to go forth with the solemn conviction that he is sent *of God*, although he may well seek the fellowship and sympathy of other Christians. Have you this conviction? There is,

however, *divine* ordination. 'All things are of God, who hath reconciled us to Himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.' If I say to others, 'Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good'—it must be because I have myself tasted that the Lord is good. The ministry of the Gospel is 'the ministry of reconciliation;' its great subject is God in Christ, and that God hath made Christ to be sin for us. It is telling what God hath wrought. Compared with the ministry of the law, its transcendent glory is, that it is the ministry of the Spirit and of righteousness, whereas that of the law was unto death and condemnation.

"Before I received your note I had seen your father on business, and talked with him about you. I mention this, because you say you are afraid to inform your friends of the real state of your feelings. I think you would find relief by freely communicating with your parents. It is God's order to honour them; although if Christ puts in His claim, father and mother are to be left; but then it must be *very clear* that it is Christ's will, and not our own which we are following.

"*Plymstock, January 22, 1850.*"

J. L. HARRIS."

### COURAGE.

Without are fightings, within are fears,  
But above the battle, and under the tears,  
The smiling heavens, the calm of years

Presage the victory.

Be brave, for thou dost not fight alone,  
For when did the Lord forsake His own?  
Now floats the assurance from the Throne,

"Sure is the victory."

For the truth of God shall win, shall win;  
Prophetic songs even now begin  
To triumph over the weary din,

The songs of victory.

Fight then in confident faith and love,  
The guerdon of valour is stored above,  
Win it, and lay at the feet of Love

Thy crown of victory.

E. S. W.

## THE BELOVED PERSIS.

"The beloved Persis, who laboured much in the Lord."—Rom. xvi. 12.

SUCH is the precious record of a long-departed Christian sister, and we know nothing more ; but heaven's chronicle will tell us much about her. This passage was brought to remembrance by the account received of a young believer who recently fell asleep at the age of twenty-three, leaving a sweet savour of Christ behind her. There are many young Christians beloved in the family circle as was this one, but their influence does not extend beyond it, and we would seek to stir up such to follow in the steps of this young sister, whose memory is fragrant with the interest and sympathies she manifested in the *assembly* with which she was connected.

Not only has she left a void in the happy little family circle, but in our church circle her valuable help in visiting, and in gospel and Sunday school work, will be greatly missed. A brightly burning, steady, shining light has been removed ; and alas ! there are few such left. It was her highest joy to lead souls to Christ, and her deep desire for this was not only shown in her own earnest efforts, but she was ever encouraging others in the work of the Lord ; indeed she has often cheered us when we have been cast down because of hindrances to the Lord's work. Her joyful confidence in God, which never seemed to waver, was not only her own strength, but it strengthened others also.

Her patience and kindly consideration of others was especially seen during her twenty weeks' confinement to her bed. She never once complained of her sufferings, and when brethren who had become cold-hearted visited her, and had their sympathy drawn out and their souls restored, she would say, "I would gladly suffer more if I could be the means of blessing to others."

She much enjoyed the thought of Col. i. 24, sharing the "afflictions of Christ for His body's sake, which is the Church." Gifts of fruit and flowers, which were sent to her in profusion, she regarded as the Lord's goodness in affording her opportunities of ministering to others

and one of her last requests on the day of her departure was that some grapes which had been received that morning should be sent to some sick and dying ones whom she named.

The last few days her enfeebled mind could not bear much truth, and she said, "I am just *resting* on Himself; it's all *faith*, believing, not seeing." But the Spirit fixed the words of 1 John i. 7, and Deut. xxxiii. 27 on her heart. She often quoted them, and said they were all she could remember. The "blood" was her password, and the "eternal God" her refuge and comfort. She mentioned the former word shortly before she departed; then putting her hand on her breast she whispered, "Put off Lord;" then slowly but emphatically she uttered the sweetest name on mortal tongue—"Jesus." This was her last word, and she gently fell asleep without even a sigh, in "perfect peace." The funeral was attended by fully four hundred people, and the Lord gave us a solemn and very blessed season, and we committed her precious earthly tabernacle into the keeping of Him who has the "keys of death." The sky was perfectly cloudless, reminding us of the time when we shall meet again in the "morning without clouds."

In the bosom of the Eternal,  
Taking refuge in her God;  
Folded in the arms of Jesus,  
Cleansed and sheltered by His blood:  
Thus, in perfect peace, she bade us  
All "adieu" till He shall come;  
Then in glory, all together,  
With the Lord we'll meet at home.

H. G.

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"THE LORD HATH NEED."

*Luke xix. 31.*

Thy Lord hath need? Oh! sleeping soul awake,  
Rise up, and hasten to the Master's feet,  
And tell Him thou couldst nothing find so sweet  
As some slight deed to do for His dear sake.  
Where is thine alabaster box to break  
As perfume for His head? Thy gift to greet  
His coming with? Thine eager haste to meet  
His steps along the weary path they take?  
"The Lord hath need." My soul, miss not the grace  
His loving hand has portioned out for thee:  
Go, seek the poor, the sad, the lost, the base,  
And minister to them. So shall it be  
Thy bright reward, when thou shalt see His face,  
To hear Him say—"Ye did it unto Me."

A. L. B.



## THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

THE grand fact of the absolute sovereignty of the eternal God is no mere theory to be reasoned about, but a blessed truth to be bowed to and rested upon. It is a truth that always provokes the rebellious will of fallen man, while it is the stay and unfailing support of those who are taught of God. In like manner it must be the terror of fallen angels, while those countless multitudes of holy angels who delight to do the will of God rejoice in the fact that His will is supreme. He Himself hath declared, "My counsel shall stand, and I will do all My pleasure" (Isa. xlv. 10), and the answer of the believer to every taunt of the infidel is, or should be, "Our God is in the heavens: He hath done whatsoever He hath pleased." (Psalm cxv. 3.)

The great monarch of the Gentile world, to whom God gave the kingdom which Israel had forfeited, was taught by severe discipline what all creatures must learn sooner or later, even that God "doeth according to His will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay His hand or say unto Him, What doest Thou?" (Dan. iv. 35.)

The first expression of God's sovereignty in His dealings with man in grace, was given in that solemn moment when man, having by disobedience forfeited the measure of sovereignty which God had committed to him, stood in the presence of his Maker as a sinner under just sentence of death. What could man do in that terrible moment? What could God Himself have done for man had He not been most absolute in His sovereignty? There was no provision in creation for man as a sinner; and there seemed

no prospect save for the solemn sentence to take its course without remedy. What could the creature—the mightiest, wisest creature—have proposed or looked for in that hour? What but the immediate execution of the dread sentence—judgment without mercy? But GOD was there, *God*, who had reserves in Himself that no creature could have dreamt of, and who had fully provided for what He had perfectly foreseen. His first utterance therefore in man's altered circumstances was an intimation of what He would bring to pass, the bestowal of unspeakable blessedness to man through the eternal victory which the Seed of the woman should, through suffering, gain over the serpent. He gives expression to the deep purpose of his heart, a purpose that was *before* creation and *above* creation, and yet needed creation as the platform on which alone it could be carried out; and the very fall of man only led to its accomplishment. Not that God brought about the fall of man, for the author of sin He never can be; but it is His prerogative to leave the creature to pursue his course, and yet make all that course subservient to the fulfilment of His own high purposes.

As the first word of grace spoken in the hearing of the guilty pair displays the actings of one who can be limited by nothing but His own perfections, so in the carrying out of the threat to the serpent, that the Seed of the woman should bruise his head, we see the working of the same mighty hand. Christ the Son of God was taken, and by wicked hands was crucified and slain. Under no constraint but that of their own natural enmity, and the guidance of Satan, whose willing slaves they became, Jews delivered up and Gentiles crucified the Lord of Glory; yet did He die by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, and upon that wondrous death the fulfilment of all God's purposes depended, and His glory in the new creation

hung. It was thus that the gracious design of God was carried out, "that as sin reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. v. 21.) This is indeed sovereign grace—grace triumphing over every obstacle, breaking down every barrier, to reach in the way of righteousness those upon whom God had set His love. But grace could not have reigned had it not been the grace of Him who ever reigns, and whose will in the highest sense can never be crossed by creature or by circumstances; as Job said, "I know that Thou canst do everything, and that no thought of Thine can be hindered." (Job xlii. 2, marg.)

And it is good for us to remember that what was displayed on the grandest scale at Calvary is ever true. God can leave rebellious creatures to do their will and yet accomplish His own. Take an illustration from the history of Joseph as stated in Psalm cv. 17, "He sent a man before them: Joseph was sold for a servant." One clause states the act of God in foresight and mercy; the other, the act of Joseph's brethren in their wickedness. They sold him with the avowed object of making void his dreams, and yet, as Joseph himself put it, "It was not you that sent me hither, but God;" and again, "Ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good." (Gen. xlv. 8; l. 20.)

It is the grand truth of the sovereignty of God that above all things men are arraying themselves against, and Christians are ignoring. But if we are to maintain our ground against the evil tide of these days it must have a more prominent place in our thoughts. The greater the opposition to God and His truth, the more need is there for the heart of the believer to be stayed upon Himself in all His majesty and grace. How beautifully is this set forth in Psalm xciii., which begins with the blessed statement, "Jehovah reigneth," and then declares His majesty and

the stability of His throne. If He is "clothed with strength," He owes not that strength to another, for "He hath girded Himself" with it. The Psalmist sets us the example of looking to heaven before he looks to earth: "Thy throne is established of old: Thou art from everlasting." Then he can look to earth without fear or dismay; he can behold the surging mass of those who rise in opposition to God—the floods lifting up their voice and their waves, and he takes refuge in the truth, "Jehovah on high is mightier than the noise of many waters, yea, than the mighty [*or* breaking] waves of the sea." "The calming of the storm on the lake of Galilee," it has been truly said, "was not only a parabolic representation of the history of the kingdom of God, but also typical of the final consummation of all things: a summary of the past, a prophecy of the future, a type of the end. And what applies to the Church as a whole, holds equally true of individual believers. Our greatest dangers are only breaking waves; waves which break at His feet."

"He sitteth o'er the waterfloods,  
And He is strong to save;  
He sitteth o'er the waterfloods,  
And guides each drifting wave.  
Though loud around the vessel's prow  
The waves may toss and break;  
Yet at His word they sink to rest,  
As on a tranquil lake."

The tendency of the present day is to subject everything to the reason of fallen man, as though man, with his "understanding darkened" (Eph. iv. 18), was capable of comprehending the ways and works of God; and it is to be feared that much of what is called Christian teaching is a mere pandering to human reason. "Canst thou by searching find out God?" No. But if "thou incline thine ear

unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding ; yea, if thou criest after knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for understanding ; if thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures ; *then* shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God ; for the Lord giveth wisdom : out of His mouth cometh knowledge and understanding." (Prov. ii. 2-6.)

To man, the needy sinner, God reveals Himself as the God of salvation, and he who submits himself to God, and obeys the call to be reconciled to Him, will indeed discover depths of wisdom and heights of glory that human reason never thought of, and will see in ages to come, what already by faith we know, that God's ways are all worthy of Himself, and that the eternal happiness of both unfallen and redeemed creatures is secured by the unconditioned sovereignty of the glorious Creator, of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things : to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

W. H. B.

## THE GIRDLE.

THIS word frequently occurs in Scripture, and conveys instruction that is much needed in these days. Although oftener found in the Old Testament, it is also frequently referred to in the New.

In eastern countries, where loose, flowing robes are worn, the girdle forms a necessary accompaniment. The Jews wore two, an inner and an outer girdle ; the latter made of leather, or more frequently of curiously-wrought worsted, and one end served as a purse. (Mat. x. 9.) Turkish secretaries are said to carry their ink-horn suspended to their girdles, a custom that is alluded to in Ezek. ix. 2.

To bind the girdle was a needful preparation for service, for journeying, for warfare, wrestling, or racing. After David had slain Goliath, Jonathan's soul was knit to his, and he gave him his girdle as a token of affection and honour.

It is also interesting to notice that the Holy Ghost has used the girdle as a figure. "Gird up thy loins like a man . . . and answer me," was God's challenge to Job; and Peter's exhortation to the disciples was, "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end." These are but two instances of this figurative language, but the diligent reader will find many others.

In the book of Exodus the children of Israel were instructed to eat the passover with their "loins girded" (chap. xii.); and the "girdle" is also spoken of in connection with priesthood (chap. xxviii.), as forming a very important part of Aaron's priestly garments. The order in which these passages occur is interesting and edifying.

#### THE PILGRIM'S GIRDLE.

Under the shelter of the sprinkled blood, in obedience to Jehovah's word, the children of Israel *stood* and partook of the roast lamb on the night of the passover, and their attitude and attire was that of strangers in Egypt and pilgrims towards Canaan. Their girded loins, the sandals on their feet, and their staff in hand proclaimed their character, and they ate in haste.

By the rich and sovereign grace of God, the answer to this is daily being produced by the Spirit of God in the hearts of sinners. Hearing, and believing the gospel, they shelter under the blood of the slain Lamb of God, and by faith feed on Him whose flesh is meat indeed, and His blood drink indeed; and from the moment they are born from above, born of God, they are strangers on earth and pilgrims to glory, girded with the truth of God.

## THE PRIESTLY GIRDLE.

In due time Jehovah brought His people out of Egypt unto Himself, and the second reference in Exodus to the girdle is connected with the fulfilment of the word, "Let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them." Yet the holy *place* would not avail without a *priest*, and God not only chose Aaron, but minutely described the garments in which he was to appear before Him. One part of the garments of beauty and glory in which Aaron was to be arrayed was the girdle, "the curious girdle of the ephod." By means of it he bound to his person the ephod, from which the breastplate and shoulder-pieces, containing the names of the twelve tribes, were never to be loosed.

In all this the anointed eye sees and the circumcised ear hears much of Christ, who is the substance of this shadow, the antitype of the type. As the true priest after the order of Melchizedek, He binds for ever unto Himself in righteousness and faithfulness, as with a girdle, the objects of His tender, changeless love; and His patience and His power are untiringly exercised towards all who trust in Him, even to the weakest.

And He calls for a response to this from those who know and value His service of love to them. It should be our joy to embrace in our affections all the objects of His love, and to serve them in patient grace, seeking to strengthen them in the Lord and to cherish in them purity of heart and reins, trueness of motive and action.

## THE SERVANT'S GIRDLE.

The chosen and separated man, sheltered under the blood, and a stranger and a pilgrim in the world, should evermore be the priestly worshipper and the faithful servant, girding himself to serve with diligence and ease.

When Gehazi was sent by his master, Elisha, to lay his staff on the dead son of the Shunammite, he was told to gird up his loins and hasten on his way. So also when Jeremiah was sent on the service of testimony to his people, he was commanded to put a girdle upon his loins. (Jer. xiii. 1.) Above all, when the Son of God, made flesh, performed His lowly service of love to His disciples, He girded Himself with a towel, stooped, washed their feet, and wiped them.

In doing this He looked for a response from His disciples, and looks also for one from us, setting Himself before us as a perfect pattern. "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." He expects that we should wash one another's feet, and opportunities for such service present themselves daily, if we have eyes to see and the loving, lowly mind and heart to avail ourselves of them.

The Master has stamped such service with dignity by performing it Himself; its reward in the present is rich, and in the future it will be full and eternal. He seeks this service from *every* saint, and it is our privilege as well as our responsibility to fulfil it. Although some have more heart for it than others, each saint *has* heart for it. Let us, then, beloved, gird up the loins of our mind, and address ourselves to this with fresh vigour and holy determination.

The true business of our life is to serve the Lord Christ, but to this unselfish, lowly service nature is ever opposed. It seeks its own and not another's good, and Satan is ever on the watch to strengthen nature's opposition, so that every servant knows that conflict is connected with service, and in proportion to the faithfulness of the service will be the sharpness of the conflict. The servant therefore must likewise be a soldier, and be well girded.



## THE SOLDIER'S GIRDLE.

In this connection also the Scriptures help us by furnishing examples. In Deut. i. 41, we find Moses reminding the people of their wilfulness on the occasion of the return and report of the twelve spies. "And when ye had girded on every man his sword ye were ready to go up." Young David, too, when vexed and chafed by Nabal's churlish conduct, and intent upon avenging himself, said to his young men, "Gird ye on every man his sword, and they girded . . . and David also girded on his sword." Once more, in that song of loves (Psalm xlv.), which will have its answer at the introduction and establishment of the Messianic rule in millennial days, and in which the personal glories of the King and the beauty of the bride are described, the word to the King is, "Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O most mighty, in Thy glory and Thy majesty;" and in Isa. xi. 5, this girdle is described: "*Righteousness* shall be the girdle of His loins, and *faithfulness* the girdle of His reins."

Beloved fellow-believers, we, too, are soldiers, and have armour provided for us, and each day brings occasion, yea, necessity, for its use. Albeit the principal part of our armour is defensive, there is one *offensive* weapon—"the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;" and wherewithal shall we bind this sword to us but with the girdle of righteousness and faithfulness? Let us then gird it closer to our souls than ever, using it only in a righteous cause, in fidelity to God and to His Son. Let us stand, withstand, and having done all, still stand, strong in the might of the Lord and clad in the armour of God, fighting with *conquered* foes under the ever-victorious Captain of our salvation. Let us take courage and play the valiant soldier for Christ, assured of the crown at His hands at His appearing.

## THE RUNNER'S GIRDLE.

We have not only a warfare to wage, but a race to run, and for this the loins of the inner man must be girded ; thought, desire, and hope must be *fixed* on the goal and the prize. Girt with his leathern girdle, Elijah was able to run to Jezreel before Ahab's chariot, but he failed to keep the loins of his mind girded. In Hebrews xii., where we are all exhorted to run with patience the race set before us, our eye is directed to Him who in this character also is the perfect pattern, who ran His course with unswerving steadfastness, allowing no obstacle to hinder, " who, for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Our eye must be fixed on Him, and our mind strengthened with the hope of resurrection and glory at His return. And let us not forget the dangers attending this race. We may be tempted to unwatchfulness, discouragement, impatience, and Satan will hang his weights on our girdle, and burden us with unbelief. But let us bear in mind the diversity of character, position, service, and circumstances, and yet the unity of faith of the worthies mentioned in Heb. xi., and whatever be our case, let us press on "toward the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

## THE TEACHING OF OUR LORD AND HIS APOSTLES.

We have thus been reminded of various characters in which Christ is to be manifested by us, and in each one the girdle is indispensable, and never more so than in this day when the temptations to distraction and wandering of mind are legion. To this use of the girdle we are called by the Master, and also by His apostles, whose words are ever applicable to us by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, who is also our power for obedience.

When the Lord Jesus was asked to obtain the division of an inheritance between two brothers, He first answered the petitioner, and then took occasion to instruct and exhort His disciples: "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning, and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their Lord." Our treasure being in heaven, our heart is to be there, our mind is to be set on things above, and while waiting for the Bridegroom, our light is to shine down upon the world, above which we are raised, as we hold forth the word of life.

In writing to the Ephesians as his fellow-soldiers, the apostle Paul, well aware of the terrible conflict to be waged with the powers of darkness, and of the need of the whole armour of God, first says, "having your loins girt about with truth." With trueness of spirit we have to discern, receive, hold fast, and contend for the truth, "the faith once delivered to the saints," which is being assailed on all sides.

Similar to this is Peter's exhortation to the scattered ones. As strangers and pilgrims he says to them, "Gird up the loins of your mind," and he points onward to the grace that is to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ, for which they are stedfastly to hope, rejoicing with joy unspeakable and full of glory. His second epistle warns us of the false teachings and corruptions with which *we* are surrounded, and the more, therefore, do we now need to be thoroughly girded in mind.

Finally, let us rejoice in knowing that He who walks among the candlesticks, and knows the exact condition of all the churches and of each of those who compose them, still wears His golden girdle, and is ever ready to serve us, to counsel, to rebuke if need be, to help, and to deliver.

H. H.

## THE AUTHORITY AND POWER OF SATAN.

### REMARKS MADE AT A BIBLE-READING.

In the midst of the deceptions with which we are surrounded, it is well to know what Scripture says about our great adversary. Satan is spoken of by our Lord as "the prince of this world" (John xii. 31., xiv. 30); he is also called "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. ii. 2), "the God of this age" (2 Cor. iv. 4), and "the accuser of our brethren" (Rev. xii. 9-10); and in Rev. xx. he is given four names, "dragon," "old serpent," "devil," and "Satan."

It is very important for us to see the relation in which Satan stands to our Lord Jesus Christ, and the force of that word, "Now is the prince of this world *cast out*." In Heb. ii. 14 we read that in order to deliver us Christ took part of flesh and blood, "that through death He might destroy him that had the *power* of death, that is the devil." In Col. i. 12-13 this power is regarded as an *authority*: "Who delivered us from the authority of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love." While God is the only source of authority, outside Christ the tempter has the authority of a gaoler. As one with Christ we stand in the same relation to Satan in point of law and justice as that in which Christ stands.

In Rev. i. 17-18, it is Christ who has the keys of death and hades in His hand; Satan's authority is not over us but over the world of which he is the prince. Christ has authority over us, not only by the Father's gift and the possession of the Spirit, but as having redeemed us who were by nature sons and daughters of Adam. We are

delivered from the bondage of the fear of death, and now "all things are ours," *death* as well as life. (1 Cor. iii. 21-23.)

We need to see what Satan *is* and what Satan is *not*. He may still obtain power over us through his subtlety; and he may be used of God for our trial of faith, as in Peter's case, or for our correction and instruction, as when Satan's messenger kept Paul from being puffed up.

Christ's death was an act of God's justice and power, moved by His love; an act of Satan upon Christ as the sin-bearer, in bruising His heel; an act of man as having crucified and slain the Lord of glory; and an act of Christ's submission, in bowing to all that God allowed to come upon Him. Sin was *on* but not *in* Christ, even as He said, "The prince of this world cometh and hath nothing in Me."

Through the woman the tempter drove the first man into rebellion, but he found in Christ, the last Adam, no corruption, no sinfulness, no perverseness of soul. The first man had a creature's mutability, and yielded to temptation; but though in the wilderness the tempter found the Lord capable of suffering and temptation through taking flesh and blood, he found Him incapable of sinning—"yet without sin."

Satan has power to tempt, but not to defile us without our consent. God uses him to test us, but if we are walking worthily He enables us to withstand. The things pleasing to the flesh are more dangerous than the hard things. Satan is God's sieve, and as such is continually used to sift out the chaff that is in us.

The book of Job is very instructive on this point. The Lord said of Job, "There is none like him in the earth, a perfect and an upright man, one that feareth God and escheweth evil;" and Satan was unable to point out any-

thing to the contrary. But God saw chaff, of which neither Job nor Satan was aware, and Satan was made the means of sifting it out. But the limiting of Satan's authority is clearly seen.

Job's knowledge of God far exceeded that of his three friends, and when Elihu says, "God is greater than man," Job bows, and allows that God has a right to do as He wills. The sifting of Job was to show how much wheat there was in him, and God was honoured thereby. It was no triumph of Satan, for at the end Job stood far higher than at the beginning. In chap. xlii. he is four times honoured with the title of "servant of Jehovah," and in the first two chapters only twice. This was the *best* of the double portion that he had after his trial.

We must expect that God will deal with us in Christ in the way of death, burial, and resurrection, and we must not count it a strange thing if we are sifted and buffeted in many ways.

The sifting of Peter was to show, not how much wheat but how much chaff there was in him. Satan discerned the state of the apostles, and "requested" that he might sift them all (see the word "*you*" in Luke xxii. 31-32). But Peter was in especial danger and the Lord prayed for him, not that he might escape the sifting, but that his faith might not fail. Peter had previously been warned of Satan's power, in Matt. xvi. 23, but failed to heed the Lord's rebuke.

Satan has a particular commission in the case of each servant of Christ, but he can only do the will of God.

The tempter was present at the Lord's supper (Luke xxii.), and at the very time when the Lord Jesus was giving the deepest unfolding of His love, he was not only taking possession of Judas, but was setting the disciples to strive among themselves for greatness.

In the case of Paul we see Satan, who is essentially the proud one, actually used to make the humble one still more humble, the "thorn in the flesh," implanted by Satan, being meekly and even gladly yielded to by the great apostle.

It is very solemn to see that once glorious but now fallen creature, become so blind as to offer our Lord the kingdoms of this world, which were but as a dunghill to Him.

We can only understand the reality of our deliverance from the authority and power of Satan, when we are brought into the liberty of the sons of God. In John viii. 28-44 we see man's foolish boast of liberty, while he is yet the very bondsman of Satan.

By nature all are "children of wrath," but the expression "children of the devil" should only be applied to those who are manifestly so by their works. It was to the Pharisees who sought to take His life that our Lord said, "Ye are of your father the devil;" he was a "murderer from the beginning," and there was no disguising their parentage. The apostle Paul uses similar language respecting Elymas, the sorcerer. It is with reference to *works* that the apostle John writes, "In this the children of God are *manifest*, and the children of the devil."

In 1 Cor. v. the apostle speaks of delivering one to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, and evidently he had become like the horse and the mule of Ps. xxxii.; he had so yielded to uncleanness and perverted his liberty in Christ, that, as a last resource, he was placed again in the sphere of Satan's power.

All suffering in the flesh is not the result of being placed under the power of the devil. The world is not yet redeemed, and until the time of the redemption of the body, for which we wait, we remain liable to suffer

disease, sickness and death. All is, so to speak, under the purchase of the cross, but awaiting the time of deliverance.

Eph. ii. shows how fully the outside world is under the authority of Satan, while in Eph. vi. we get his subtle and silent working amongst the saints.

When Israel was in Egypt, God acknowledged through Moses the authority of Pharaoh, and sent the message, "Let my people go." This corresponds with Eph. ii. But when Israel was over the Red Sea and in the wilderness, Pharaoh's authority was gone, and they were under God's authority alone. Yet in the wilderness every man did that which was right in his own eyes. This is the condition of too many Christians in this day; they remain in the wilderness, and never get into the land. God might tolerate Israel's ways in the wilderness, but when they got into the land implicit obedience was enjoined (see Deut. xi.).

It is in the land that conflict chiefly takes place. The children of Israel were fighting for full possession, and though they never failed in great battles, they too often failed in smaller ones. So is it with ourselves.

Our conflict is first inwards, then in that sphere which bears the name of Christ, and lastly in the outside world. Many Christians do not understand the second conflict; they do not use the word of God as the only standard, but fall in with everything that has a fair appearance, and then find that all goes wrong after a while.

We do not escape the world's pollution, save as we are living above it, and the adversary may use certain *pleasant* things as his "fiery darts."

Immediately after the transfiguration on the top of the Mount, Satan put forth his power at the foot. After Peter was given a special revelation that Jesus was the



Christ, the Son of the living God, he at once yielded to Satan's whispers through want of watchfulness.

Similarly Satan thought to lift up Paul by means of the revelations that were given to him (for nothing requires so much humbleness of mind as the grace of God), but by his acceptance of the thorn in the flesh, Paul's humility shone out the brighter.

A godly old German woman who was struck with a whip for attending a prayer-meeting, aware of her soul's danger, hobbled across the road, and falling upon her knees prayed God to keep her from pride, because He had counted her worthy to suffer for His name's sake.

In whatever measure the Christian walks in the flesh he is under the power of Satan. If we walk in darkness we place ourselves again under the power of the prince of darkness.

Satan is the ruler of the darkness of this world, and his effort is by all means to put out every light that shines for God. But it is our joy to know that "all power" in heaven and on earth belongs to Christ.

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## THE MIGHTY POWER OF GOD.

### NOTES OF ADDRESSES.

The *condition* of power is this—a thorough consciousness of our own weakness and of our dependence on God. It was so with Christ. He was the vessel of God's mighty power. Anointed with the Holy Ghost, He emptied Himself; He did nothing of Himself; He received His words from the Father, and of His works He says, "The Father that dwelleth in me He doeth the works;" and of His doctrine, "My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me." He took the place of dependence. The Holy Ghost would lead us in the same path, for He takes the place of

dependence also, "Whatsoever He shall hear, that shall He speak." He speaks not from Himself, as the source, but is first a listener, and then a speaker. May we better learn to take the blessed place of dependence.

As the Lord's servant, Paul was with the Corinthians in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. What a contrast to the teachers in whom the Corinthians were glorying! He was afraid lest he might think a thought of himself, or speak his own words. He spoke in words that the Holy Ghost taught, and left it to the Holy Ghost to demonstrate the truths he preached. Christ crucified is the power of God, and in order to know His power we must be identified with Him as the crucified One. Paul was kept constantly weak, and derived his power from the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. He knew that he had the same flesh as when in his energy and zeal he persecuted the church of God; he knew that the same self-righteous spirit was in him, and only the power of God, through the Holy Ghost resting upon him, kept it down and therefore with fear and trembling Paul spoke the word of God, lest he should rest upon his eloquence. So did he get his words from the Lord that he could say, "Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you-ward is not weak, but is mighty in you." It was Christ that lived in him, spoke in him, and wrought through him. In order that he might be an instrument that God could use, he was kept in constant dependence: "for we which live are alway delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be manifested in our mortal flesh." It is by being associated with Christ in His weakness, in His absolute trust in God, in His obedience to the Father's will, and thus only, that the power of God can rest upon us. (J. S.)

We read of the wonderful works of Christ, and as we

contemplate His mighty acts we say, "He was the Son of the Father, He was God and yet perfect, sinless man; but how is it possible that I, a poor worm of the dust, and without strength, could ever speak, act, or endure as He did?" But is there no example of the all-sustaining, the all-conquering power of God in one like myself? Yes, the apostle Paul was one; and his words are "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." If he could say that, it never behoves any Christian to say, "I cannot."

Would we think of limiting the power of God upon His throne? There is no failure of power in the Father, in the exalted Son of God, or in the indwelling Spirit of God. There is no height we cannot reach; there is no suffering we cannot endure; there is no act of obedience which by the Holy Ghost we cannot perform. But we shall not realize this divine power unless we are walking in fellowship with God. God has His own path, and out of that path He will never step to afford His children fellowship; but if we forsake that path He will correct, will discipline, and will bring us back to it.

The reason we are not wiser and stronger is, that we have not followed the path in which we would have had God's presence always with us. In one sense, blessed be God, we never can get away from His presence, for He never leaves, never forsakes us; but in another sense we do; that is, we lose the consciousness of His presence and the manifestation of His power. Let us remember the possibilities of faith as exemplified in Paul, and let us seek to say with him, "I can do all things;" I can be full without being puffed up; I can be emptied without murmuring.

The presence of God is *power*. When God gave His presence to His ransomed people in the cloud and pillar of

fire, He pledged to them His guidance all through the trackless wilderness. Was it not fulfilled? He said to Moses when the time came, "I will be with thee." But Moses was forty years too soon in his attempt to deliver Israel. The flesh is always out of time and out of place—too fast or too slow. "They that are in the flesh cannot please God." The flesh is never right. When Moses in his backwardness said, "But who am I?" God said, "I will be with thee." That is enough; let us be content to be nobody.

From experience we know that God's presence is *everything* to our souls. When we are enjoying His presence, resting in the full and unfailing springs of delight which are in Himself, then are we strong. Jesus found it so; and He has said, "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me." This was His source of power and wisdom. The steps of the Son of God from the bosom of the Father were down, down, down, into the place of dependence, weakness and death. The course of the natural man is ever up, up, up—that is, in his own estimation.

Christ never entered any path where He did not enjoy the Father's presence. He could say, "I do always the things that please Him." That is the way to secure the presence of God—to do His will, and walk in His truth. If any one asks, "How shall I know what pleases the Father?" the answer is, "The Spirit searcheth . . . the deep things of God . . . we have received . . . the Spirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." Through the Scriptures He can make us of quick scent in the fear of the Lord, to discern between good and evil, truth and error. The Father grant us subjection to His Spirit that we may walk

in the path of obedience, and draw every moment out of His fulness.

Jesus said, "He hath not left Me alone." Because I am His Son? No. Because I made the world? No. Because I can raise the dead? No; but because "I do always the things that please Him." We too ought to please God, to enjoy rest of soul and peace of mind like Christ. In any associations we make, in any companionships we form, we ought never to rest unless we have the Spirit witnessing with our spirits that we are, in so doing, pleasing the Father.

The 16th chapter of Judges shows how we may lose the power that we have had. Samson had power. By the Spirit of the Lord he rent the lion as he would have rent a kid. He carried away the gates of Gaza, bar and all. He snapped the strong cords that bound him, like a thread. No one could touch him until he placed himself in Delilah's lap and told her all his heart. What does Delilah represent? The world, whose prince is the devil, and who sets his baits most skilfully to attract and beguile the church of God. *Beware of Delilah's lap.* The young believer is in danger, but the oldest believer is in no less danger. Samson played with her, and then told her all his heart. She began to afflict him. How? She did not pierce his heart, she did not put out his eyes. No; she sent him to sleep, and shaved off the seven locks of his separation. So long as he retained them he was invincible. As soon as they were cut off, he was weak as any other man. The secret of his power was given up to Delilah, through her wiles.

God cannot give His fellowship to the world. If we in our spirit, in our ways, in our thoughts and speech are conformed to the world, we must lose the joy and blessedness of fellowship with God, and with that our power.

The Lord had departed from Samson. Does this mean that He had given him up? Oh, no. Samson's name comes where Lot's does not, in the record of God's faithful servants given in Heb. xi.

The Philistines put out Samson's eyes, and he became their sport. What an awful thing it is when a Christian becomes the world's sport! How solemn to hear the world speak of a Christian as the men of Sodom spoke of Lot, "This fellow!" But before Abraham, the man who retained his Nazarite heart, the men of the place rose up and said, "Thou art a mighty prince among us;" for he was separate from Sodom and dwelt on the hill with God. Let us remember that there is power, unlimited power with God; and let us not forget the way in which that power is to be experienced, even by obedience; nor forget the way in which that power may be lost—by sleeping on the world's lap. (H. H.)

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

### XX.

#### *Second letter to a young man.*

"I feel very thankful that your desire for going abroad has been overruled for the present. It requires some little experience to judge between the hasty zeal of nature and the leading of the Spirit. Power to wait on the Lord is perhaps rarely acquired till we have had a fall or two from our over-great hastiness.

"The life communicated from the risen and ascended Jesus recognizes that the law is 'holy, and just, and good,' and owns its spirituality and extent; but Jesus Himself, and not the law, is the rule of life. 'Learn of *Me*,' says He, 'for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.' Jesus is the great teacher as well as the great doctrine of God. He is our example and our guide, and our never-failing fulness of all grace. He is our study now, and will be throughout

eternity. And never will there be deeper subjects than His own glorious Person, finished work, and perfect righteousness. True, we are learning this now, though slow of heart and dull of understanding, but when heart and understanding shall in glory be occupied without imperfection, it will still be to *know* and delight in Him.

“You have unconsciously run into the mistake of young converts, to make the mode and measure of God’s dealing with your own soul the only way of His dealing with any soul. It is only another form of self. You can see the odiousness of self-righteousness in another, but you do not perceive that in your writing, A—— B—— is quite as prominent as Jesus Christ. If you tell me what great things God has done for your soul, I do and can rejoice with you, but the experience of your self-condemning conscience is not *Christ*. God is sovereign. The Holy Ghost, who is God, acts according to His own will and pleasure. He gently opens the heart of a Lydia to attend to the things spoken by Paul; she believes, and is baptized, and receives Paul and his companions into her house. An earthquake alarms the conscience of the jailor; he hears the word too, believes and is baptized, and shows kindness to his prisoners.

“Be assured it is a far happier way, as it is certainly the humbler, to speak *for Christ* than against evil, whether it be in men or in systems. Severity in judging others is marked by the apostle in Rom. xiv. 1-3, as a mark of weakness in the faith, and in Gal. v. 26, as a mark of a legal tendency. When we are well exercised in judging ourselves, we shall have little heart to judge others. It is before God that we learn truthfully to say, ‘Sinners, of whom the chief I am.’ Will you accept a little tract of mine, which I now send, with the words of the apostle in 1 John ii. 20, 21, 27?

“*Plymstock, April 9, 1850.*

J. L. HARRIS.”

- (1) *Was the truth of the "one body" revealed to Paul only? and*  
 (2) *Should Christians assemble only on that ground?*

(1) **THOUGH** the truth that the Church is the body of Christ was made known to the apostle Paul by revelation, it does not follow that others did now know it. In 1 Cor. xi. the apostle tells of having received from the Lord the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, but it was previously known to others. The gospel was similarly revealed to him (Gal. i.), but it had for some time been preached by the other apostles. That Jew and Gentile were to form the Church was revealed to Peter; and Paul says in Eph. iii. 5, 6, "as it is now revealed to His holy apostles and prophets *by the Spirit*." (2) If it be said that the truth of the one body as revealed to Paul, is the only true ground for assembling, and that the Lord cannot manifest Himself to those who do not meet on that ground, we ask, On what ground were Christians assembled before the revelation given to Paul, and did the Lord reveal Himself to them? The "truth of the one body" was never given as a ground of meeting, nor was it taught as such until recently. It is a novelty and contrary to Scripture. Believers should gather together in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matt. xviii. 20; 1 Cor. v. 4), and the only title mentioned in Scripture, for assembling with them, is the belief of the gospel. When the truth is really understood and believed (Matt. xiii.), Christ is received, and the person believing is washed from his sins. Manifested evil in a professor would show, as in the case of Simon Magus (Acts viii.), that the person was not fit to be received. Paul says in 1 Cor. ii. that when he first came to Corinth he preached Christ crucified, and in chapter iii., that he laid the foundation. That was God's foundation. (See Gal. i. 8, 9.) Whoever is resting on that foundation, and is evidencing his faith by a consistent life, is entitled to fellowship with Christians. (Of course in primitive times they baptized all believers.) Further, a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ is meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, being complete in Christ and perfected for ever. His standing before God for acceptance is that he is "in Christ;" it matters not how ignorant he may be of all additional truth, and the church is the place for him to learn that. If any one lays down any superstructure truth as a ground for fellowship, he is plainly setting up a sect, and under the idea of union, it may be, he is rending the one body of Christ by refusing to receive those whom God has received. The Lord has said, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in *man*." "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord." Man's words are heard, man's writings eagerly perused, and often implicitly received. The Bereans were commended by God for *testing* by the Scriptures what they heard.



## ON BREAKING BREAD.

FOR true participation in the Lord's supper a heavenly conscience is deeply needed,\* or else the scriptural frequency with which we partake of it, viz., each first day of the week, will degenerate into a *habit*. It will then simply be a weekly custom, flattering the observers of it with a subtle and hardening sense of self-approval, rather than the holy, happy, yet self-abasing feast that it was meant to be, and which it always is to humble souls.

Observe, first—It is a “SUPPER,” and a supper means a substantial and satisfying meal. The very Greek word used in the New Testament is derived from one that has reference to the huntsman's hearty meal, which after toil and fasting he so relishes. Such should be the Lord's Supper to us spiritually. It should be to our souls a full and satisfying meal, abundant in quantity, and also exactly suited to our taste; as *abundant* as were the seven loaves to the five thousand, which left seven large baskets over; and the food supplied so *appreciated* that the hungry multitude crossed the sea for more of it. Oh, for a similar hunger and like esteem for the diet of redeeming love set forth in the Lord's Supper! Indeed, one may say, God never provides either *small* suppers or *unsuited* ones, whether it be the supper for unsaved sinners in the gospel, or His supper for His saints (see Luke xiv. 16, and Rev. iii. 18-20), for He always expects hungry guests, and He fills them “with good things.”

\*On the value of a heavenly conscience (1) towards God; (2) towards fellow-saints; (3) towards weak saints, see Papers in volume of *Golden Lamp* for last year, pages 172, 274.

It was at the institution of this Supper that our Lord asked for a "guest-chamber," and it is as His *guests* He regards us when we are seated at it. We all know the interest we feel in our guests. At an ordinary human supper how concerned a kind host is that his guests should sup well, having provided the best his house affords; and he is grieved if he sees that it is slighted, or not relished. How much more does Jesus, our Lord, observe whether our appetite for His supper is good and keen! And how grieved must He be when His guests are either absent from it altogether, or make use of the heavenly provision in a listless and formal way!

True, it is only ordinary, every-day bread that He puts on the table, and simple ordinary wine. But in HIS eyes who provides it, how costly and full of meaning is that bread, and how precious the wine! And verily they should be a rich feast also to our souls. To the believing, hungry soul they will be so; but to those who are Laodicea-like, "rich and increased with goods," that is, earthly things, or any form of *self*, what a merely outward act will be the "breaking of bread," and what a shell without its true and blessed kernel will be the entire Supper!

The partaking of the Lord's Supper is so simple, and occupies so little time, that only true preparation of heart and previous meditation can give divine and proper weight and fulness to so brief an act.

The attitude in which we partake of it is also significant. Our Lord took the Passover reclining on a couch, and followed it with the breaking of bread and the cup, and in that same reclining attitude the disciples received it, and obeyed His word, "Drink ye all of it." But they knew the murderous character of Jerusalem, and their Master's warning that His death was at hand helped to give emphasis to His word, "Do this in remembrance of Me."

Now, week by week, we sit at the Lord's table in comparatively smooth surroundings, and the holy feast is soon over. Oh, then, how much the more do we need a Lord's-day morning to prepare ourselves for it beforehand, and also to watch against wandering thoughts when the hour for partaking comes! Prayer, reading, and meditation on Christ's "wondrous cross," and on God's love to us in giving Him, are surely the chief means of obtaining a heavenly appetite for the Lord's supper. But how can the idle saint, who perhaps has left his bed later of a Lord's-day morning than other mornings of the week, or the worldly-minded, and sin-excusing saint, who has not judged himself for careless walk and lightsome talk during the week—how can such expect to find in the morsel of bread and the sip of wine which the Lord's table provides, any real *supper* at all? No; God gives His spiritual bread only to the hungry, and of His costly wine of redeeming love He is equally careful. (See Prov. xxxi. 4-7.)

One word more. This God-given appetite of which we speak, is in two forms. There is first the appetite of *conscience*, and then that of *affection*.

As saints who frequent the Lord's Table, we need to have a conscience about all sins and wanderings of which God's good Spirit has made us aware, since the previous occasion we sat as partakers. For how can we learn to live godly in Christ Jesus except we have and also cultivate a tender conscience? As we look back on the days and hours of the past week, and are reminded of failure and shortcoming, which we have had to confess to our Father and God, how *sweet* and *rich* becomes that broken loaf to us at the Lord's Supper! Every crumb of it reminds us that Jesus was bruised on the tree for our sins; yes, for ALL of them; for HE died for every sin of our believing days as well as for those of our unregeneracy.

“ His precious blood was shed,  
 His body bruised for SIN ;  
 REMEMBERING THIS we break the bread  
 And joyful drink the wine.”

Or again we sing—

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

And as the hunger of conscience is satisfied and ends, the sweet and happy hungering and thirsting of *love* only grows within us. We inwardly long after Him who has so truly lifted off us “ sin’s accursed load.”

“ Here we forget our griefs and pains ;  
 We drink, but still our thirst remains :  
 Only the Fountain-head above  
 Can satisfy the thirst of love.”

This is a blessed hunger and a precious thirst, and it shall one day be satisfied. (See Matt. v. 6.) Hence it is that hungering and thirsting saints would fain prolong the Lord’s Supper, instead of stinting either its frequency or its length, did other service to Christ but allow of it. Hence, too, the precious frequency with which the Pentecost saints kept it (see Acts ii. 46), *daily* finding in it some fresh supply for their conscience and some new joy to their hearts. Hence, lastly, the joy it would be to really spiritually-minded partakers of the Lord’s Supper if, ere they left the meeting and the table, the moment had come for the Lord’s descending into the air, and shouting us to meet Him at the everlasting and forever relished marriage supper of the Lamb ! Thus linked together are the feast below and the feast above, as were the foot and the top of Jacob’s ladder of old. As Paul says, when writing against all shallowness, all levity, and all self-pleasing of saints at the Lord’s Supper, “ For *as often* as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death *till He come.*”

Blessed be God for the many assemblies of His children that in our time do each week celebrate redeeming love at the Lord's Supper. May HE give all of us grace that it may always be to our souls a "supper" indeed, and a feast of fat things !

H. D.

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## MEATS CLEAN AND UNCLEAN.

THIS subject is one well worthy of careful study, first, because it opens up to our view one of the great sources of trouble in the early church, and enables us to understand the immense difficulties in the way of breaking down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile, and of gathering them around one table, there to commemorate the dying love of the Lord ; secondly, because the principles which guided the early Christians in their perplexities on this point are applicable in many matters which now perplex us.

The difference between clean and unclean animals was known and evidently acted upon in Noah's days (see Gen. vii. 2) ; but not until the time of Moses (see Lev. xi.) were full and particular instructions given on this subject.

A Jew, strictly trained to observe the law, would look with absolute horror upon those who ate "unclean" meat, such as we are accustomed to see upon our tables. So much was this the case that he would not even enter the house of a Gentile (John iv. 9 ; Acts x. 28) ; and the strength of this conviction may be gathered from the fact that even a revelation from heaven scarcely convinced the apostle Peter that by the death and resurrection of Christ he was freed from this ordinance. The vision required to be repeated three times in order to accomplish this, though about eight years had elapsed since the Lord's ascension.

So close a watch was kept against any association with

Gentiles that when Peter came to Jerusalem, where the other apostles were, he was called to account for eating with Gentiles in the house of Cornelius. But on his relating the vision and attendant circumstances the objectors were satisfied, and only then did the apostles themselves appear to apprehend the Lord's plain command, that the gospel was to be preached to "*every* creature," and not merely to Jews and proselytes, as they had thought.

No doubt the news of Peter's vision would spread far and wide, and he would himself inculcate its teaching wherever he went; yet in Acts xv., twelve years later, we are told that certain men came down to Antioch from Judæa, and troubled the disciples by telling them they could not be saved unless they were circumcised and kept the law of Moses, observing, of course, among other things the distinction between meats clean and unclean.

It was probably on this occasion that Peter, notwithstanding his thrice-repeated vision, dissembled, as recorded in Gal. ii. He had held fellowship and broken bread with the church at Antioch, in which were both Jews and Gentiles; but when certain of the Pharisees who believed came from Jerusalem, fear again overcame him, and he withdrew and separated himself from the Gentiles. The spirit which these Judaizers manifested may be inferred (Gal. ii. 4), and it is no wonder that dissension and disputation took the place of godly edifying. They evidently denounced, as an unholy act, the bringing of the uncircumcised into the church, and doubtless pleaded that they alone were carrying out the word of God. If they had been told that the Gentiles had been visibly baptized with the Holy Ghost they would, perhaps, have pointed to Leviticus xi., and refused to move therefrom. To these Judaizers Peter yielded, and then Barnabas, Paul's own fellow-labourer, was carried away with their dissimulation. They may have

argued that it was well to give way to these men who came from Jerusalem, where the apostles were; but they were not walking uprightly, and were giving up a vital principle, which would result in rending the church of God in twain and in nullifying the gospel. We cannot but admire the boldness and wisdom of Paul in withstanding and rebuking Peter to the face before them all. It was no time for vacillation, and Paul's firmness saved the church from well-nigh shipwreck. But if we admire Paul's courage we cannot withhold our admiration from Peter, who, though he was the elder, received the rebuke, and bore no grudge in after days to him who administered it. (2 Pet. iii. 15.) Would that we all had more of this spirit!

The result of this contention at Antioch was the sending of Paul, Barnabas, and other brethren to Jerusalem, to have the question authoritatively decided by the apostles and elders. (Acts xv. 2.) Is there not here an example for us? Instead of contending for our varied opinions when a matter of difference arises, likely to cause strife and confusion, would it not be better that those who are elders should come together to seek the mind of the Lord by prayer and searching of the Word?

After careful enquiry and consideration, the apostles and elders, inspired by the Holy Ghost, write an epistle to the Gentile believers, telling them that those who had gone from Jerusalem and troubled them on the subject of circumcision and the law, had no authority from them, and they enjoined upon them to abstain from meats offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, &c.; but nothing was said as to abstaining from unclean meats.

Surely now, we would say, this can no longer be a point of contention or dispute; Peter's vision twelve years previously, and now the apostolic letter, would place the matter beyond question. But alas! our prejudices are often

proof against even the clearest word of the Lord. Seven years later (accepting the dates given in the margin of our Bibles) we find that the apostle Paul had to write on this subject to the saints at Rome, evidently to meet fresh difficulties on the question. (See Rom. xiv.) Some would eat certain meats, and others would not eat; one judged his brother, and his brother despised him; and this, of course, would lead to a breach of fellowship. In these circumstances what does the Spirit of God enjoin? Does the apostle say, Refuse fellowship to those who will not eat for they are disobedient to God's word, and make the gospel of Christ of no effect? No; it is evident that the Lord makes allowance for the strength of prejudices imbibed from early childhood. Prejudice, some may say, ought not for a moment to be allowed to stand in the way when we have a "Thus saith the Lord." True, but the Lord, who knows us altogether, in matchless grace causes Paul to write thus, "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations." And again, knowing well how much patience would be required, the apostle adds, "Now the God of patience . . . grant you to be like-minded one toward another after the example of Christ Jesus [*margin*] . . . wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us"—that is, in all our ignorance and with all our prejudices—"to the glory of God." (Rom. xv. 5, 7.) This teaching is the more striking when we remember the immense importance of the real subject of difference, viz., circumcision.

In the first epistle to the Corinthians, written about eight years after the decision of the Holy Ghost by the apostles as to the abstaining from things offered to idols, we find Paul dealing with this question at some length in chapter viii. So common was the sale of meat offered to idols, that to avoid partaking of it, and so disobeying the



command of the Lord, it would appear that some believers would not eat meat. Does the Spirit of God insist upon the fact that the mind of the Lord had been made known (Acts x.), and that no forbearance is to be shown to those who are not clear upon the point? On the contrary, the apostle enlarges upon the subject, and shows their liberty in the matter, but yet inculcates forbearance one with another.

Has not the Lord in much grace caused these subjects of contention and division in the early church to be recorded for our instruction? His desire surely is, that we may gather from the Scriptures which refer to them, rules and principles for our guidance amidst the difficulties and perplexities of the present day. He would teach us that although truth on certain points may be quite clear to us, we must not insist on others seeing *at once* exactly as we do.

While we bear with children of God who from early training, &c., fail to apprehend certain truths fully, we are not by any means thereby condoning their ignorance or failure, but are acting as our Lord Himself acted, when He taught His disciples as they were able to bear it. (Mark iv. 33.) While taking every opportunity of teaching the truth to those less instructed than ourselves, we need to use much patience lest we hinder their growth by exciting opposition and causing contention. (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.)

To this effect, surely, is the teaching of the Scriptures upon which we have been dwelling. What long forbearance was exercised by the Lord even towards His apostles! And what patience with one another are we exhorted to! Does not experience also show that this, after all, is the most successful way? Many of us who are now firmly convinced of the correctness of our church principles were

but slow learners in the school of God. Had we been dealt with as we are sometimes inclined to deal with others, we should probably have remained in our unscriptural positions. But patience having been exercised towards us, our prejudices and opposition gradually gave way, and we now, by the grace of God, hold firmly to the truth.

The difficulties in arriving at a clear conclusion from Scripture on the subject of church government are considerable, and they are increased by faulty translations in the Authorized Version; and we need to bear this in mind in our judgment regarding many children of God. But while we say this, let no one think that we make light of church order, baptism and kindred subjects, or that we would encourage laxity as to teaching the whole counsel of God. Such is far from our intention; but we wish to bring into notice another side of truth, namely, that while we firmly hold to what God has taught us, we are not to cease bearing and forbearing in love with fellow-members of Christ who see not yet as we now do. (Eph. iv. 2.)

Let us take warning by the Corinthian church, which was very scrupulous about meats and drinks, and yet was so low in morals as to allow in its membership one guilty of a sin which even the heathen would not have tolerated. This has been the experience of every period in the Church's history. The lower the Church's spirituality, and the more its allowance of worldliness or evil, the more particular and exacting it becomes regarding forms and ceremonies; the shell is everything, the kernel nothing; much is made of the clothing, while the body is neglected. It is very desirable to have good clothing, it is more desirable to have a healthy body; it is best of all to have both.

W. J. S.

## THE HIDDEN TREASURES OF WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE.

NOTES OF A BIBLE READING ON COL. ii. 1-3.

THE "conflict" which the apostle had for the Colossian and Laodicean saints was the conflict of *prayer*. The same word is used of our Lord in Luke xxii. 44, "And being in an *agony* He prayed more earnestly." In Col. iv. 12 the corresponding verb is used, where Epaphras is spoken of as "labouring fervently" in his prayers for the Colossians. It is a solemn thing to think of Paul's earnest conflict for the Laodiceans, and then to remember the Lord's description of them in Rev. iii., thirty years afterwards They must have failed to watch and pray for themselves.

Verse 1 also teaches us that we should pray not only for those we know, but for those we have not seen. Paul's heart was large enough to take in all the saints he had met, and to remember the thousands who had not seen his face in the flesh. The special longing of the apostle's heart was to present "every man *perfect* in Christ Jesus;" that is, as full-grown, healthy, comely men, and not starvelings; they would then be perfectly well-pleasing to the Lord. This should be our standard for ourselves and for one another.

In chap. i. 28, the repetition of "every man" is marked; "warning *every man*, and teaching *every man* . . . that we may present *every man* perfect." The apostle uses similar words in 1 Thess. ii. 11, "As ye know we exhorted and charged *each one* of you, as a father doth his children, that ye would walk worthy of God." Paul cared for his spiritual children after the pattern put before earthly

parents, to train up their children "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." He dealt with them *individually*, not in a lump.

Prayer for the salvation of souls is much more common than for the *growth* of souls. The souls' growth, however, should not be the chief thought in our minds, but God's being pleased in His children; otherwise our affections and behaviour to them are marred. We fail in fully representing Christ, if we do not begin and end with God.

The aim of Col. ii. is to lead us up into Christ the heavenly wisdom, and to turn us away from all worldly wisdom. The word "wisdom" occurs six times in the epistle, and in one case, chap. ii. 23, it is Satan's counterfeit, "a show of wisdom." This epistle corresponds with the book of Proverbs in the use of the words "wisdom," "knowledge," and "understanding;" it is intended to warn and make us wise according to New Testament teaching.

In these days the deadliest enemy in the human heart is the pride of wisdom; it is the chief weapon in the hand of Satan for marring the communion of saints with God, with Christ, and with one another. There are gross and base sins as drunkenness, brutishness, love of money, love of power, but that which the Church of God needs to watch most against, is man's wisdom. We are only safe from it when we see that all the fulness of the Godhead, all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, are laid up for us in Christ, and when we deal with them accordingly. Then we see man's wisdom to be foolishness. We are in danger if we admire it, and only safe when we despise it, as we are taught to do in 1 Cor. i. "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise" is the apostle's quotation from the prophet. What a unity there is between Isaiah and Paul!

We know that there is a human wisdom, which can properly be called such, in relation to the things of time ; and in this the world excels more than ever. But Satan takes occasion by man's wisdom in things temporal to puff him up, and to make him think he has a right to judge in God's eternal matters. His very wisdom in earthly things is used to make him a fool in divine things. But "the world by wisdom knew not God ;" and we only escape this snare as with largeness of heart we seek to comprehend the breadth and length, and depth and height of God's love.

If we think we must get some of the world's wisdom to understand the things of God, we place ourselves under the power of Satan. Man's wisdom uses "enticing words" (1 Cor. ii. 4), and the apostle's warning is "lest any man beguile you with enticing words." This reminds us of how Eve was deceived.

The expression used in Gen. iii. 6, "to make wise," rather means "to give good success:" it was this that tempted Eve. The same word is often used of David, as a man of understanding, who successfully brought to an end what he had in view. It also occurs in Josh. i. 8, "then thou shalt have good success." To Eve, the devil offered good success through disobedience. God tells Joshua that He gives it through obedience. In 2 Cor. xi. 3, Paul says he fears lest the minds of the Corinthians "should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ," or rather "from singleness towards Christ" through the serpent's subtilty. Having Christ as the one object before the eye is our safeguard.

As the treasures of Egypt were all under Joseph's hand, and Pharaoh's word was, "Go to Joseph," so God's treasures are in the hand of Christ for us. The supplies that Joseph had could not be reckoned, and Ps. cxxxix. teaches

us to say, "How precious are Thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! If I should count them, they are more in number than the sand." In the wonderful doxology at the end of Rom. xi. there is the same thought of treasures, "O the depth of the *riches* both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"

It is very important to see that apart from Christ, the Son of God, man cannot attain any intimacy with God, and God has no means to reveal Himself and to tell out His bosom secrets. The apostle John is one with the apostle Paul on this point: "The only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." Men of the world will pay compliments to the Scriptures, and say, that in their time they have fulfilled a very good office, but now it is time to lay them aside, that men's minds may grasp higher and deeper things. But this is setting aside God's true revelation of Himself for the scanty things that the mere creation can reveal. "The heavens declare the glory of God" to men that know nothing of God in Christ, and this renders them without excuse according to Rom. i. 20. But it is *only in Christ* that any of God's hidden secrets can be learned by man; and to have this thoroughly settled in the soul is a great preservative against Satan's delusions.

From the bosom of God the secrets of God must be obtained, and He is ready to reveal them—"To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. (Col. i. 27.) In chap. ii. there are two mysteries—the mystery of God, and the mystery of Christ; and they are distinct. The mystery regarding the Church is, "Christ in you, the hope of glory." God's purpose is to reproduce Christ Himself in the believer, morally now, and bodily also at the resurrection. The

fulness of Christ, that is, His body, will not be complete until we are in His likeness in glory.

To the Corinthians Paul says, "We speak the wisdom of God in a mystery;" but he could not unfold it to them because they were carnal and babes in Christ. To the Ephesians and Colossians he could speak of the heavenly mysteries, because they were in a condition to receive them. Both epistles are addressed "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ."

In Col. ii. 2, the apostle sums up the two mysteries of which he had already spoken in chap. i. (vv. 25-27). The mystery of Christ had been kept hid in the past. But having a revelation of it now, we can go back to certain Old Testament types, and see it hidden in them. We also get a glimpse of it in John xvii., in Christ's prayer that those whom the Father has given Him may be one, and may be brought into His glory.

The world has some notion of the A, B, C, of the gospel as a remedial system, and they think there is nothing more than this in the Scriptures. But the believer is in the secret of God, and knows what God's purposes are in Christ, and awaits their fulfilment.

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## THE FIRST ADAM AND THE LAST.

Rom. v. 12-21.

THE teachings of this profound section of Scripture are but feebly apprehended by any of us, and it is to be feared that by many they are much neglected; yet the truths set forth in these few verses are of exceeding importance, and it was never more necessary that believers should be established in them. Learned men are inventing all kinds of theories rather than bow to the simple state-

ments of Scripture concerning God's ways with man, and it would be well if all the Lord's people would seek by a more prayerful study of this whole epistle, and not least of this weighty portion of it, to fortify themselves against the fair speeches that are so calculated to deceive the simple.

The word "*Wherefore*," with which this section begins, connects it with the whole preceding argument, though especially with the former verses of this chapter. The writer has shown very clearly at the end of chapter iv., how all believers in the Lord Jesus are affected by His death "on account of" their sins, and by His resurrection "on account of"\* their justification. He now by an illustration shows how it is that "the many" are affected by the action of "the one," and makes it plain that in God's ways with man there was always something beyond *individual* dealing. Thus the *federal* headship of Christ is brought into marked contrast with the *natural* headship of Adam; the "first man" being the cause of condemnation and death to all who spring from him by natural generation, and the "second Man" being the source of justification and life to all who are linked with Him by regeneration.

Adam was the appointed head of the race, and therefore not by the woman, but by *him* sin entered. Sin was in the universe before, but by Adam it entered *the world*; it invaded the race of man, and became a power reigning over man, a principle within him, and a state involving righteous condemnation. Sin entered, and death by sin, and thus by the one sin of Adam death spread through to the whole race, because *his* sin was regarded as the sin of the race, which stood or fell in him.

All sinned, "*for* until the law sin was in the world," and

\* *δια* with the accusative in both instances.



though sin is not imputed or *set down to account* (see Philemon 18, Gk.) in the absence of law, yet *death reigned*; and the reign of death is the conclusive proof of the existence of the sin, apart from which death could not be known. Death reigned "even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression." During all that no-law period, when there was no divine standard by which to measure men's acts and turn sin into transgression, *death* was the standing witness of the existence of sin—death not simply as each man's personal desert, but as the penal consequence of Adam's sin.

The mention of Adam serves to bring out the statement that he was a type of the Coming One, that is, of the One who was to come after him in the same public and representative character that he had sustained to the race; the *second* man, the *last* Adam. The first was a type of the last, inasmuch as in each case by the action of the *one* the *many* are affected.\* But though Adam was a type of Him who was to come, there are limitations and contrasts, which accordingly are brought out in verses 15-17. "But not as the trespass, so also is the free gift. For if by the trespass of the one the many died, much more did the grace of God, and the gift by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abound unto the many." (Rom. v.) Some regard the "much more" of this verse as simply argumentative; but it rather seems to express *abundance*, and to indicate

\* For some of the thoughts expressed in this paper I am indebted to others, and the following table, slightly altered, is taken from Dr. San-day :—

<i>The Head.</i>	One man, Adam.	One man, Christ.
<i>The Action.</i>	One act of trespass.	One act of obedience.
<i>Persons affected by it.</i>	All Adam's posterity.	All who are Christ's.
<i>Effect of the Action.</i>	Influx of many offences.	Justification from many offences.
<i>Final effect of it.</i>	Death.	Life; the justified reigning in life.

that the provision is not simply *adequate* to the need, but abounds far beyond it. The grace of God does not restore man to Eden and positive innocence, but brings him into a state and position far beyond what Adam ever knew, or, so far as we may learn, could have known apart from the fall.

But if this grace and gift abound, it is "by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ." Adam is not called "the one man" in the opening of this verse; that fact is well known; but the grand truth brought into prominence here is the fact that all the undoing work of Adam is more than reversed by One who is also *MAN*. As condemnation and death came through a man, so through a man must come justification and life. But where in Adam's race should one be found who could become the source of blessing to men, seeing that all who spring by ordinary generation from Adam are by their very existence subject to death? What created mind could have answered this question? But the question was never left to the creature, for it was settled by infinite wisdom and infinite love before the necessity arose. And in the answer we have the full display of the grace of the blessed God, and an equal display of the grace of Him who, according to the counsel of eternity, did Himself become *man* to fulfil the purpose of divine love. It is by the *grace* of this "One Man" that God's grace and gift abound to men: "Ye know the *grace* of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich." (2 Cor. viii. 9.) It was by becoming *man* that the glorious Son of God took the first mighty step in the wondrous work by which the grace of God and the gift (of righteousness) abound unto the many.

The point of verse 16 is, that whereas the *one* offence

brought condemnation, the result of God's free gift is a verdict of acquittal from the *many* trespasses of which the saved have personally been guilty. That which is inherited by us as children of Adam is like the acorn, which in congenial soil grows and spreads into the mighty oak, or like poison put into the spring or source of a river, which poisons the stream in the whole of its course. But so rich and full is the provision of God in Christ that from all the fruits of that "one offence" there is justification.

Verse 17 confirms the preceding statements, and leads to the blessed consummation, bringing in a twofold contrast. The *one* offence by which death reigned is contrasted with the "abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness," and further, the reign of *death* is contrasted with the reigning *in life*. The terrible reign of death is for ever ended as concerns those who are Christ's, and they are not simply brought under the power of life, but are to *reign in life*. What freedom and power are expressed by the word *reign*, and what a sphere is *life*! And this is through *the One*—the matchless One—thus named in triumph at the close, "even Jesus Christ." Thine, O Lord, is the grace, thine was the work, thine shall ever be the glory!

Verse 18 concisely repeats the unfinished statement of verse 12, and concludes it, though it has been virtually finished in the somewhat parenthetical portion that ends with verse 17; "therefore as through one offence [the result was] unto all men to condemnation; so through one righteous act the result was unto all men to justification of life."\* As the one trespass of Adam resulted in the con-

\* This is the rendering given by Mr. Moule, and is substantially the same as the R.V., but the expression "one righteous act" seems more definite. Some render *as towards*, but if it is *towards* in v. 18, it must be the same all through, and we may ask, Did death spread *towards* all men only, or actually *unto* them (v. 12)? The justification is as definitely

demnation and death of all who spring from him, so the one righteous act of Christ, when in obedience to the will of God He offered Himself in all the glory and fulness of His person, results in the blessing of justification of life to all who are His.

The next verse (19) presents the same truth in a slightly different form. Men are *treated* as sinners on account of the offence of Adam, for they are *regarded* as such, the word "made" not meaning a change wrought, but rather *constituted* or *appointed*. So men are *treated* as righteous, for they are most truly *regarded* as such; "for as through the one man's disobedience the many were constituted sinners, even so through the obedience of the One shall the many be constituted righteous." The "obedience" here must be the same as "the one righteous act" of v. 18, and as the accomplishment of the will of God by "the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all." (See Ps. xl. with Heb. x.)

But it may be asked, what place is left for the *law* in this representative system? The answer is, that the law was added to, or superinduced upon, a plan already laid, and that for a subordinate though necessary purpose, namely that the sin that existed might be made manifest as *transgression*; that what was inherent in that first trespass might be unfolded to man, and so form the dark background for the display of grace; for "where the sin multiplied, there the grace superabounded," rising above all those numberless transgressions into which the first sin,

unto all as was the condemnation; but the important thing is to see clearly that the word "*all*" in each case is qualified by the "*one*." We have Adam and his posterity on the one hand, and Christ and those who are Christ's on the other. And throughout the whole passage the word "*all*" is used in relation to the two heads, the first Adam and the Last; while the expression "*the many*" is in contrast with "*the one*," by whose act they are affected.

as a seed unfolding itself, had developed, and justifying all believers from them.

The last verse of the chapter brings us back to the two prominent words of the section, *sin* and *grace*, and leads us to another contrast, though one that is very similar to that expressed in verse 17. If "death reigned," it was SIN that reigned in death—death in its threefold stage; separation from God; separation (in due time) of soul and body; and then the fearful consummation, the second death, the final doom of those who never receive grace and righteousness. But in the case of all who do, grace shall reign—not apart from, but *through* righteousness unto eternal life—life in resurrection glory, the blessed consummation of that salvation of which Christ is the author, to whom, with the Father and the ever-blessed Spirit (through whose grace and power alone any are receivers of grace and the gift of righteousness)—the God of our salvation, be the glory for ever and ever. Amen. W. H. B.

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## THE MANIFESTATION OF GOD'S POWER.

### NOTES OF ADDRESSES.

IN the epistle to the Ephesians the manifestation of power is threefold: (1) the power put forth *for us* when God raised Christ from the dead (chap. i.); (2) the power wrought *in us* by the Holy Ghost (chap. iii.); (3) the power put forth *by us* in conflict and warfare (chap. vi.). We doubtless feel our lack of the second and third manifestations, but what we really need is, a better apprehension of the first.

In Isaiah li. 9, Israel's prayer is "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord; awake as in ancient days!" God had revealed His arm in bringing them out of Egypt, and in giving them the land; and in the Psalms

reference is again and again made to Jehovah's arm. This will be Israel's cry in the future, and our need is to lay hold on the "arm" of our God now. "Set me as a seal upon thine arm," is the bride's desire in the Song. God would have us turn our thoughts back to the omnipotence of divine power shown in the resurrection of Christ from the dead, when He divested Himself of all that which bound Him, and spoiled principalities and powers. How was this done? Through *weakness*. Where we fail is in expecting power without the cross; in expecting to live without first dying. We do not realize the power of God, because we are not prepared to follow in the footsteps of our Lord, and unless we do this, God cannot put forth His power in us.

He who never slumbers nor sleeps, echoes back to Israel the word "Awake." "Awake, awake, put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem." This word also occurs in the epistle to the Ephesians, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." It will *cost* us something to arouse ourselves, and put on the beautiful garments of resurrection life and power.

(H. G.)

"The exceeding greatness" of God's power to usward who believe, is what we are to know by the Spirit's wisdom and unveiling, even the power that raised up Jesus from among the dead. This power makes us like Him, now inwardly, and hereafter outwardly. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory. The climax of this will be when we see Him as He is, and are in a moment made like Him. That which makes us like Him now is seeing Him by faith day by day. If our eyes are dim our strength will fail. When the Philistines got Samson under their

power they put out his eyes to hinder any use of his strength. Paul prays for the Ephesians that the eyes of their heart may be enlightened to behold the Pattern to which they are to be conformed.

In writing to the Hebrew saints the apostle reminds them of what they had endured when their eyes were illuminated—they were then like their suffering Lord. God grant that our vision also may be cleared. How can it be? By reading more and more His word, which shows us we were Gentiles, down in the mire, and are still needing the Spirit of God to unveil Christ to us as the Risen One, and ourselves as one with Him.

The apostle's prayer in Eph. iii. is, that we might be strengthened with might in our inner man, and that we might know the love wherewith we are all loved. May we in our hearts be strengthened to receive that love, that we may pour it out on others, and as we do so, God will pour in more.

“The power that worketh in us” is the power of the Holy Ghost. Let us not grieve Him who is the Revealer and Teacher and Strengtheners. (H. D.)

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

### XXI.

#### *Thoughts on the Psalms.*

“Surely it will be our blessed occupation in heaven itself to witness the unfolding of Scripture as to the fulness which is in Christ Jesus. The seventeenth Psalm is one I often ponder. None but Jesus can say, except in a very qualified sense, ‘Let my sentence come forth from Thy presence, let Thine eyes behold the things which are equal.’ It is only as introduced into the grace wherein we stand by faith in Jesus, that we can

appropriate in any measure such language to ourselves. And this is the beauty of the Psalms, that we need to realize all the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ to enable us to read them with self-application.

“You refer to 1 Peter i. 5. Who could have written so pointedly on this subject as Peter? Compare his words, ‘*kept through faith*,’ with the Lord’s words to him, ‘*I have prayed for thee that thy faith fail not*.’ It seems to me a miracle to be *kept*, when one realizes that one’s heart is ‘deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;’ and if I judge aright the knowledge of its *deceitfulness* is the fruit of more matured experience than the knowledge of its desperate *wickedness*. There must be a daily putting *off* and putting *on*. In Colossians iii. there is a double putting off, and putting on; and I must say that I feel most consciously poor, as yet, in my spiritual wardrobe.

“Before we came down to breakfast this morning, I asked my wife to read to me Psalm xc., the tenth verse of which—‘The days of our years are threescore years and ten,’ &c.—is very present to my mind; and growing infirmities warn me that my sphere of active ministry is becoming, not only yearly but I may say daily, more and more limited. I often turn to Ps. xxxi., where we evidently find Christ, as is apparent from v. 5, ‘Into thine hand I commit my spirit.’ But I desire, as having this spirit, especially to make my own (in my measure) that word which was so perfectly applicable in Him, ‘*My times are in Thy hand*’ (v. 15). I desire submission to His will; whether it pleases God to measure my times by days, weeks, months, or years.

J. L. H.”

“Feb. 15th, 1873.”

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FRAGMENT.—In Christ we have, as believers, put off the “old man,” and have put on the “new man;” but our difficulty is to get rid of the habits of the old man, and to ‘put on habits becoming the new man. This is an *inward* work; thus, “anger” has to be replaced by “bowels of mercies.”



## THE FALL: WAS IT A NECESSITY ?

FEW subjects have exercised the minds of Christians more than that of man's fall. The question naturally arises : As God might easily have prevented the fall of our first parents, why did He place them in the garden with a possibility of sinning, guarded only by a solemn warning, perhaps not well understood by them ? Some, looking at the Fall in the light of the glorious results of the redemptive work of Christ, with too little regard to the unutterable woe of the lost, are prone to exclaim with Augustine of old, as he contemplated the Fall, "Oh, happy fault!" assuming that God could find no other way of accomplishing His purposes in connection with the redeemed. Some, on the other hand, regarding perhaps more the miseries of the lost than the bliss of the redeemed, and thinking it derogatory to the character of God to say He could find no other way of accomplishing His end than by the allowance of sin and its terrible consequences, are bold to say, "The Fall is no advantage."

Now, in both these views of the Fall, it has to be observed that the thoughts of the reasoners are occupied with the creature, rather than with the Creator. In every Christian doctrine, and in all Bible truth, the question of God, His honour, and His glory, stands first : the question of the creature, its blessing and its good, stands second. To invert this divine order, though it may not be so intended, is to put the creature in the place of God, and to forget that creation, with all its untold mysteries, spiritual, moral, and physical, is designed to subserve first, and chief, the glory of that Almighty One who created things for

Himself, and in the knowledge of whom alone is the creature's fullest good.

The path of faith in regard to all the mysteries of God is the path of child-like trust. Many mysteries are unveiled to us in that divine revelation which has been put into our hands, and many more yet remain unrevealed, awaiting the unfoldings of the world to come, when we who now know but in part, shall know even as we are known. Faith is happy and rejoicing in what it knows, and is also trustful and thankful regarding that of which it is ignorant ; for truly there is not only much grace in revealing what is open to our view, but much goodness in veiling what is at present shut out from us. He who in wisdom revealed to His apostle in the Isle of Patmos the meaning of the seven trumpet sounds, said, when the seven thunders uttered their voice, "Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not." God alone knows what He can wisely communicate to us, and faith can rejoice in a blissful ignorance that hangs implicitly on God.

Let us suppose for a moment that there were two ways by which the All-wise could accomplish the same end, though we do not allow for a moment that it is so. Supposing, for argument's sake, that God could have accomplished all the good He designs to accomplish, either with or without the Fall, and yet that the God of all grace allowed the Fall to supervene and mar that creation-work which He had pronounced very good, faith will at once say, whatever the natural thought might be, that the Fall was the very best, if not the only means whereby God's purposes of self-revelation and of blessing to His creatures could be accomplished. Faith would also regard as little short of blasphemy, the assertion that the Fall has no advantage ; for it must be borne in mind that in the

Bible, God never removes from Himself the direct responsibility of whatever He allows. In the history of Job, Satan is brought before us in the first chapters of the book as the moving cause and active agent in all Job's miseries; but when God speaks to Job out of the whirlwind, He never once alludes to Satan, taking upon Himself the whole responsibility of what had happened to His servant. So, also, when Peter speaks to the Jews of their wickedness in crucifying Christ, he does not for a moment hide the fact that He was delivered "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God;" and He who in His eternal wisdom foresaw the death of Christ by the hands of wicked men, yet said in prophetic vision to Zechariah, "Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd." By the same pre-determinate counsel and foreknowledge God delivered man up to the possibilities of the Fall, for ends and purposes of which we know something now, and shall know more hereafter.

But the word of God, while saying comparatively little, directly, of why He allowed the Fall, has not left us without analogies in certain matters; and in connection with these He has revealed His purpose so explicitly, that we are by no means without light concerning many of His ways which would otherwise be involved in dark, inscrutable mystery. The epistle to the Romans is especially helpful to us here; for in that precious epistle, the counsellings, plannings, and orderings of God in the past are handled with a profoundness, probably not surpassed in any part of Scripture. We would, in passing, refer to the first eight verses of the third chapter of the epistle. In the fourth verse Paul lays down an important principle, in answering the question, "Shall their want of faith make of none effect the faithfulness of God?" He replies, "God forbid: yea, let God be found true, but every man a liar,

as it is written, That Thou mayest be justified in Thy words, and mightest prevail, when Thou comest into judgment." (R.V.) These words are quoted from David's penitential Psalm, the fifty-first, and the very same words would be true if applied to the penitent utterances of our first parents in the garden; for all temptations from without are divine testings, the object of which is to prove the creature to be what God knows that it is. Thus, in the Fall, while man was proved to be false, God was proved to be true, and perhaps in the universe of God there is no greater necessity than that God should be demonstrated to be what He essentially is.

In verse 5, the apostle puts another question into the mouth of an objector—"If our unrighteousness commend the *righteousness* of God, what shall we say? Is God unrighteous who visits with wrath?" and he at once replies, "God forbid: for how then shall God judge the world?" assuming that God's allowance of sin is no justification of the sinner, and gives him no plea whereby to escape the righteous judgment of God. Again, the objector is supposed to ask, "If the *truth* of God, through my lie, abounded unto His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner? and why not (as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say) Let us do evil that good may come?" To such the answer is, Their "condemnation is just."

Thus the apostle appears to take it for granted that the fall of Adam at once brings to light the *righteousness* of God on the one hand, and demonstrates the *truth* of God on the other. It may be asked, "Might not the righteousness and truth of God have been shown in some other way?" But faith's answer is, "God has revealed no other," and we may well assume that the way chosen is the only one and the best; for it is impossible that the God of infinite grace and of fathomless compassion, who rejoices in

the salvation of the sinner and weeps over the woes of the lost, should ever have allowed, in the government of His universe, the possibility of such immeasurable woe as the entrance of sin into the world has caused, had there not been an absolute necessity for it. We are not required either to know, or to give expression to, what that necessity was; but to doubt the necessity, is at once to doubt the wisdom, the power, and the mercy of God.

We will now look further on in the same epistle to the Romans, and see whether the truths contained in chapters ix., x., xi. do not afford statements and analogies which go far to explain the reasons that made the Fall necessary. As already stated, the primary point in all such investigations is that which has reference to God. Hence, in these three chapters, written with a view to unfold, if not altogether to explain, the dealings of God with man, the first, chapter ix., treats exclusively of the word, the power, the purpose and the will of God; and these comprehend not only the salvation and blessing of some, but the rejection and destruction of others. Thus, on the one hand, God makes known "the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He afore prepared unto glory;" but He also makes known His much long-suffering, His power, and His wrath, on the vessels of wrath who had fitted themselves to destruction. It is for this reason that the apostle so emphatically alludes to the history of Pharaoh; and God's dealing with him for the sinfulness of that hardening pride which led to his destruction, affords a complete analogy to the dealings of God with Adam in the garden. Both were left to the exercise and choice of their own will, and the result was in the one case, the misery, ruin, and condemnation of the race, and in the other, the destruction of Pharaoh and his hosts in the Red Sea. In reference to either the apostle would say,

"Hath not the potter authority over the clay?" And if God has willed to do what He has, what has the creature to do, whether he understands it or not, but in silence to bow and to worship? For God demands of us that we remember our first lesson, that "God is greater than man," and that He is God only wise, blessed for ever.

But as chap. ix. deals with the sovereign will of God, so chap x. unfolds the unlimited freedom of His grace; and chap. xi. shows the unalterable character of God's purpose, whether in His "goodness" towards those who continue in it, or in His "severity" towards those that fall. It would almost appear as if the apostle's object in this chapter was indirectly to meet unbelieving doubts that might arise as to the wisdom of God in bringing in one dispensation after another, where all have ended, so far as the creature is concerned, in irremediable ruin. Thus the Adamic dispensation ended in the Fall; the ante-diluvian dispensation in the flood; that of Noah in idolatry and the Tower of Babel; the Mosaic dispensation resulting in one captivity and destruction after another. Last, and not least—as hinted at by the apostle in those solemn words addressed to the Gentile Church, "Take heed lest He spare not thee"—we see the approaching judgment of the present Christian dispensation, so far as the earth is concerned, which will be brought about by the apostasy of Christendom and the worship of the man of sin, the lawless one, whose coming is after the working of Satan.

God has thus written failure upon each successive dispensation; all have failed; but God has not failed, for His gifts and calling are "without repentance." What He hath said, that He will do, and what He hath purposed, that He will perform.

The apostle assumes that God's ways are unsearchable, that they are "past tracing out" (R.V.); but He unfolds

to us His great purpose. And what is that purpose but that, having *proved* the creature to be what He well knew he was, He might gather up into one, under a divine Headship, that which shall endure for ever, and in the dispensation of the fulness of times might reveal in Christ that which before the Fall could never have been revealed, because it could not have been understood? Truly, as we consider the works of God, we may repeat the old proverb, "Fools and children must not see work half done." Shall we say, then, for a moment, that from the first fall that overthrew our race, or from all the succeeding falls and failures that have followed one another in such marked succession, there is "no advantage?" or that God's universal way of dealing might have been improved upon by poor, weak, blind, ignorant man? God forbid! Rather, looking back upon the whole history of our race, and of God's dealings with us, whether considered dispensationally or individually, let us thank God for the wisdom of that plan by which He is teaching the creature what *he* is, and teaching at the same time who that God is, in whose hand our breath is, and whose are all our ways; and does not the slowness with which we learn manifest how deeply the lesson is needed? Shall we not, then, say with the holy apostle, as he winds up these solemn chapters, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!"

When in eternity God planned the history of the world's six thousand years, He did not take man into His counsels; but to the loving heart and to the obedient soul God has revealed Himself and His purposes in the past, the present, and the future; and he who has best learnt his lesson will wind up all his ponderings on what seem to be the dark enigmas of the past or the future, with

thoughts of wonder, adoration, and praise, and he will be contented to hear the voice of infinite love whispering to his soul, "What thou knowest not now, thou shalt know hereafter."

H. G.

## THE DESIRE FOR SPIRITUAL POWER.

WHY do we want this power? Are we not apt to think of *results*, while God looks at *motives*? He searches the inmost recesses of the heart, and do we not need to try our inmost thoughts in His sight as to any desire for power? This might often make us ashamed of our very desire. Power to witness for God may be what we covet, and we may seek that God would open our lips; but we may be witnesses for Him *without speaking*. The apostle Paul was called to suffer for God. Do we ever ask for power to serve God thus? Are we not apt to associate power with great results, and with taking a high place among our brethren? God's strength was perfected in Paul's weakness when he had the thorn in the flesh. To *be* for God may be more important than to *do* for God. Power is as much needed to *live* for Christ in the midst of the surroundings in which God has placed us, as to preach to thousands. It is often harder to lead a Christ-like life in the midst of an ungodly world than to preach the gospel or to stand before our fellow-saints. To walk in the fear of God, to be lowly in the world, and meek in the assembly of God's people, is better than to hold large meetings, or to have a name for zeal. If our motives are wrong, is it any wonder that our prayers for power are not answered? Self and not God may be at the bottom of our prayers. Let us seek to know what it is to be dying with Christ daily, that His life may be manifest in us—to be broken vessels, that the light may shine out.

H. G. L.



## THOUGHTS FROM GOD'S WORD REGARDING THE YOUNG.

### I.—THEIR PLEASURES.

THE exuberance of life and energy in the young calls for more variety of mental and bodily recreation than is needed by those of staid and maturer years. The natural sportiveness of youth is also pleasing to God, and is recognized in His word. When our Lord was on earth He well knew how to bend and adapt Himself to children, though as the "Man of sorrows" He had before Him the agony of the cross and its atoning death. With all this fully in view, He so considered others rather than Himself, that the young were by no means lost sight of. Witness His receiving of little ones and taking them in His arms; also His sympathy with the young ones who shouted "Hosanna to the Son of David!" and His defence of them when the priests and scribes found fault, albeit, perhaps, too few of those whose voices were then raised in His praise, really knew Him as their Saviour from sin. His comparison of the older ones with children playing in the market-place also manifests His observation of youthful ways. The picture of Jerusalem in the millennial age, as given by Zechariah, shows how God notices the playfulness of the young: "The streets of the city shall be full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof" (chap. viii. 5). This recognition of the youthful pleasures of that coming day, when Jesus shall reign on Mount Zion, is quite in keeping with what we are told of Him in the days of His flesh. Surely, then, family life in houses in which God's word and Jesus' love bear sway, may well be cheerful and sportive and happy.

But God's *holy fear* should be in all the recreations of youthful believers, as well as that sense of ease and liberty which His changeless, boundless *love* gives. They may count on their Heavenly Father's presence and on His approving eye and ear for their times of mirth and relaxation as truly as for their hours of toil or study. The bow unbent and left at ease is as much intended for the heavenly fight—"the good fight of faith"—as the same bow when bent with arrow on the string. For the mind and character of the young saint, suited recreation is just what hours of sleep are for our wearied bodily powers. But though both are needed, they must both be used with caution and with self-restraint. The same Solomon who wrote in Eccles. vii. 16, "Be not righteous over much . . . why shouldest thou destroy thyself?" also wrote in Prov. xxv. 16, "Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee;" and youthful recreation is a kind of "honey."

The truth is, we are never fit for any of our surroundings except as our springs of strength and joy are above. To walk here below pleasingly to God, we must ever make God our strength and Christ our joy. If we do not, both the griefs and the joys of life will entangle and overcome us. And this is as true of the briefer pleasures and sorrows of youthful fellow-saints as it is of those of older ones. A day's or an evening's giddy amusement (especially if spent with unsaved or thoughtless companions) may do the young child of God as much soul-damage as will the giving way to a passionate sorrow. The word "temperance" in the New Testament means "self-restraint," and it is this which youthful believers are made divinely capable of exercising, and are expected to exhibit. But this "temperance" is a part of that precious "fruit of the Spirit" described in Gal. v. 22, 23, and it is only by the Spirit's power being allowed free exercise that it can be brought forth in us.

If, through the Holy Spirit's inward company, the joy of the Lord is in the hearts of youthful believers, the world's entertainments will, first of all, not be wished for, and secondly, if unexpectedly entered on, they will speedily prove distasteful. The distance between young Christians and all such scenes of mirth will become greater and greater, till the pleasure-seekers of the world will as much dislike them as they in turn will pity the poor worldlings.

The truth is, that being joined in one Spirit to the Lord, or, as Paul says, "married . . . to Him who is raised from the dead," the children of God find their all in Jesus, whose love in once dying and now ever living for them has won their hearts, and has made them as His redeemed ones altogether His.

#### II.—THEIR SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD.

In God's word we meet with precious instances of separation from the world in early life, and even from those dear by earthly ties, when the claims of God clearly called for it.

Surely it was the "expulsive power of a new affection" that took Rebekah straight from Mesopotamia to Isaac, and made her hasten the journey to him rather than consent to any delay; for her spirit was in fellowship with Eliezer's word to all Laban's household, "Hinder me not." In this she affords us a type of the bride's trueness of affection to Christ.

It was the same strangership, for love's sake, that enabled young Ruth to cleave to feeble Naomi, spite of her sister Orpah's going back. And what a reward was hers! She found herself sheltered under the wings of the Lord God of Israel, even when poverty and exposure in the gleaning field were her lot. And in what an honourable marriage her life-story ends!

Doubtless it was inward happiness of soul that pre-

served Joseph, though young, from taking any part in the evil ways of his own brothers; that took him unharmed through the seductions of Potiphar's house; and in prison caused him to be occupied with God-given "dreams" instead of idle talk, or murmurings at his hard lot.

It was communion with God from a child that made Samuel a listener in God's sanctuary, and his early word, "Speak, for Thy servant heareth," characterized him through life, and thus was he saved from the company and the manners of Eli's sons.

And was it not a similar joy in God's voice in the Hebrew Scriptures that delivered Daniel from defiling himself with Gentile food and banquets? Surely this was a greater deliverance than even that from the lions afterwards, and earned for him the precious title, "O man greatly beloved!" This is an Old Testament illustration of John xiv. 20-23.

As some of us in God's church are moving on in life, and are nearing its close, new thoughts are awakened in us, and greater cares occupy us, about younger saints, who are to live and witness for Jesus our Lord after we are gone. And all the more are we thus concerned because new forms of "the deceivableness of unrighteousness" keep arising, and will still more arise. "Even now are there many antichrists." Forms of error are beginning to appear which will deceive all—all, that is, in this Christendom sphere—except those whose names are written in the "Lamb's book of life." In these deceptive days the church is so like the world, that if young Christians only rely upon the guidance and example of even fellow-believers, they may be drawn into evil things before they are aware of it.

God grant that all our ordinary, and still more our unwonted and special assemblings, may quicken parents and elder ones in their care of younger believers, and also

make younger ones more alive to their own eternal interests. May the ministry of God's word, whether by tongue or pen, fill *them* with a firmer and a holier purpose of better *knowing* God our Father, and Jesus our Lord, and of more openly and fully confessing Christ and serving Him in a money-getting and pleasure-seeking world.

In connection with this subject Philip Doddridge's fine and godly epigram may well be remembered—an epigram which Dr. Johnson judged to be the best in the English language:—

“ Live while you live, the sacred Preacher cries,  
And give to God each moment as it flies.

“ Live while you live, the Epicure would say,  
And catch the pleasures of the passing day.

“ Lord, in *my* view let both *united* be—  
I live in *pleasure* whilst I live to *Thee*.”

Yet “a little while” and the Eden of God's pleasures will be the home of all his saints for ever, and one pleasure amongst the many will be this, that as “His servants” we shall “serve Him,” and “shall see His face,” and shall have “His Name” written on our “foreheads.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

H. D.

## THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN :

### ITS GENERAL PURPORT.

AT the outset several leading features are noticeable: its abruptness of commencement, without introduction or salutation; the decision and force of the language; the strong contrasts; the apparent contradictions; the positive assurances of death on the one hand, and of life on the other.

These peculiarities seem to point to a state of things pressing forcibly on the apostle's attention, and calling for

prompt interference and vigorous action. Because of the imperious nature of the topics he has to bring forward, the usual courtesies are withheld, whilst their absence is fully seen to arise from no want of affection towards those to whom he writes, or from any disregard of the position of favour with God wherein they stand.

Those whom he addresses are in danger upon a vital point—the point upon which their salvation depends. To this he applies himself. There is no leisure for ordinary instructions or warnings. It is a question of life or death—the very substance of the Christian's hope and faith. To this and its immediate connections he confines himself. The range is limited, but the subject is of the utmost possible importance.

There were those who sought to seduce the disciples of Christ. These seducers are called antichrists—that is, opposed to Christ. They are described in chap ii. 22, as denying that Jesus (of Nazareth) is the Christ. In Matt. xvi. 16, Peter owns Him as “the Christ, the Son of the living God;” as announced in Psalm ii. The knowledge that Jesus of Nazareth, who then stood before him, was the high and holy One, is declared by our Lord to be due to the Father having revealed the fact to Peter. And in John vi. 69, Peter makes the same acknowledgment on his own behalf and on that of the other disciples.

In this epistle (chap ii. 22) John declares that the denial of Jesus being the Christ is tantamount to denying that He is the Son of God, and likewise to the denial of the Father; and that he who so denies the Son, hath not the Father.

Thus, then, we have several indications of these parties:—They are seducers and deceivers. They deny that Jesus is the Christ. They deny that He is the Son of God. Inferentially they deny both the Father and the

Son. They have not the Father. The Spirit of God calls them antichrists and liars. Who can these persons be? Are they Jews, Gentiles, or of the Church of God?

They cannot belong to the Church of God, because the apostle declares in chap. ii. 19, that "none of them were of us;" for such seems the force of the passage. Neither can they well be Gentiles; because the very language presupposes an amount of knowledge of the Scriptures of God which, in that day, the Gentiles could not easily obtain, and it likewise evinces an antagonism to the claims of Jesus as the rightful Messiah, which we do not read of the Gentiles having ever exhibited.

But of the Jews we read in Matt. xxvi. that the great council of the nation, presided over by the High Priest, condemned Jesus to death because of His acknowledging Himself to be the Son of God and the Messiah, or Christ. The hostility of the Jews to Jesus displayed before Pilate, and at the cross, is seen throughout the Acts to have been constant, and it is their national characteristic to the present day. It is not difficult therefore to trace in the Jew the indications above given by the apostle John. Other intimations are not wanting of unconverted Jews having found their way among the early Christians for mischief. 2 Cor. ii. 12-24 shows what they already had been doing in the Corinthian Church; and Paul designates them false apostles and ministers of Satan.

The special shape in which their malignity is found working in this epistle, is the denial of Jesus Christ having come in flesh. The passages in chap. iv. 2 read literally thus: "Every spirit that confesseth Jesus Christ HAVING COME in flesh is of God. And every spirit that confesseth not Jesus Christ HAVING COME in flesh is not of God." A wide distinction exists between the *lip* admission of a certain fact, and the acknowledgment of Him whom that

fact identifies. Satan and his emissaries would go much farther than the admission of the fact; they would even acknowledge Jesus of Nazareth as the Holy One of God, the Christ, and even the Son of God. (Luke iv. 34 and 41.) But this was not an avowal of willing subjection to Him, for they added, "Let us alone; what have we to do with Thee?" The required confession is that of *the heart and life*. The lip avowal, as in Acts xvi. 17, is intended to beguile.

In 2 John 7 the opposition of the antichrists takes a second form, that of "not confessing Jesus Christ COMING in flesh." The hatred to Jesus is continuous. It refuses to own Him as the Messiah, whether in relation to His First, or to His Second Advent. Nevertheless the same Jesus who is gone into the heavens will come the second time, He is identically the same, yesterday, and to-day, and for ever.

As, therefore, while our Lord was on earth it was in vain for the Jews to say that God was their Father (John viii. 41), while they denied Jesus as the Christ; so, the apostle tells us, it is in vain for any to assert that they have the Father while they deny the Son.

The opposition of these antichrists seems also to take a third form—that of attributing to our Lord an illusory or visionary existence, instead of that comprehended under the term "in flesh." None of the Jews, not even the disciples, had been willing to admit that the Christ should suffer. But in order to suffer, it was requisite that He should be incarnate, in reality, and not merely in appearance. This point the Holy Ghost is careful to establish. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." And the reason is furnished in Heb. ii. 14, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same."



In this epistle, evidence to the same effect is carefully adduced. It is the first point brought forward. The apostle had heard the voice of His lips ; had seen Him, not casually, but had gazed upon Him ; and even handled His blessed person. To this evidence he adds that of the water and the blood proceeding from His wounded side, which he himself had personally beheld. Apart from any figurative interpretation, this seems, in chap. v. 8, to be adduced in further proof of the incarnation and of the death of the Son of God.

The immeasurable importance of this fact is discernible in this, that "in Him" is life. "He that hath the Son hath the life, and he that hath not the Son hath not the life ;" "but the wrath of God abideth on him." "This is the true God and eternal life." Well, therefore, might the apostle say, "Lord, to whom shall we go ? Thou hast the words of eternal life ; and we believe and are sure that Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God."

Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, crucified, and risen, gone into the heavens and seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high, was the foundation of their hope. Deprived of Him, there could be no hope. Those who adhere to Him, and are anointed by the Holy Ghost, know that in Him and in Him alone there is life. This truth, that they who have the Son have life, is pressed upon them (chap. v. 13) as the testimony of God Himself. His believing people, as children of God, have fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ ; they have also fellowship one with another ; and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth them from all sin. They walk with God who is Light, and this involves following Christ who is the Light. Any one who says he has fellowship with God, and does not follow Christ, is asserting that which is untrue.

We may now examine in what way the apostle applies this teaching. The followers of Christ are "one body." They are united to Him who is the Head of that one body. An abandonment of that one body is declared by the apostle to be a manifestation that those who left did not belong to that body. He further declares them to be antichrists, saying that when he wrote there were many such. At that time the "one body" was not outwardly broken into fragments as at present. When any one deserted the family of God, he must needs return to the world. Renouncing the protection of the Good Shepherd, he returned to the dominion of Satan.

But broken to pieces and mixed up with the world as the Church ostensibly now is, there are yet those who know that the body is still one. Some few have acted on this knowledge, coming out from the world and from the various sectarian parties to gather together round their crucified and risen Lord. It will be well for them if they continue thus, and, in obedience to the command of their Lord, resist all efforts of Satan to disunite them. He is not unskilful in inventing plausible pretexts for scattering those whom Christ has joined together, for transforming them once more into sectarian bodies, and for reuniting them with the world. All this is to the dishonour of their Master, and therefore to their own irreparable loss.

"Love not the world," says the apostle, "neither the things that are in the world; for all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world." The desire of supremacy, or ambition, is alike adverse to the Father in the Church as in the world. The other master-passion of the human heart, avarice, is equally subversive of the Father's will; and also the pride or boasting of life, since we know not what a day will bring forth.

The darkness is past : the true light now shines. Ignorance of God's character and pleasure, whether entire or comparative, has been removed by the shining of the true light. That light reveals that God is love. Darkness, therefore, is as closely allied to hatred as light is to love. He that loveth not his brother abides in darkness, and walks in darkness, and knows not whither he goes because that darkness has blinded his eyes. He that hates his brother is apart from God ; of the family of Cain, a murderer. He has not eternal life abiding in him. At the same time it is quite possible for him to say he is in the light. Nevertheless he is in the darkness, even until now. Man may deceive himself or his fellow-man, but God is not mocked. As each sows, so shall he reap. That the Jews, while our Lord was on earth, believed that in possessing the Scriptures, they possessed eternal life, is manifest from John v. 39. Of this notion the Lord was careful to disabuse them. So also does the apostle herein labour.

In chap. iii. two families are designated : the family of God and the family of Satan. Those who are born of God, love the children of God. Those who are born of the devil hate them. The children of God are not to be surprised at the world's hatred. It hated their Lord, and of course it will hate them. It hated Him because of His obedience to His Father. It hates us in proportion to our obedience to our Lord.

"In this the children of God are manifest and the children of the devil : whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother." The apostle Paul declares that all manner of gifts may be possessed without love ; that love far exceeds them all ; and that, if love be not present, these gifts are profitless to him that possesses them. And no wonder, for he "abideth in death !"

Many motives are adduced by the apostle to enforce this brotherly love among the children of God. If we walk in the light, we must love each other. We walk in the darkness if we do not. It is sin to do otherwise. God's love is perfected in us if we love one another. Hating a brother is accounted murder. Christ came to destroy the works of the devil, amongst which is hatred. Brotherly love is the command of God. God sets the example to His children (chap. iv. 11). He is a liar who says he loves God and hates his brother. To love our brother is part of our love towards God (v. 1). The practice of this love evinces that we are born of God and know God (iv. 7.); he that loveth not, knoweth not God.

This brotherly love is to be displayed by uniting with Christ's people (chap. i. 7; ii. 19); by laying down our lives for them (iii. 16); by relieving their necessities (iii. 17); by praying for them if they sin (v. 16). R. N.

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## HOW A PASTOR MAY HELP THE FLOCK.

### I.—BY EXAMPLE.

So fully may a good example be set by one who is a pastor after God's heart that when he is removed by death he may still be remembered, his faith followed, and the end of his manner of life be considered. (Heb. xiii. 7.) If however, he exhort others to be followers of himself, let him add the qualifying words "even as I am of Christ." (1 Cor. xi. 1.) Let Christ in glory be so fully his object that he may be able to say, "Be followers together of me," or *with me*. (Phil. iii. 14-17.)

This principle so animated Paul, that we find him counselling Timothy in accordance with it. How is his "son in the faith" to command the respect of others, notwithstanding his youth? By being "*an example of the*

believers in word, in conversation, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." (1 Tim. iv. 12.)

How impressive, by reason both of its nature and of its circumstances, is the scene in John xiii. 1-17 where our Lord washes His disciples' feet. Apart from all other thoughts which might here pass through our minds, we would, for our present purpose, simply draw attention to verse 15, "I have given you an *example*, that ye should do as I have done to you."

## II.—BY PRAYER.

"Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God." (Col. iv. 12.) Thus did this fellow-prisoner of Paul (Philemon 23) much help his Colossian brethren, while forcibly kept from them. He could not follow up his prayers by other pastoral service, but he so felt the value of prayer that it is said that in it he "laboured fervently." The Greek word implies a very wrestling of soul in prayer, and is of the same root as the substantive translated "agony" in Luke xxii. 44.

Paul's writings give frequent evidence of his abundant prayers for his brethren, for those unknown to him by face as well as for those among whom he had personally laboured. Yea, he did "not cease to pray" for the Colossians, though he had only "*heard* of their faith." (See chaps. i. 4-9 and ii. 1.) Recognising that he was their debtor, they were thus continually upon his heart, and we may be sure that he was all the better able to help them by an epistle, in that he had already long done much for them in prayer.

Our Lord, too, values such intercessory prayer. He does not depend only upon *warning* when he says to

Peter in Luke xxii. 32, "I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." Have we not been again and again encouraged as we have listened to His prayer for us in John xvii. ? And are we not sure that not only through the power of the indwelling Holy Ghost, but as much also in answer to the Lord's prayers, we who believe on Him through the apostles' word (verse 20) are still kept, and taught, and sanctified, and will be glorified ?

### III.—BY PRECEPT.

Under this term may be included both teaching and exhortation. The former is instruction in truth, the latter pressing on the conscience truth already received. In the former the food is brought to the lamb or sheep of Christ's flock ; in the latter he is urged to take it and to let it be seen by his conduct that he is nourished by it. Let the pastor seek aptitude in both. This is attained only by much reading of the Scriptures, by much communion with God, and by his own right use, in his family and in all his engagements, of whatever God has taught him.

Enough has been said to show that while oversight is "a good work" (1 Tim. iii. 1), it is also a serious one ; and none should profess it but those upon whom God has laid it (1 Tim. i. 18 and 2 Tim. i. 6), and who possess the qualifications set forth in 1 Tim. iii. and in Titus i. Such, and such only will be stedfast and without fear, for God has given them "the spirit of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." (2 Tim. i. 7.) On such there is the laying on of the hands of the presbytery, the cordial fellowship in service of other elders of the church. (2 Tim. iv. 14.)

Alas ! that there should be so few such servants of Christ and of His Church. But this state of things is not new ; see Phil. ii. 20. May God increase the number of those who care for the flock.

The pastor need not renounce the earning of his daily bread in what is known as "secular work." On the contrary let any one take care, if such a step be contemplated as possibly desirable, that he look truly and fully to God about it. Our ordinary engagements as servants or men of business may be very effectual in the discipline of our souls. What more likely than that constant personal contact with others in the ordinary affairs of life should do much toward fitting us to help our brethren in the many difficulties they encounter in similar circumstances? Viewed in this light, no work need be really *secular* (i.e., of the age). While caring for things which to the outward eye appear to be altogether of the world, we may, and should be, gaining much heavenly experience, and much aptitude to serve the family of God. Time spent in the shop or counting-house is not to be regarded as lost. Far from it. One may there become so well-furnished as to make the few hours in the week which can be directly given to pastoral oversight, yield much blessing to the flock of Christ.

Some there are, perhaps not many, who, known by their fruit, give evidence of their call to be apart from temporal pursuits. Let us take heed not to be among the many imitators, concerning whom it must be acknowledged, that they do not present the "signs of the apostle." J. C.

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#### NOTES AND REPLIES.

*How are we to understand the seeming contradiction between "I know that Thou hearest Me always" (Jno. xi. 42), and "I cry unto Thee in the day time and Thou hearest not" (Psa. xxii. 2), and similar expressions in the Psalms used in reference to Christ?*

THE answer is simply this, that while the blessed Son of God was always heard and His prayers were always answered, yet when He stood as the *sin-bearer*, and said, "My God! my God! why hast Thou forsaken Me?" His cry was *not* heard, and His prayer not answered. If while

Christ was being made sin for us, and before the atonement had been sealed in death, God as the sin-avenger had heard and answered, He would have violated all the conditions that brought Christ to the cross. Thus in Heb. v. 7 we read that He who in resurrection was constituted "a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec," in the days of His flesh "offered up prayers and supplication with strong crying and tears unto Him that was able to save Him from death;" but the answer came only after He had passed through death, and He was saved "out of" it. Also in Psa. xxii., He who said in verse 2, "Thou hearest *not*," said in verse 21, in connection with resurrection, "Thou *hast heard Me*," and adds, "I will declare Thy name unto My brethren; and in verse 24, "He hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted . . . but when He cried unto Him He *heard*."

*What is the distinction between "the kingdom of heaven" and "the kingdom of God?"*

It will have been noticed that while the expression "the kingdom of heaven" is almost invariably used in the gospel of Matthew, it is never used elsewhere in the New Testament. The reason of its use by Matthew is evidently not from any essential difference between the terms "kingdom of heaven" and "kingdom of God," but because Matthew's gospel has especial reference to Christ as the Son of David and lawful inheritor of David's temporal, earthly throne; and the Spirit of God by this expression emphasises the fact that the kingdom of the Messiah will not find its establishment and support from conflicts and struggles upon earth; but, as we are told in the book of Daniel, its establishment and its glory will be directly from heaven. Thus while in Matthew the heavenly origin of the kingdom is dwelt upon, what we may call the Gentile gospels of Mark and Luke, as well as Paul's writings and ministry to the Gentile Churches, bring into prominence the fact that the kingdom is set up by God, and not by *man*. Our Lord alluding to this, says to Pilate, "My kingdom is not of this world;" the preposition "*of*" (*εκ*) implying that earth was not its source. Christ was Himself the basis of the kingdom, for all centred in Him, and God says, "*I lay in Zion for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.*" God, not man, is the founder of the kingdom; and heaven, not earth, is the source of its authority.

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*Who are the "angels that sinned," referred to in 2 Peter ii. 4; Jude 6?*  
 THE language used concerning them shows that they are not the "wicked spirits in the heavenlies" (Eph. vi.), who are to be cast out of heaven. (Rev. xii.) It is unsafe to hazard conjectures, and our wisdom in this as in other matters is to await the unfoldings of eternity.



## “BE STILL.”

“Be still, and know that I am God.”—PSALM xli. 10.

IF we carry our minds back to the city of Cæsarea in the year A.D. 62, we find Paul a prisoner under the power of the Roman governor; with liberty, however, to receive visits from his friends. Had we been amongst their number, we should probably have asked the beloved apostle how he liked the enforced rest and quiet of those two long years; how, with his ceaseless energy, and burning zeal to accomplish the work put into his hands, he could endure a confinement that allowed him nothing more than the occasional visit of his friends. Had such a question been asked, the answer would doubtless have been given in much the same words as those written to the Philippians when he was in somewhat similar circumstances, “I know how to be abased, and I know also how to abound: in every thing and in all things have I learned the secret both to be filled and to be hungry, both to abound and to be in want. I can do all things in Him that strengtheneth me” (Phil. iv. 12-13, R.V.); and he might have added, that he had learned the secret both how to do and *not to do*.

It is well for us to remember that however much God values the work He may do *by* us, He values far more the work that He does *in* us; for that which He does in us will pre-eminently manifest the grace which makes us vessels of His eternal glory. When laid aside from the activities of service, workers for the Master are prone to forget this, and a painful sense of useless inactivity is taken advantage of by Satan to mar that calmness of soul which is needful for the carrying on of God’s mighty work

within, in order that the faithful servant may thereby be ripened, it may be for brighter service here, it may be for brighter service yonder. Lessons in being "still" have to be learned by every child of God sooner or later, and we are often slow in learning these lessons by which God seeks to bring out the softer tones of the divine likeness, the lowlier features of divine grace—those doubly precious resemblances to the character of Christ, which it is well nigh impossible to fix upon the soul amidst the din of strife, the activities of real service, and the outworkings of the energies of faith. In the one case the heart is occupied with its own workings and doings for the Master; in the other it yields to the quiet operation of God's workings and transformings, and learns the blessed secret of that direct and personal knowledge of God into which the believing soul is led in the quiet stillness of apparently unoccupied hours. From necessity rather than from choice the heart is then contented *not to do*, that God may the more effectually do what He sees needful, in order to portray by His Spirit upon the living tables of the heart the image and likeness of Christ. God's object, it may be, is to make His child no longer a preacher, a speaker, or a doer; but a silent epistle to be read by men and angels.

The following story about a child beautifully illustrates this. A friend going once to call upon a lady, found her child seated by her side, and while the little one's eyes beamed with intelligence, neither did her little tongue speak nor did her hands move; she was silent and motionless. The friend was struck at the quietness of the child, and before leaving asked her what she was doing. Her reply was, "I am learning my *still* lesson." How precious an answer! How obedient the child; how wise the mother! Now, what if God is again and again teaching His faithful ones that of all lessons this "*still*" lesson is

the most important? Must not the heart of our Father in heaven rejoice with exceeding joy when he sees those whom He loves so well, and whose eternal destinies are to Him of such priceless value, quietly and calmly content to *sit still*, and *not to do*, seeking in His holy presence to learn their lesson well, and to please Him who takes them aside by “the still waters” to rest awhile?

It is thus God teaches us, and well it is for us if we are able to say—

“ I am not eager, strong, or bold—

All that is past !

And I am learning *not to do*,

At last, at last !

My half-day's work is almost done—

'Tis all my part ;

Now I would bring my patient God

A patient heart.”

Truly we have a patient God, and we need continually to echo the prayer of the apostle in 2 Thess. iii. 5, “The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patience of Christ.” Our poor impatient hearts need to be guided into that love which can alone bring forth in us the patience of which Christ is the example, and of which James writes, “Let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.” How often we need to be reminded of those words of Psalm xlv. — “*Be still and know that I am God !*” It is not till we are still, content not to do, when He so appoints, that we can realize the precious truth that He is GOD. There is often more pride in our restless inability to be still than we are aware of; and our loving Father has often to use hard means to break the neck of our pride, and to lay our stubborn self-importance low in the dust. The tempest, the shakings and swellings, indicated in the Psalm, add force to the injunction to “be still.”

May the Lord in His infinite mercy give to all His loved ones whom He has for a season taken aside, such an appreciation of their golden opportunity, that the deep and precious teaching of their "still" lesson may be well learned, and yield a rich present joy as well as a precious eternal reward.

H. G.

"I WILL GUIDE THEE WITH MINE EYE."

Without a fear, without a care—  
 Thus would I wait, my Lord,  
 Watching Thy gracious eyes until  
 My heart, prepared to do Thy will,  
 Springs forward at Thy word ;  
 Then would I run unweariedly,  
 To do the work Thou biddest me.

Thus would I—but my coward soul  
 Does aye elude my will,  
 And, trembling, shrinks from pain and grief.  
 And quails in anxious unbelief  
 From faintest touch of ill !  
 My Lord, I mourn in shame and tears  
 These unbelieving cares and fears.

Cast out the terror from my heart,  
 Keep me from vain alarm,  
 Ever consenting, Lord, to all  
 Thy will for me in great, and small,  
 Fearless of loss and harm ;  
 Instruct me, rule me by Thy Word,  
 And use me as Thou wilt, my Lord.

Thus shall I ready be to run,  
 Thus willing, Lord, to wait ;  
 My lightened heart shall learn to sing.  
 With thanks accepting everything  
 Thy will doth dedicate  
 To train my soul for coming days  
 Of everlasting love and praise.

E. S. W.

## "THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT."

MATT. V.—VII.

THE sixth chapter of Luke's Gospel is evidently a brief counterpart of Matt. v.—vii. ; for it begins and ends as the "Sermon on the Mount" does, and is almost wholly composed of portions of it. Other portions lie here and there in Luke's Gospel, from which it would seem that Matthew gives in these chapters a summary of our Lord's Galilean *teachings*, as he gives in chapters viii. and ix. a summary of His Galilean *miracles* ; for these also are found in different parts of Luke.

We may therefore regard Matt. v.—vii. as an announcement and a declaration by the Lord, of the holiness and heavenly-mindedness of that "kingdom of the heavens\*" which had already, in His own blessed Person, come down on a visit to earth. This "kingdom of the heavens" is the same as the "kingdom of God" in the other Gospels. "Kingdom of the heavens" points to the place *above* from whence the King had already come in grace, and would hereafter come in glory. Compare our Lord's words to Pilate in John xviii. 36, "My kingdom is *not of this world* . . . . now is My kingdom *not from hence*." Most justly, therefore, does He call it "The kingdom of the heavens." Compare also God's message to Nebuchadnezzar in Dan. iv. 26, "They shall drive thee from men . . . . till thou know . . . . that *the heavens do rule*." The expression, "kingdom of God" points to God Himself as the one only *source* of power or authority in the heavenly kingdom.

\* This comprehensive expression gives the exact meaning of the original, as Mr. Newberry's Bible rightly shows.

Very opposite in every way are earth's kingdoms, even if the heart of the king is under the power of the truth of God. Nimrod, the first monarch of earth, was in God's view, or "before the Lord," only a "mighty hunter"—making prey of men, that is to say, as the hunter does of animals; yet was he necessary when men by sin had become as beasts for violence. When the great Gentile empires were presented in vision to Daniel, it was under the figure of four beasts—see chapter vii. And even the God-given kingdom of Israel had debased itself more and worse than the Gentile kingdoms, and had so abused the law which had been given to teach them the blessed "fear of the Lord," that it was employed for worldly and hypocritical purposes.

It was after this manifestation of earth's kings and kingdoms that our Lord gave His divine announcement of the "kingdom of the heavens," and set forth, through its laws and statutes, the *highest spirituality*, in utmost possible contrast with the vain religious worldliness of His own nation.

The "Sermon on the Mount" is full of such contrasts; and it also shows that all the spirituality it inculcates was hidden in the law given by God at Sinai, though only a measure of this had ever been pressed on the people (see Matt. xix. 7, 8); and even that small measure had been rejected.

Having briefly glanced at the "Sermon on the Mount," as a whole, we may look a little at its internal structure, and for this purpose may divide it into three parts.

1.—The introduction.

2.—The excellence of a God-wrought holiness, and its vast superiority over mere national Jewish religion

3.—Concluding exhortations and warnings.

Space will only allow of a few remarks under each of these heads.

(1) The introduction consists of what are called the "Beatitudes." With them we have only to compare the promises under the law in Deut. xxviii. to see the vast superiority of these spiritual blessings compared with Israel's temporal ones. Earthly blessings and prosperity in this life are God's prerogative to give, and His only; and it pleased Him under the Old Testament to connect them, as a rule, with faith and obedience. But in the "kingdom of the heavens" it is quite otherwise. In the blessings uttered by our Lord there is a marked absence of earthly advantage. Both the internal and external characteristics of the subjects of the heavenly kingdom are those of the Spirit, not those of the flesh.

It is instructive to notice that in these chapters the blessings precede any mention of precepts or duties. The word used, *makarios*, means "happy" as well as "blessed," and points to the *joys* of Christ's disciples rather than to the gain or profit of His service. Indeed, the same word is used by Paul in the expressions "the *blessed* God," and "the *blessed* and only Potentate," in 1 Tim. i. 11; vi. 15. God *rejoices* in all His works, and declares that this characteristic happiness belongs to His children who are serving Him here below. This bright and joyful introduction to all the subsequent precepts reminds us of Neh. viii. 10, "The *joy* of the Lord is your strength."

(2) The excellence of a divine holiness as inwrought in the believer is the theme of the second and larger part of our Lord's discourse; from chap. v. 13 to vii. 12. The divisions under this head are in beautiful order.

The practical character, amongst men, of the "blessed" ones is given in chap. v. 13-20. So distinct from the world are they, that they are described as "the salt of the

earth" and "the light of the world"; they preserve it from corruption, and are as luminaries from above by their good works. Only thus are they fit to be teachers of the law and will of God; they first *DO*, and next *teach*, and are the very opposite of the "Scribes and Pharisees" of a mere outward religion, who "say, and do not."

The lofty spirituality of the laws of the kingdom of the heavens is unfolded in chap. v. 21-48, and our Lord most fittingly illustrates this before a Jewish audience by showing how far the utmost requirements commanded by Moses are to be exceeded now. By His "but *I* say unto you," the sixth and seventh commandments of the Decalogue are made to apply to sins of the heart; simplicity and truthfulness of speech take the place of oaths; good is to be returned for evil, instead of retaliation for wrong; and love is to extend far beyond the neighbour, even to the enemy. As we listen to His teaching we are constrained to say, "Thy word is *very pure*: therefore Thy servant loveth it;" and also, "I have seen an *end of all perfection*; but Thy commandment is exceeding broad."

In the light of such a holy, acceptable, and perfect will of God we cry out, like Isaiah, "Unclean, unclean," and as to living it out and teaching it to others, we say with Paul, "Who is sufficient for these things?" Indeed we instinctively feel that in such an exposition of the law, just as in the parable of the Good Samaritan, our Lord was involuntarily giving a portrait of Himself.

In chap. vi. 1-18 we see the practical result of the heart's reception of this searching and spiritual law, in the matters of almsgiving, prayer, and fasting. They will be for God's eye or ear, and not for man's. Who is not reminded here, first, of the widow's mites, and next, of Him who had continued all night in prayer before He uttered this discourse? (See Luke vi. 12.)



The next section (chap. vi. 19-34) lifts from us the cares of life as to food and raiment. As the previous one put living sincerity into our offerings and our prayers, so this one bids us carry the truth that we have a "Father in the heavens" into the household, the workshop, the office, or the warehouse.

The last section, in chap. vii. 1-12, warns against a censorious and judging spirit towards other fellow-disciples. This is very suitably placed, for is it not just when we have honestly and devotedly sought to follow out the previous precepts, that Satan can most tempt us to judge others, whom we do not think to be as whole-hearted or obedient as we are? From Luke ix. 49, we see that it was when John was himself closely following the Master, that he forbade another, who, nevertheless, was casting out demons, in his Master's name, even as John was.

Verse 12, as to doing to others what we would they should do unto us, may be regarded as a divine summary of the previous part of the chapter; the word "therefore" with which it begins, implies this.

(3) How solemn is the last brief portion of the "Sermon on the Mount." Chap. vii. 13-28 contains final encouragements to the saints, and warns against false teachers who would, by their carnality, weaken the commands and lower the holiness which had been set forth by the Lord. Compare Paul's words in Acts xx. 29-35, on leaving the elders of the church at Ephesus.

The "strait gate" and "narrow way" seem also to have reference to our Lord's whole discourse, and tell of purity and heavenly-mindedness, even as the "wide gate" and "broad way" tell of the easy entrance and course of Pharisee or Sadducee religion.

The contrast between "grapes" and "figs" on the one hand, and "thorns" and "thistles" on the other, and be-

tween the good and bad trees and their respective fruits, belongs to all the present age, and affords a test for all who claim the privileges of the "kingdom of the heavens." That our Lord intended this prolonged application is seen by His reference to the day of His judicial action at the close of this age. It is here that He first uses the expression "that day." "Many will say to Me in *that day*."

The "Sermon" ends in solemn harmony with its contents. Side by side does the Lord put the precious *rock-built* life and life-work of His true disciples and sent ones, with the *fair-show* work of the mere plausible professor who has built on the sand, and who makes the awful discovery of the vanity of his life when the storm of wrath sweeps himself and everything else away.

Solomon's proverb, "A divine sentence is in the lips of the king: his mouth transgresses not in judgment," was never more true than in our Kingly Master's utterance in these chapters.

H. D.

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## A GOLDEN CHAIN;

### OR, GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE IN CHRIST.

"Whom He did *foreknow*, He also did *predestinate* . . . . whom He did *predestinate*, them He also *called*; and whom He *called*, them He also *justified*: and whom He *justified*, them He also *glorified*."—ROM. viii. 29, 30.

WE know that the Pauline epistles are not placed in the order in which they were written. The Epistle to the Romans, first in order, was not the first church-letter written by the apostle. But the order observed in the New Testament commends itself to the thoughtful, renewed mind as divinely fixed; that is to say, fixed by men who acknowledged God in the arrangement of the Scriptures, and who were guided by Him.

The object of the Holy Spirit in this epistle evidently

is to present, in the simplest and clearest manner, the ground on which God can and does justify the ungodly, in a way honourable to Himself and with safety to the believing sinner ; namely, in virtue of the death of His Son : “ being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus.” The epistle which is first in order thus settles the first grave question between the sinner and God, even his salvation. Although this is the special point, the prominent feature, of the Epistle to the Romans, it is not the only one ; but rather, from this point the Holy Spirit, by the apostle’s pen, leads us on and up, step by step, to the elevation and triumph with which the 8th chapter closes, and from whence Paul descends or branches off in chapters ix., x., and xi. to the national question of Israel and the Gentiles.

By these few general remarks we introduce the subject of this paper—“ *A Golden Chain ; or God’s purpose of grace in Christ.*”

With God counsel precedes action, and purpose gives birth to promise and prediction : hence “ calling,” one link in this chain, fulfils purpose—“ *called according to His purpose.*” In harmony with this is the order of the Spirit’s ministry in and through Christ. When Jehovah presented Him to Israel through Isaiah, He said, “ The spirit of Jehovah shall rest upon Him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and might ”—counsel first, and then might ; a blessed example to us to form our plans in secret with God, and then to act ; to think under His eye before we speak.

God, then, had a purpose of grace towards us before He called us with an effectual and holy calling, “ not according to works, but according to His purpose and grace given us in Christ Jesus before the world began.” (2 Tim. 1, 9.) And in the passage from Rom. viii., cited above, we have

the five links of this chain, which begin and end with God Himself. This order is ever true of all that emanates from God—"Of Him, and *through* Him, and *to* Him, are all things;" therefore, "to Him be the glory for ever."

In considering this subject we will follow the order observed by the Holy Spirit, and commence with—

### 1.—FOREKNOWLEDGE.

"Whom He did *foreknow*." The foreknowledge of God is declared by Himself, witnessed to by others, and proved by events. In Isaiah we find Jehovah repeatedly challenging idolators and idols on this ground; see chapters xli. 22-23; xlv. 10; and xlviii. 3-9. When instructing Jeremiah in his service as a prophet, He said, "Before I formed thee I *knew* thee" (chap. i. 5). In Acts iv. 28, we find the assembly of believers testifying to God's foreknowledge; and the facts referred to prove it. "Known unto God are all His works from the foundation of the world." Nothing that happens increases His knowledge or surprises Him, however new it may be to us. "He calleth things that be not, as though they were."

But what did God foreknow concerning these believers at Rome, and therefore concerning us? He foreknew their coming into being, time, place, and parentage, but did He foreknow or foresee any moral excellence, any good thing, anything better in them or in us than in others? Certainly not; all are alike born in sin and shapen in iniquity; there is no difference in this respect. All distinctions between man and man are outward and circumstantial, and before God *all*, in virtue of their descent from Adam, are sinners; and, as a fact, the saved are often the most unlikely by nature to be so. They were foreknown as those fitted for that exhibition of sovereign grace which is His glory; and, in the wisdom of God, only wise, they were "*predestinated*,"

according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will.

## 2.—PREDESTINATION.

Here again we have to enquire, What is predestination ? The word occurs several times in the New Testament ; it is therefore important that we should know its meaning. The English word “predestinate” is simply to decree or determine beforehand ; and the Greek word used here is similar—“to fix determinately, to decree, to destine beforehand.” See Acts iv. 28.

God, then, foreknew us as ruined in the first Adam and bearing His fallen image (1 Cor. xv. 49), and as therefore just suited to the display of His grace in Christ Jesus, the last Adam ; He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, definitely fixed or predestinated us in Christ *unto sonship* (Eph. i. 4-5), “to be conformed to the image of His Son” (Rom. viii. 29), that He might, in resurrection, be “the Firstborn among many brethren,” all by grace bearing the likeness of Him who is essentially the “image of the invisible God.”

Such was His purpose in Christ Jesus before time, and on the ground of this purpose He began to act on sinners at Rome in the apostle’s day, and since then on us. Finding us in sin’s darkness and death, “alienated from the life of God,” He “*called*” us.

## 3.—CALLING.

This is the third and centre link in this golden chain, and until we were brought under its power we had no warrant to trace the other links either backward or forward, but now we can do so with joy. What is it, then, to be “called ?” Other Scriptures refer to God’s call. Paul acknowledges these very Christians in Rome as among “the *called* of Jesus Christ.” Of himself he wrote to the

Galatians, "When it pleased God, who separated me (like Jeremiah) from my mother's womb, and *called* me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me;" and when he was defending the truth of God before the Galatians he expressed his astonishment that they were so soon removed from Him who "called" them in the grace of Christ. Is *calling*, then, the presentation of the gospel and the commandment to believe in it? It is surely far more than this, for observe, that those who are called are justified—"Whom He *called*, them He also justified." But all who hear the gospel and the command to believe it are not justified; therefore calling is something more than the outward hearing of the gospel. Yes, beloved fellow Christian, you and I know that it is nothing less than the sovereign act of God's mercy in regenerating the soul by His Spirit and His word: "As many as received Him . . . were *born of God*." (John i. 12-13.) "Of *His own will* begat He us by the word of truth." (James i. 18.) We know that the proud reasonings of man's corrupt heart rebel at this. In Paul's day human pride objected to it, replying against God; and now that it is more than ever rife it should be met with the same reproof with which Paul met it—"Who art thou, O man that repliest against God?"

In Adam's fall, the whole race of which he was the head also fell, and became as the clay, the "lump," of which Paul speaks in chapter ix. of this epistle. All were obnoxious to the justice of God, for if all had been left to perish, God would have been just, for all had sinned. But it is on this "lump" that the God of grace is pleased to act in sovereign right of mercy, "to show His glory on the vessels of *mercy* which He had *before prepared* unto glory, even on us whom He hath *called*, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles."

It is sad to find the amount of opposition that exists against this truth even among God's children, owing to the lack of full subjection to God's word. But the fact remains. God *called* then and calls now, and "whom He called, them He also *justified*."

#### 4.—JUSTIFICATION.

What is it to be justified? "How shall man be just with God?" was a question raised by Job of old. The verb "to justify" in the original means "to hold as guiltless, to accept as righteous;" therefore to be justified is to be cleared, acquitted, approved, and accepted. If we are by nature guilty and condemned, and if there is to be no compromise of God's character, but the display of all His attributes—of justice equally with mercy; no lessening of the guilt of sin nor relaxing of the sentence against it—how is this to be effected? Again, if He who has the right to condemn and the power to execute the sentence is the One who clears and accepts, we still have to ask and discover *how*? The answer is given in the infallible word of God.

We have seen that it is "GOD who justifieth" (Rom. viii. 33); "The Scripture, foreseeing that GOD would justify the Gentiles through faith" (Gal. iii. 8); again, "That HE might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth." (Rom. iii. 26.) This He does in grace. Man has no claim on Him for justification; he deserves nothing but judgment; he is a sinner, declared by God to be such, and nothing else (Gen. vi. 5); his conduct without an exception proves it, for "there is none that doeth good, no not one" (Rom. iii. 12); and when convinced by the Holy Spirit of his real state he confesses it to be so. Therefore justification must be by grace, by free favour; and so it is written, "being justified *freely* by His grace." (Rom. iii. 26.)

Christ's finished work is the ground on which a righteous God, whose name is Holy, can honourably acquit all who believe on Christ Jesus. In Him we are justified—"justified by His *blood*," not by His life; but being reconciled by His death, we are also "saved by His life." By virtue of Christ's endless life, with all its activities and capabilities, we are preserved to the end, to eternity, for He has said, "Because I live ye shall live also." Faith enables our souls to apprehend the value of His justifying blood, and unites us to the living Christ of God, so that we are "justified by faith;" and the faith by which we are thus justified "without works," produces good works; and therefore, as James teaches, we are also "justified by works."

What grace of God to pardon and accept in the Son of His love everyone who rests in Him and in His finished work! What more could He do? Yet one thing more which forms the last link in this chain—"Whom He justified, them He also *glorified*."

#### 5.—GLORY.

In answer to the prayer of the Lord Jesus in John xvii. 1, God has glorified His Son (Acts iii. 13), taking Him up from the dust of death into which He had brought Him for our sakes, receiving Him up into heaven, and seating 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 age, but in that which is to come, the age of millennial glory. God "raised Him up from the dead and gave Him glory," and in Him, the members of His body, the church, have been raised up also, and made to sit together with Him in the heavenlies, so that, virtually, we have been "glorified." Yes, God who reached us by the wondrous stoop of His beloved Son unto



death, has uplifted us by His power through the cross, and has brought us to HIMSELF, to participate in the glory He has given to Christ ; and that glory will yet be manifested, for “when Christ, who is our life, shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory.”

God’s foreknowledge and predestination of us were before time ; we have experienced this calling in time, and give God thanks. On the testimony of His word we rest, assured that we *are* justified by His grace through faith, and we rejoice ; but for the last link—our manifestation in glory—we hope, and are called patiently to wait. “When He shall be manifested we shall be like Him,” and shall be glorified together with Him.

Thus, beloved fellow-saints, we see that God has, for His own eternal glory and our eternal joy, bound us to Himself by this golden chain of inseparable links ; and may the knowledge and belief of this move us to diligence, to constant, simple trust, and to whole-hearted devotedness in service, and also enable us joyfully to endure whatever suffering He is pleased to lead us through. To Him be glory. Amen.

H. H.

## ORDER AND DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH.

### NOTES OF BIBLE-READING AT A CONFERENCE.

IN the early chapters of the Acts we see the Church in its best state. It was built up by prayer and testimony. The 3000 were added, and obedience to the Lord followed in baptism and the breaking of bread. Further on we read that the churches had “peace,” and were “edified” and “walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost, were multiplied.” This is the *normal* state of the Church of God, and it is a rightly ordered church which walks after this pattern.

If in our assemblies it is otherwise, our business is to deal with God as to the cause. God makes a church by turning sinners and enemies into *children*, and then filling them with His Spirit. It rejoices God to see sinners trusting His Son, but we are apt to forget that the great desire of His heart is to have obedient children, who may be glad with Himself.

The natural course of things, so to speak, is that God's love should ever be flowing into our hearts, and flowing out from us. If this is not the case there is some hindrance within us. It would not have required much to stop the flow of the golden oil to the lamps through the golden pipes of which we read in Zech. v.; and so it is with us; a very little thing will grieve the Spirit, and our love will wax cold and our light become dim.

"Walking in the fear of the Lord" is the highest pattern, and if we thus walk, though the Lord does not give power to work miracles, we shall have power without them, and shall be content, because we have the Spirit of Christ.

The great business of Satan is to lead us to follow the men of the world in self-will and self-exaltation. The great business of the Spirit of God is to fill us with self-abasement and the desire to please God after the perfect pattern of the blessed Lord. Keeping Him before us, and seeking to be like Him, we may count upon the fulfilment of that promise of promises, "If in anything ye be *otherwise minded*, God shall reveal *even this* to you." God will show us any secret fault that may be hindering our souls' progress and conformity to Christ. Instead of forgetting past attainments, we may be indulging some lurking self-satisfaction which needs to be laid bare.

God would first teach us self-discipline, and thereby would teach us how to deal with the sick fellow-members

of Christ. The discipline of God in which we have to exercise ourselves is, first, that of the Father towards us as children ; and secondly, that of the Lord towards us as servants. Christ is the perfect example of a son to a father, and of a servant to a master.

In Paul we have an example of the peculiar discipline of the Lord towards His servants. In the expression, "Lest I should be exalted," we perceive a disciplined man ; "there was given me," he adds—not by the Father, but by the Lord Jesus, who was dealing with him as a servant—"a thorn in the flesh." Discipline does not always mean positive correction for faults ; it may be godly training. Paul's thorn in the flesh was given, not because he *was* exalted, but to prevent his being so—to keep out the thorn of pride from his conscience.

The rules by which we are to discipline ourselves are found in the Word of God, and the power is that of the indwelling Spirit of God. "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted," said our Lord, and He who gave precept and example as to humiliation is now the highly-exalted One.

When the apostle learned the value of the thorn in his flesh, he *welcomed* everything that would serve the purpose of keeping down his flesh and helping him in the work of self-judgment. "*Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me : therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions.*" Instead of seeking to gain deep soul-profit by the difficulties that try our flesh, are we not too much occupied with getting rid of them ? After *thrice* beseeching the Lord, Paul learned his lesson.

If every company of saints were self-disciplined ones, having Christ before the heart and conscience as the

pattern whereby to walk as children and servants, each one would be filling the place for which he was baptized into the body by the "one Spirit." There would then be as many shepherds and overseers, teachers, and evangelists as God would have. If the Spirit of God were unhindered the overseers would be doing their work, the evangelists theirs, and so with every gift. But from lack of self-judgment there are many who do not fulfil their obligations, who will see their accountability when it is too late—in the day of the Lord.

If we fail to exercise self-judgment the Lord bids us to expect His own exercise of judgment. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and *many sleep*." Having disabled heart and conscience they could no longer discern the Lord's body, and were taken away from service by the direct judgment of the Lord. Sickness and death are not, however, always in judgment. Many are weak and sickly, and yet pleasing to God, like Timothy. Some of Christ's most faithful servants have been taken away in their early days, not in judgment to them, but possibly to others.

The pattern of a church is naturally in the line of John xvii., in which the oneness between the Father and the Son is so manifest. There should be among us oneness of mind and judgment as to the things which please God. Contrary judgments call for humiliation and forbearance, and searching of heart as to giving up our own will; but there is no need of giving up one jot or tittle of the will of God. In dealing with diversity of judgment we need to know God in the character of the "God of patience and comfort," and to receive the "patience and comfort" which the word of God supplies. There is, perhaps, nothing that we have need to grieve over so much as the conscious want of patience one with another. Rom.

xiv. 1-7, expresses our *habitual* intercourse towards others of the family of God, the way in which we should ever receive and deal with each other. It shows the line of conduct towards all within the heavenly family.

As difficulties frequently occur in these days about receiving children of God, would the reception of Paul at Jerusalem, as given in Acts ix. 26-28, be a pattern for us to follow?

May not the manner of his reception be regarded rather as an example of God's condescension to the weakness of His children? When Ananias was instructed by the Lord to go to a certain house to find a *praying* Paul he hesitated, and limited the power of God by his unbelief. Had he remembered the grace that had been shown to himself he would have rejoiced that Saul of Tarsus, the persecutor, had become a member of Christ. The same unbelieving spirit was manifested by the church at Jerusalem, as the course which they took shows. Saul "assayed to join himself to the disciples," which was the natural course for him to take, but "they were *all* afraid of him, and believed not that he was a disciple." Their fear arose from unbelief, and this led Barnabas to bring him before the apostles.

The reception of Paul in Acts ix. was altogether exceptional, and therefore is not to be taken as a rule. Let us not, in the exercise of needful care, resort to an extreme course that will show our lack of faith in God, and let us not allow the difficulties around us to lead to the adoption of rules unauthorized by Scripture.

An *example* from Scripture ought never to be enforced as if it had the authority of a *precept*. An example is given for our instruction, and we have to weigh surrounding circumstances carefully before we can scripturally follow it. A precept is given by infinite wisdom, and, when

rightly applied, lays us under divine obligation to obey it under all circumstances. An example calls for the exercise of wisdom, and may have elements that might not recur again.

What are the scriptural rules as to receiving believers ? It would be difficult to find any, and we are cast upon God for wisdom. In the apostles' days the Spirit of God wrought first *in* the church, and then *by* the church, and those who were converted joined themselves "to their own company," their own family. We do not read of their being proposed for fellowship; they were in fellowship, and recognised by those already in it. Knowing little of the truth of the Head and members, they held it instinctively; they were in the body, of the household of faith, and were dealt with according to the rules of the house.

In early days he who confessed Christ carried his own commendation with him. Letters of commendation are in Scripture chiefly connected with those who minister in the church as servants. If anyone coming from one place to another now requires a letter of commendation, it is because of the times we live in rather than according to the strict pattern of Scripture; it is a thought strange to Acts ix. that Saul ought to have had a letter of commendation. If one dead in sins was quickened by the Spirit, it would be the natural outflow of the love of the Spirit to join himself to the disciples, and they would discern and receive him on his own testimony. In those days sheep were sheep, and wolves were wolves, but "false brethren" soon found their way into the church. Now the *world* is called "Christian," and therefore we have to be much on our guard. But then our tendency is to make a *fence*, instead of looking to God. For lack of self-judgment, holiness, and power, we seek to compensate by stringent church enactments. But when life and power

go out, only the tomb remains. Let us beware of a lifeless formalism.

If there were "great grace" there would be the same revealed power as when it was said, "and of the rest durst no man join himself to them;" and our obligation is to have that power. Were we filled with the Spirit we should burn out those who are not of God, as the warmth of the fire drove out the viper in the island of Melita, and it did Paul no harm though it fastened on his hand.

The spirituality of the church would be an effective security against the continuance of evil in its midst even if it entered. It would become natural for the church to appeal to Him who is the Lord of the house, to take a matter in hand that was too hard for them, and He would deal with it, while they exercised self-judgment. Lacking this, our rules are a poor security.

An ancient Greek offered to build a philosopher a house which thieves could not rob. He replied, "You need not; my house is free from thieves already, because I have nothing in it to be stolen." When Judas had nothing to gain he went out.

In judging those who are within, we have safe rules as touching corrupt doctrine and corrupt deeds. In 1 Tim. i. 18-20, it is corrupt doctrine that severs a good conscience from the faith. Paul's exercise as to maintaining a good and tender conscience is constantly manifested. It is not difficult for self-judged persons to judge others; and no church judgment is effectual that does not lead to self-judgment. When the flesh in Christians is unjudged, the carrying out of the judgment of Christ is almost impossible. Those who know least of self-judgment are generally the harshest in their judgment of others. Peter, failing to judge himself for sleeping in Gethsemane, was quick to grasp the sword to cut off the high priest's ser-

vant's ear, and was the first to deny his Lord. The self-judged person is at the mercy seat, and he leads the person he desires to rebuke to that judgment seat for self-judgment and self-correction.

In our judgments as to discipline, and in everything else, we are bound to be of one mind; and wherein we are not so, it becomes us to confess it, and not to turn our backs upon any difficulty, but to wait on God with the certainty that He will give oneness of mind.

If at the command of Christ, and with the mind and bowels of Christ, we put away any from fellowship, we must reckon upon 2 Cor. ii. being made good to us in their restoration. We only begin the matter of restoration by putting away, and should not rest till restoration gives joy to God and to our fellow-saints.

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#### NOTES AND REPLIES.

*Who are the "just men" in Heb. xii. 23, and what is meant by their being "made perfect"?*

THE "general assembly" of which the apostle writes in this verse points to the aggregate of the redeemed as forming one united whole. The "spirits of the just" would refer to those who have finished their earthly course, and "made perfect" looks onward to resurrection. The death and resurrection of Christ reveal to us what could only have been dimly apprehended by Old Testament saints, God having provided some better thing for us. Verses 22-24 in their actual accomplishment await the resurrection of the body, but that which lies before us as an object of hope is presented to us in Scripture for faith's present grasp. Faith is the substance, the ground of confidence, of things hoped for, and the evidence, or demonstration, of things not yet seen. That which is before us should, by faith, be made a help to our present life and walk.

*Is the "day of atonement" (Lev. xvi.) prospective or retrospective?*

THE confession of Israel's sins, iniquities and transgressions, by the high priest on the day of atonement could, we think, only have been in retrospect of the *past* year. On that day the standing of the nation, as regards the flesh, might be expressed in the memorable words of Balaam: "He hath not beheld iniquity in Jacob, neither seen perverseness in Israel" (Num. xxiii. 21), and they could begin another year in the consciousness of God's favour and presence.



## THE PARABLE OF THE POUNDS,

### PROPHETICALLY CONSIDERED.

THE truth of the Lord's advent is intended to have a practical bearing on our whole Christian life. In our worship we are told by the apostle to commemorate the Lord's death in the breaking of bread "*till He come;*" and from the lips of our blessed Lord Himself, in the parable of the pounds in Luke xix., the same event is brought before us in all our service by the command, "Occupy *till I come.*"

The circumstances under which this parable was spoken are peculiarly interesting. On the day preceding the tenth of the month Abib, the passover lamb was selected, and on the same day our Lord made His public entry into Jerusalem, presenting Himself under the double aspect of the spotless Lamb of God, and Zion's holy King, thus uniting in His own blessed person the salvation that was to be at the cost of His own blood, and the righteousness of that kingdom which was to be founded on His cross.

There seems to have been a strange awakening consciousness of some important issue, which probably none understood; arising, it may be, from something in the very appearance of our Lord, as He thus stood before them on His way to consummate the mighty work for which He had come into the world. He was, so to speak, already treading the path of victory, and the glory of the coming kingdom was irradiating His countenance, and carrying the conviction to those who followed Him, that "the kingdom of God should immediately appear."

As our Lord draws nearer to the cross, the visions of

the kingdom seem all the more to occupy His thoughts, albeit the pathway lay through Gethsemane, Calvary, and the grave. Thus we find it in the chapter before us, also in chapter xxi., and again, more remarkably still, in chapter xxii, as revealed in those loving words spoken to His disciples ere He went from the supper table to the garden—"I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me; that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom."

In the parable of the pounds our Lord describes Himself (i.) as a nobleman going into a far country, (ii.) to receive for Himself a kingdom, and (iii.) to return. The whole tone of the parable indicates that He designed to disabuse the minds of His followers of the idea that the kingdom was then to be established; and had the disciples understood this, they would not have asked on the day of His ascension into heaven, "Wilt Thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?"

(i.) The Lord's departure from this world is given to us at the end of this gospel; (ii.) His receiving the kingdom, in Rev. v., when He takes the seven-sealed book from the hand of Him who sits upon the throne; and (iii.) His return to take an account with His servants and to punish His enemies, is the theme of all the prophetic writings.

Two classes are mentioned in this parable, the servants and the citizens; and the former are divided into the faithful and unfaithful. These "servants" include all professed Christians, and the "citizens" represent the enemies, especially the Jewish nation, who are here described as saying, "We will not have this man to reign over us," words which were soon uttered by their own lips.

In a previous parable in this Gospel the Lord had said, in the person of the Good Samaritan, when committing the wounded man to the keeper of the inn, "Whatsoever

thou spendest more, *when I come again* I will repay thee," and now, in the parable before us, as the Master speaking to His servants, He says, "Occupy till I come;" that is, carry on in the meanwhile the business that has been committed to your care. In the parable of the talents in Matthew, the servants are entrusted with different amounts—one, five, and ten talents—but the faithful ones receive identically the same commendation and reward, because proportionately rendering the same service; but in the parable of the pounds, while the amount received in each case is the same, the result of their respective labours is different, and their rewards vary greatly.

A divine righteousness is thus brought to bear upon the subject of rewards hereafter, which must never be lost sight of, and this is especially noticeable in the words spoken by the apostle Paul, when he knew that the time of his departure was at hand—"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of *righteousness*, which the Lord, the *righteous Judge*, shall give me at that day;" and, as if to show that love of the appearing of Christ could not possibly exist without faithfulness in service, he adds "and not to me only, but unto them also that love His appearing."

There is much in this parable that in principle, so far as the faithful servants are concerned, connects itself with the judgment-seat of Christ, corresponding with the time when the nobleman returns, having received the kingdom, and his servants are called that he may see how much each man has gained by trading. The apostle Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, says in reference to builders and workers in the church of God, that if on the one hand any man build upon the foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, or on the other, wood, hay, stubble, "each

man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire;" and according to the result of the proving by fire will be the reward on the one side, or the loss on the other. This is strikingly illustrated in the parable under review. The first servant comes with the result of his diligent labour, and lays ten pounds at his master's feet; to him the nobleman says, "Well, thou good servant, because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." Here is one like the apostle Paul himself, whose one aim in life had been to serve the gracious Master who had loved him and given Himself for him, and he was content to suffer the loss of all things, and to count them but dung, that he might win Christ. How sweet to such an one in that day will be those precious words from the Master's lips, "Thou *good* servant!" What a compensation for all toil, and loss, and suffering, will such a commendation be! Let us remember also the force of the word "faithful." In these days we are too prone to regard apparent success in work rather than faithfulness of heart and obedience of life. As stewards, we are required to be *faithful*, and to him who regards things aright, all that he has, and all that he is, belongs to his Master; he is a slave, bought at an infinite price, and all his rights belong to Him who redeemed him.

It is further interesting to observe the disproportion between the "very little" in which he was found faithful, and the greatness of his reward. One pound was all that he had received; his patient toil had made it ten; and now "ten cities" are placed under his control. Truly the heart will say, when the awards of service are given hereafter, that a little work has reaped an exceeding great and abundant reward, and workers for our Master will wonder at the eternal recompense of the labours of this fleeting

life. May this thought make us prize and use yet more and more each passing moment that bears us onward to eternity.

The second servant brings only five pounds for the one pound entrusted to him. He had received from his lord the same as the one who went before him, but how different is the result of his labour! We can but infer that there had been less whole-heartedness in service, a lack of entire consecration to his master's interests, and the using of opportunities for his own selfish gratification and purposes. Half his time had been spent for himself and half for his master; and he had forgotten that as he was himself "bought with a price," his master had a claim to all. Like the one of whom the apostle speaks in 2 Cor. iii. he suffers loss when he comes before the judgment-seat, and instead of being over ten cities, he is placed over five only. Nor is it undeserving of notice, that he receives not those precious words of approval, "Thou good servant," so grateful to the ears of that whole-hearted servant who had given his lord his *all*, and brought him the *ten* pounds. What makes the omission the more remarkable in this case is the fact, already noticed, that in the parable of the talents in Matt. xxv., the one who receives two talents and brings two more, is commended in precisely the same terms as the one who received five talents and brought other five.

A word now upon the unfaithful servant. The charge made against him was not that he had misused, or spent for his own selfish ends, the pound entrusted to him, but simply that, with a heart unappreciative of his Master's character and claims, he had folded it up in a napkin, and left it unused. To him the Master says, "Thou *wicked* servant." This at once stamps his character, and shows that he does not represent a believer, however weak, frail, and shortcoming, but an unbeliever, who fails to

realise his responsibility to God as a servant, and virtually disowns His claims upon him. Like those spoken of by the apostle in Hebrews ii., he has *neglected* God's salvation. It is well to remember and to remind the sinner of God's claims, for man is very prone to think that if he does no definite wrong or injury he will escape the righteous judgment of God; forgetting that man is punished not only for what he does amiss, but also for what he neglects to do.

That faithful servants will have their respective places of honour in the kingdom, is taught by David's rewards to his true followers when he came to the throne, and is also manifest from the Lord's parting words to His disciples before they went from the supper table to Gethsemane, to which we have already referred—"I appoint unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed unto Me, that ye may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."

But while at the heavenly judgment-seat the Lord's servants receive their reward, the enemies have also to be judged, as we read in those solemn words with which the parable closes: "But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring them hither and slay them before Me." A few words on this point will show how deeply prophetic this parable is.

In verse 14 we read, "But His citizens hated Him, and sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." "Behold your King!" was Pilate's utterance to the Jews when the Lord stood before him; but they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him; crucify Him!" When Pilate asked, "Shall I crucify your King?" the chief priests answered, "We have no king but Caesar." They who had chosen the murderer Barabbas,

instead of God's Christ, now choose the world's Cæsar instead of God's King. As in the case of their cry, "His blood be on us and on our children," God holds them to their choice; and as our Lord foretells, the time will come when those that received not Him who came in His Father's name will receive another who will come in his own name (John v. 43). The Cæsar whom they had chosen was soon to destroy their city, their temple, and their people; and the Antichrist, that other who will come in his own name, will yet more terribly prove Himself to be the very emissary of Satan—a Barabbas and a Nero in one.

The message of rejection in the parable is not, however, so much one given to the Lord in person, as one sent after Him when He had left the world; and this corresponds with the rejection of the testimony to Christ given by Peter to the Jewish people, the high priest and rulers, in the earlier chapters of the Acts; afterwards by Stephen, and finally by Paul, when he stood before the council in Jerusalem. Thus the Jewish people literally sent the message "after Him," and they are sending it still.

In Luke xxi., our Lord, referring to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, speaks of it as the commencement of those "days of vengeance" which run their terrible course, until the "times of the Gentiles" end in the destruction of Antichrist in the latter day. The especial time, however, to which the slaying of the enemies refers, is when the Lord returns, having received the kingdom. From the book of Daniel we learn that the Jewish people will yet hold a national position in their own land, probably occupying precisely the same relation to the Gentile powers that they did in the time of our Lord. Daniel's vision of the seventy weeks teaches us that after sixty and nine weeks the Messiah shall be cut off,

and, as the margin reads, "shall have nothing." Having come as Israel's King and God's Anointed, His claims are rejected, and He is cut off, and goes back to the God who sent Him. We then read that "the people [*i.e.*, the Romans] of the prince that shall come [*i.e.* the Antichrist of the future] shall destroy the city and the sanctuary," as fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by Titus, A.D. 70; but we read further, "And the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined." This carries us on to the consummation of the times of the Gentiles, and we are told that then the prince mentioned before (the "man of sin," of 2 Thess. and the "wild beast" of Rev. xiii.) "shall confirm a covenant with many for one week." This implies that the Jewish nation, who had refused the covenant of God's grace as presented to them in Christ, and had crucified God's King, will then fulfil the solemn words of Isaiah lvii., "Thou wentest to the king with ointment, and didst increase thy perfumes, and didst debase thyself, even unto hell." But the Jew, who has thus entered into covenant with Antichrist, will have to learn that he, like Satan, under whose power he acts and by whom he is guided, is both a murderer and a liar; for the covenant made is broken, their sacrifice and oblation is made to cease, and in their temple shall rest "the abomination that maketh desolate." This is the time of God's final vengeance on Jerusalem, when the blood of the Son of God shall be avenged, and to this terrible time our Lord refers in Matt. xxiv., when He quotes the words spoken by Daniel; and He adds, "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time; no, nor ever shall be; and except those days had been shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake, those days shall be



shortened." The holy seed of Isaiah vi. 13 will be the substance, *i.e.*, the stock of the Israel of the future, and the divided and scattered nation shall be gathered, and shall once more become one, when they look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn.

It is thus that God makes man the arbiter of his fate, and He will use for the destruction of a rebel people that very power which they have invoked, thus revealing to all time that the God who is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin," is yet the God of holy vengeance and of retributive justice, "who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children."

From this reference to the "enemies" in the parable, we discern the thoughts that were welling up in the mind of the Holy One, as He foresaw what His rejection would cost the devoted nation of Israel, whom He came to bless, and to gather under His wings. He saw what lay behind the indignation of Scribes and Pharisees, as they observed the momentary triumph with which the lowly King was received by the multitude on approaching the city; but *His* heart was occupied with the miseries that awaited the doomed city, as we see from verse 41, "When He was come near, He beheld the city, and wept over it."

As we connect together the tears of the Son of God with the divine utterances concerning the judgment of the wicked, hard thoughts of the righteous judgment of God disappear. Those thoughts which naturally fill our minds then give way to a holy reverence and awe in the presence of heights of righteousness and holiness, and depths of sin and transgression, that God alone can understand.

## “THE BRIDE, THE LAMB’S WIFE.”\*

“Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb’s wife. And he . . . shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God, having the glory of God.”—REV. xxi. 9-11.

IN reading this account of the glory of the Church we may well ask, “Can vile, wretched sinners like ourselves have anything to do with this?” The answer comes, “These are the true sayings of God,” and on God’s testimony we may believe what would never have entered into the heart of man to conceive. Many of the Lord’s people only think of heaven as a place of exemption from pain and sorrow, but God reveals to us what heaven is, in order that our hearts may be set on things above. Most people would like to go there after they have done with earth, but not until then. The young man who left the Lord and went away sorrowful, preferred earth to heaven, but God would give us such a knowledge of heaven as would lift us above earth. It is the cross which speaks to us of the baseness of earthly things and the brightness of coming glory.

Satan has a most distinct interest in keeping us away from this Book of the Revelation, to the reading of which a peculiar blessing is attached. No other book so frequently mentions the Lamb, that Lamb who is our link with the glory, which but for Him we never could have. No other book tells us so much of the glory, but Satan wishes to keep us grovelling upon the earth. It is this book, too, which tells us most of Satan’s working and of his overthrow.

\* Notes of an address given by the late Mr. J. L. HARRIS about 1840.

John, who had been employed to tell the churches of their failures, had his heart cheered by these revelations of future glory. None of God's purposes can be frustrated, and notwithstanding all the Church's failure, God shows John in what way the Church is viewed by Him. How great is the contrast between what we see and what God sees !

The angel who carries John away in the Spirit and shews him the vision, was one of those who poured out the vials of God's wrath upon that which pretended to be the Church ; and this reminds us of the connection between grace and glory. We are apt to attach some glory to our own service, but as we read in Rev. vii., "These . . . have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb : *therefore* are they before the throne of God." Our eternal blessing is owing solely to the blood of the Lamb, and he who has touched the Lord Jesus Christ is as meet for glory as if he had been as devoted as the apostle Paul. The Lamb is the great object of the glory, and when ourselves in that glory we shall look back upon the riches of the grace which brought us there.

The eighteenth chapter of the Revelation describes the city of man's building, the centre of all human glory. But as the sentence, "The kingdom is departed," followed hard on Nebuchadnezzar's boast, so here, the proud exclamation, "I sit as a queen," is succeeded by "In one hour is thy judgment come." When man is most righteous, most perfect, as he thinks, then he is most ripe for judgment. Men are big with expectation of what will come in a few years' time, and none can say what man's energy may not produce ; but if God's word be true, man can only produce that which God is going to judge—Babylon, the "cage of unclean birds."

That holy Jerusalem, which is the symbol of the bride, has the glory of God. Of no account in man's estimation, she is one vast vessel to be filled with glory. All men want power; it will be vested in this city, which will have in Christ "the power of God and the wisdom of God." The glory will not add anything to us; it will only manifest what we have already. After man's city with man's glory has been destroyed, then God's city and God's glory will be revealed, and we in the heavens shall minister to those on the earth. God and man are as opposite as possible: the newspapers will tell us of the enlightenment of the nineteenth century, but God tells us that Christ is the light of the world. As to the Church generally, it has lost the power of testifying, and its light has been darkness, but God's purposes are not changed, and the only light that shall enlighten men in that day will be that which comes from this holy city.

"The city," John writes, "was pure gold," and this pure gold signifies that which is divine; there is no place for mere human nature. At present the eye is ever ready to see the workings of the flesh in the believer, but there we shall see Christ in each other, and ourselves reflect Christ. When God gave a religion to man He ordered a temple to be built, and man is still busy rearing temples; but now the Church is the temple of God, and hereafter God and the Lamb will be the temple of the Church. Then we shall know the value of the cross far more than we do now. In "the Lamb is the light thereof," we are taken above creation, for Jesus, the sun's creator, shone above the brightness of it, and God was light before He created the sun. The nations bring their glory into Babylon, but the saved nations will bring their glory into the golden city.

Redemption leads us to serve the Creator before the

creature. Purchased by the blood of the Lamb, all things are ours. Christians should know how rich they are, not by what they give up, but by what they have, for God has called us unto His kingdom and glory. We should tell men how generous our God is, and how we can give up what they are greedy of, because we have more. Is high birth a thing esteemed? We are born of God. Are noble associations coveted? We have fellowship with God.

The water of life has come to us through the Lamb, but now it is hindered in its course, instead of being like a smoothly-flowing stream. But then the flow will be unhindered; then we shall think the thoughts of Christ alone, and then the Lamb shall knit together the body into that unity for which so many Christians are now pining. The stream proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb circulates through the whole of that city, and flows forth in blessing to others.

God gives us everything in Christ, and it is this consciousness of possessing all things that makes a man lowly. The prospect of glory humbles more than the knowledge of being a ruined sinner. Then God shall have a worship beyond that which we now offer, and the highest happiness of heaven will find its expression in, "Thou art worthy!" The Revelation foretells the most alarming things, but it closes with the glory. Death and judgment await the natural man, but life and glory and incorruptibility are before us. The preciousness of these things is a safeguard against dangers present and future, and we may cheer ourselves with the remembrance that we are born from above, that the glory is our native clime, and that the Holy Ghost has been given to reveal to us the things that are freely given us of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

## WON AND SATISFIED.

“What have I to do any more with idols? I have heard HIM and observed HIM.”

—Hosea xiv. 8.

OH, vainly I thirsted, and eagerly sought  
 For some object for which I could live,  
 And many were offered, and eagerly grasped  
 For the joy which I thought they could give.  
 Each idol in turn held the throne of my heart,  
 Till—each failing to rest me—I bid them depart.

Yet I thought if I only had this or had that,  
 Its possession would rest me at last,  
 So I eagerly sought it, and inwardly pined  
 When swift from my vision it passed.  
 Oft I chid these vain yearnings—why, why should I care?  
 But, though stifled at times, the deep longing was there.

It was there—that strange thirst for I could not tell what,  
 Save 'twas that which I did not possess;  
 My idols had failed to fill up the great void,  
 I had drank—but my thirst was no less.  
 Vain search for a bliss which the world could not bring:  
 The secret was this—that my heart owned no King.

All had failed, I was helpless and weary—when lo!  
 The soft touch of a Hand on my soul,  
 And a Voice, whose low sweetness took captive my heart,  
 Whispered “Look unto ME and be whole.”  
 Oh, how swiftly my heart sprang to answer that voice,  
 And for ever and ever to make HIM its choice!

I have gazed on His face, I have basked in His smile;  
 Its strange sweetness has ravished my soul—  
 My idols are flung “to the moles and the bats,”  
 For shall JESUS have less than the whole  
 Of the heart He has deigned thus to woo for His own?  
 Nay—low at His feet it breathes “JESUS ALONE.”

O Master ! my Master ! Thou knowest my heart,  
 Its heaven is to gaze on Thy face,  
 For heaven will only in deeper degree  
 Be the bliss of Thy tender embrace.  
 Thy smile draws me captive—I gaze and adore ;  
 As for idols—what have I to do with them more ?

O Jesus ! Lord Jesus ! Thou callest me Thine,  
 The rebel is conquered at last ;  
 From the chains of the devil Thou settest me free,  
 But my Conqueror holdeth me fast.  
 Oh sweet to be held in the arms of Thy love,  
 Till I'm clasped to Thy heart in the mansions above !

E. J. A. P.

## A GREAT CONTRAST.

“Master, we would that Thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire.”

“Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy right hand, and the other on Thy left hand in Thy glory.”

“Not what I will, but what Thou wilt.” “I am come to do Thy will, O God.”

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

WHEN the blessed Son of God pledged Himself to the accomplishment of the will of God, He knew fully and perfectly what obedience to that will involved. But (wondrous mystery !) He was born into the world as an infant ; not simply with the physical helplessness of a babe, but with a mind both capable of, and needing, development, so that it could be said of Him that He “increased in wisdom” as well as in stature. And then with ripening knowledge there must have come to Him a growing sense of what He must endure in performing that work which He had undertaken. How the first sight of the altar and the sacrifice must have spoken to His tender heart ! And how the first view of Israel's high

priest in his robes of glory and beauty must have carried His thoughts forward to that blessed priesthood on which He would enter in the majesty of resurrection! Though He was born under no sentence of death, like the ordinary children of Adam, He well knew that death, even the death of atonement, would be the end of His earthly course, and that a blessed resurrection must quickly follow. That this was ever upon His heart is evident from many Scriptures, and that it weighed with increasing pressure upon His spirit as the time approached, is also apparent. Thus we read that as He was leading His disciples to Jerusalem for the last time, "Jesus went before them; and they were amazed; and as they followed they were afraid." (Mark x. 32.) There was something in His manner which they could not understand. He had twice, at least, told them of His approaching death, and, though they had not really taken in His words, they seem to have had some undefined dread upon their spirits, and even to have feared what the end would be. (See John xi. 8 16.) Now, for the third time, He calls the twelve aside and unfolds to them what is uppermost in His own mind. With great minuteness He foretells the various stages of the great transaction, placing the events in the exact order of occurrence. (Matt. xx. 17-19.)

(1)—He would be betrayed to the chief priests and scribes.

(2)—They would condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles.

(3)—They (the Gentiles) would mock, and scourge, and crucify Him.

(4)—The third day He would rise again.

But as Luke tells us, "they understood none of these things; and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things that were spoken." Though the Lord



was so explicit, they did not believe that He meant exactly what He said; they treated His words as they treated the prophecies of His humiliation, and as so many Christians now treat the prophecies of His kingdom and glory—they *spiritualized* them; that is, they explained them away. They took them as only figures of great conflicts out of which He would come victorious, and occupy that throne of which He had recently spoken, around which *their* thrones should be placed. (Matt. xix. 28.) What an intimation is given to us in all this of the absolute loneliness of the Lord Jesus! The great burden on His heart was shared by none of His disciples. *Their* eyes were upon the kingdom and the throne; *His* were upon the cross, with all its attendant sorrows, by which alone the kingdom could be reached and the throne established. But what He lacked in them He found in God; for He could always say, "He that sent Me is with Me; the Father hath not left Me alone; for I do always those things that please Him." (John viii. 29.) This blessed path of obedience, sympathy, and fellowship is open to us also through His rich grace.

An illustration of the ignorance and ambition of the disciples, though not unattended with the spirit of faith, is given in the narrative concerning James and John, which follows the Lord's prediction of His sufferings and death. (Matt. xx. 20-28; Mark x. 35-45.) Confident that the kingdom must come, whatever troubles might intervene, these two brethren approach the Lord, and, by the lips of their mother, make request that the two chief seats in that kingdom may be theirs. But Jesus answered and said, "Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" It is quite possible that they understood Him to refer to

the sufferings He had just spoken of, but when they readily replied, "We are able," it might surely have been said again, "Ye know not what ye undertake." But the Lord knew that if they were ignorant, they were true, that they were willing to endure for His sake, and He accepted their willing mind, and promised them a share in His endurance.

There was, indeed, a cup of which they could not drink, and a baptism which no creature could have endured. That cup He drank, and that baptism He passed through on behalf of His people. But in addition to His sin-bearing agony at the cross, He suffered constantly from the hand of man as God's righteous servant and witness in the earth. And of *these* sufferings, which culminated at Calvary, it is the privilege of His people to know the fellowship. This privilege He promises to the favoured two, and we are told how it was granted unto them. James was the first of the twelve to seal his testimony with his blood (Acts xii.)—a fact which implies that he was one of the most prominent witnesses of the Lord at that time in Jerusalem, Peter being the other; and John had the honour of serving the Lord longer (apparently) than any of his fellow-apostles, and of suffering much for His sake. When he sent to the Churches the Book of the Revelation, he described himself as their "brother and fellow-partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and endurance in Jesus." (Rev. i. 9.) We thus learn that a life of faithful service to the Lord may be as true a drinking of His cup and a partaking in His baptism as the actual laying down of the life for His sake. And it will be no matter of surprise if these two brethren are seen very near to the Lord in His kingdom, yea, in the very seats they coveted, though, whatever place may be theirs, they will occupy it with a mind far different from that which

prompted the request. The Lord does not disclaim power to give these seats, but simply declares that in the awards of His kingdom He will still act in subjection to, and in fellowship with, the Father, who in His perfect foreknowledge has prepared each place for its occupant.\*

This action on the part of the two stirred the indignation of the ten, but their anger only sprang from the same source as the request of the former, and equally needed correction. They appear to have given vent to their feelings at some distance from the Lord, and therefore He called them to Him that He might instruct them as to the difference between the principles of His kingdom and those that govern the nations of the world. In earthly kingdoms greatness is supposed to be displayed in the exercise of dominion and authority; in His kingdom it shows itself in lowly service: "Whosoever will be great among you, let him be your servant; and whosoever will be chief [or *first*] among you, let him be your slave." In the kingdom of God greatness is shown in lowliness; he is the highest who is most ready to serve. Not only by precept does the Lord inculcate this humble spirit; He is Himself the great exemplar of it. He who must be for ever pre-eminent in the eternal kingdom stooped to a greater depth of humiliation than can possibly be measured by any one who shall, through grace, find a place therein. But it was to render a service that none but He could have rendered.

How grand in their very simplicity are the words, "Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many!" He "*came*" from the bosom of the Father, and from the

\* The correct rendering appears to be, "To sit on My right hand and on My left, is not Mine to give, except (*to them*) for whom it is prepared of my Father."

uncreated glory of the Most High, where He had indeed been ministered unto, being surrounded by myriads of holy and mighty angels who had ever delighted to do His bidding, and instantly to fulfil His every command. But, coming to a sinful world, He left all the glory and service that had been His, and Himself appeared in the lowly form and guise of a servant. His whole life was one great service. He always did the will of the Father, and the records of His earthly path show how He was ever ministering unto others. But the greatest act of service came at the close, when He gave "His life a ransom for many."

On this great statement we will not now attempt to dwell, but it should be remarked that so full was the Lord's mind of the peculiar character of His death that even in presenting Himself as an *example* He gave expression to it. The whole Bible does not afford a more explicit refutation of the Socinian theory, that the Lord both lived and died simply as an example, than these few pregnant words from His own lips. He had often spoken of *saving* the lost; He now tells His disciples that the great salvation was to be the fruit of *redemption*, the paying of a price, and that price nothing less than His own life. He had, indeed, announced the same truth in the temple, as recorded in John x., but it is here even more explicitly stated. In the words, "a ransom for many," the preposition rendered "for," properly signifies *in the room of*, or *in the place of*, and intimates how truly the Lord, in His infinite grace, became the substitute of all those who, by the teaching of the Spirit of God, ever have trusted, or ever shall trust in Him, and who, through personal appropriation of Himself and His wondrous work, are able to say, He "loved *me* and gave Himself *for me*."

## STRANGERS AND PILGRIMS.

“To the *strangers* scattered abroad” the apostle Peter addressed his first Epistle; and if we as Christians were better acquainted with this character of our calling, our hearts would be more effectually preserved from the “cares of this life” and the “deceitfulness of riches.”

That the believer is a stranger on the earth is accepted as a truth by all Christians, but to live in the power of it is another thing altogether. What means the anxiety to accumulate wealth, the adding of house to house and field to field, so manifest among many who confess the name of Christ? Is not the explanation simply this—that they are not *living out* their profession of being “strangers and pilgrims on the earth?” (See Heb. xi. 13.)

No one whose mind is *set* on things earthly can carry out the truth of the first Epistle of Peter. With all his efforts to secure happiness here, such an one will fail to reach it, just because he is settling down in that upon which God has pronounced judgment. (See 2 Peter, iii. 10–12.) It is not God’s purpose that the Christian should have his treasure and rest here. Moth and rust still corrupt, and thieves break through and steal, and God has frequently to permit His children to experience this corruption and loss in order to free their souls from the deadly influence and power of those earthly things on which their hearts are set. The Christian’s treasure is in heaven, and God would teach us so to appreciate *His* treasure that the heart may be where the chief treasure is.

There are, however, treasures on earth on which our love may rest. It is not our *loving* them that is wrong, but

our loving them *as belonging to earth*. We should love as ourselves living in spirit above, in that scene to which we belong as children of God, begotten again in Christ Jesus.

It is quite lawful for the Christian to love, and to love intensely, his wife and children, and for them to love him likewise. But how? As an unbeliever does, with mere natural affection? No. The Christian husband loves his wife "as Christ loved the church." This is a far higher love than that of nature, for it is connected with heaven, from whence it is derived. If a husband so loves his wife, and the Lord sees well to take her to Himself, how different will be his sorrow from that of an unbeliever under like circumstances! The sorrow of the child of God is quite as real and as keen as that of the man of the world, yet he sorrows not without hope. The earthly link has been broken, but the heavenly one is thereby rendered only more real and more precious: in spirit he ascends to heaven to hold communion with Him who has taken His loved one to be for ever with Himself.

So also is it when Christian parents are bereaved of their children. Look at David as portrayed in 2 Sam. xii. In his case the Lord's hand was dealing with him in chastisement on account of his sin. Was not his sorrow both real and deep? It surely was. God had struck the child so that it was very sick, and the father keenly felt the blow that God had measured out. David besought God for the child, and fasted and wept. But the child died. Will not David mourn and lament a thousand times more now that the child is dead? The servants thought so, and very naturally, too. But David "arose from the earth and anointed himself, and changed his apparel, and came into the house of the Lord, and worshipped." His conduct perplexed those who had witnessed his sorrow, and in answer to their enquiry he said, "While

the child was yet alive I fasted and wept, for I said, Who can tell whether God will be gracious to me, that the child may live? But now that he is dead, wherefore should I fast? Can I bring him back again? *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.*" Was this callousness on the part of David? Had all his love for the child vanished with its death? On the contrary; his love was linked the more strongly and blessedly to the child in the hope of a bright reunion in eternity. But he had learned practically the truth as to the believer's strangership while passing through the wilderness to the "rest that remaineth to the people of God."

May we all learn more and more to be in heart "strangers and pilgrims," "strangers and foreigners" in this world; for only as we do so shall we be able to enter into the present enjoyment of the truth that we are "fellow-citizens of the saints and of the household of God."

C. F.

#### NOTES AND REPLIES.

*Is the cleansing from sins in Lev. xvi. 30, purely ceremonial?*

FROM the Epistle to the Hebrews we learn that the Levitical law was a shadow of the good things to come, but not the "image" of those things (see contrast in Col. i. 15, where Christ is said to be "the image of the invisible God"): hence we learn that the sacrificial cleansing, under the law only shadowed forth the sacrificial work of Christ, and could not make the conscience perfect, as the apostle tells us. Yet they accomplished a divine object under the Jewish economy, in that they secured to Israel, so long as they were outwardly obedient, a right and title to the land which they possessed. The "blood of bulls and goats" did sanctify "to the purifying of the flesh," and through these outward observances Israel occupied their land, and enjoyed their promises, as children of Abraham "according to the flesh;" but the whole law in its ritual and service contains types and shadows of the eternal realities and precious certainties which belong to those who in Christ are the children of Abraham by faith.

*What is the meaning of 2 Tim. i. 10, "Who hath abolished death, and brought life and incorruption to light through the gospel?"*

THE force of the word "*abolished*" needs to be understood. In connection with "death" it implies a setting aside, and a making null and void of death's judicial claim. Till Christ died, Satan could claim the power of death, as it were, by judicial authority, according to the sentence pronounced by God in the garden. Hence we read in Heb. ii. 14, that Christ through death destroyed him that had the power of death, that is, the devil. The word "destroy" in this verse, is the same as that under consideration, and implies in no sense the *destruction* of Satan, but the absolute and judicial making null and void of his claim, as the one who had exercised the power of death. Now, the Lord is presented to us as the One who holds in His hands, by virtue of His cross and passion, the "keys of Hades and of death" (Rev. i. 18); as if part of the victory of the cross had been to wrest the keys from the grasp of Satan. Till Christ died and rose, life and incorruptibility were necessarily hidden, and hence the gospel of the grace of God is that through which they are now brought to light, and through which the glories of the world to come will yet be brought to light. One of the great efforts of Satan now is, to prevent the enlightening power of the gospel of the glory of Christ from shining into the hearts of men. (2 Cor. iv. 4.)

*What are we to understand by "the rudiments of the world" in Col. ii. 8-20?*

THE rudiments or elements of the world seem, in this epistle, to refer to the things of *men*, in contrast with the things of Christ. The danger of the Colossians was similar to that to which we are exposed. If we are led away by worldly philosophy and vain deceit, we get occupied with theories of evolution, of human development, or of moral improvement, from which, as believers, we have been delivered by the cross of Christ. In Him we profess to have died to everything that could be evolved or educes from human nature, and all our resources are in Him "in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." We are not to subject ourselves to the world's dogmatic teachings, or to its speculations, for we are complete, filled up, in Christ, and have no need of aught beside. To any who are troubled with doubts or difficulties arising out of the evolution theories of the day, whether infidel or semi-Christian, we would especially commend this second chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, which, if intelligently read and pondered, meets the whole question, and leaves to such theories neither root nor branch.



## CHRIST'S TWOFOLD REPROACH.

“Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt.” “Let us go forth therefore unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.”—HEB. xi. 26; xiii. 13.

OUR perishing fellow-sinners around us boast themselves chiefly in three things—their wisdom, their gold, and their religion. The love of gold and pride of religious ritual are now more than ever prominent in these lands and wherever the English tongue is spoken. We know, alas! how easily formal worship on Sunday can combine with making haste to be rich the rest of the week. Man’s gold and man’s religion are readily welded together. Awful illustrations of this are seen in the priests’ gifts of “thirty pieces of silver” to Judas Iscariot, and “large money” to Roman soldiers (Matt. xxviii. 12), in order that they might uphold their corrupt temple-religion against “Jesus and the resurrection.” This evil combination was and is the only way to be popular. Man’s busy world hates *poverty*, and equally hates *simple worship* “in spirit and in truth,” such as the Father seeks from the “true worshippers.”

Hence Christ’s reproach was twofold. The *first* was the reproach of poverty, for He had not “where to lay His head.” The *second* was the reproach of separation from Jewish outward religion and its temple hypocrisy and guilt, for He suffered “without the camp.”

The Epistle to the Hebrews sets in contrast Christ’s holy brethren of the heavenly calling and man’s professing world, and it is in this epistle that the reproach of Christ is twice mentioned.

In Heb. xi. 24-26 the subject is the "faith" of Moses, as seen in his refusing Pharaoh's palace and throne, for which apparently he had been trained, and choosing rather to suffer affliction with the Hebrew *brickmakers*. He thus shewed that he esteemed the "*reproach of Christ*" greater riches than the treasures in Egypt." He knew that *any* reproach of poverty for the coming Messiah and His people was of infinitely more worth than gold that perisheth, and he endured the scoff and sneer heaped upon him by Egyptians of rank and wealth in Pharaoh's court, his former associates. It was a genuine reproach of Christ on account of his *poverty*.

We trace the same reproach all through the Master's footsteps as given in the Gospels. "There was no room for Him in the inn." (Luke ii. 7.) "Is not this the carpenter?" (Mark vi. 3.) "Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on Him?" (John vii. 48.) Yes, one reproach of Christ was His poverty. As has been often said, He had a manger for a cradle, a borrowed ass to ride upon, had nothing to bequeath to His own blessed mother, and was laid at last in another's grave! Though He *was* rich, yet in grace and for our sakes He "became poor," that we through His poverty might be rich. But how *could* money-loving, covetous Israel receive such an one for their Messiah?

In Heb. xiii. 13 the "reproach" is of a different kind, and one that our Lord must have incurred all His days, owing to His separation from the nation's corrupt religion. Obeying God's law perfectly from the first down to His being baptized by John in Jordan, that He might "fulfil all righteousness," He nevertheless stood aloof from all the commandments of men. He refused to wash hands at their bidding, and when they made much of clean and unclean meats, going beyond the Scripture, He openly

opposed them, teaching that nothing that entered into a man defiled him, but that which came out of his heart. Our Lord clung to the divine and spiritual, and threw far from Him traditions of elders and Jewish inventions. The temple itself had become to Him a "house of merchandise" and a "den of thieves." Thus He lived apart from the human religion of His day, and outside it all He died!

No wonder, then, that there was the mocking and the jeer of priest and hireling at the cross. And mark the form it took. "*Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it again in three days, save thyself.*" Such was "His reproach," endured outside the gate of Jerusalem, "without the camp," that camp of Israel in which, at the first and so soon, the *golden calf* was set up for worship.

Now is it not just in these two characteristics of Christ's reproach that we find it so difficult to follow Him? Naturally we shun poverty, and love carnal, popular religion. The order of the two things is also important. It is only as saints love their Master's holy poverty, and avoid using the extras of their purse for themselves, that they really in spirit go forth "*unto HIM without the camp.*" In other words, we cannot be truly "outside" on Sundays except as we have been correspondingly "outside" in self-denying poverty through the week. We may have worked "with the hands, the thing that is good," in our earthly callings, but if part of the week's wages or business gains, not needed by us, has not been used to "give to him that needeth," no wonder we have not the Master's reproach of poverty. Our fellowship may consist much in outward church details, but if there is not the grace of fellowship in temporals, we shall know little of spiritual enrichment. Loving, lowly obedience to every "jot and tittle" of God's truth cannot be dispensed with by us. But there are the weighty things of the law,

“judgment and the love of God,” as well as the less weighty matters, the tithing of “mint, rue, and all manner of herbs.” The latter we have to do, and not to leave the other undone.

When we have been humbly following our Lord through the week, how increasingly sweet will be our Lord’s day, as we go forth “unto Him without the camp” of guilty Christendom’s outward religion.

May God give us grace to understand Christ’s twofold reproach, and to bear it to the end. H. D.

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## A SCENE IN THE TEMPLE.

NOTES FROM AN ADDRESS ON JOHN VIII. 1-11, BY MR. T. NEWBERRY.

“EVERY man went to his own house : Jesus went to the Mount of Olives.” Such is the contrast given in the last verse of John vii. and the first verse of John viii.

A wondrous attraction that Mount of Olives must have had to our Lord. At its base was the garden of Gethsemane, with its shadow of Calvary. From its summit He was soon to ascend to His Father and our Father, and when He again descends from heaven His feet will stand on that mount, and it shall cleave in the midst. (Zech. xiv. 4.) Both His sufferings and His glories are thus connected with Olivet.

The feast of tabernacles had just been celebrated, and the Lord well knew the ignorance of the people. There was the temple in its grandeur and beauty, the priests in their sacred robes, the altar, with its sacrifice ; but all was as a sealed book to them. Now He comes with His heavenly teaching, fresh, as it were, from God, having spent the night in communion with Him on the mount, and He takes His seat in the treasury ; for He never entered the inner temple. The feast being over, the

people were at liberty to come and hear the Great Teacher, and they kept flocking in (read "were coming" in verse 2 instead of "came"), until perhaps thousands were assembled. Doubtless He took a position where all could see and hear, and He taught them.

While thus occupied the Pharisees bring before Him a guilty woman. "Now we shall entrap Him," they thought; "He can't with false charity say she *may* be innocent." "Teacher . . . . Moses in the law commanded that such should be stoned: but what sayest Thou?" His teaching they could not gainsay, but here was a case that would be beyond His wisdom. Their intention was to place *two* criminals at the bar, instead of one; for their object was "to accuse *Him*." If He *condemned* the poor woman, where was the mercy and grace which He preached? On the other hand, if He *excused* her, He would be setting at nought the law. But they knew not that a "wiser than Solomon" was there. Christ is "the wisdom of God" as well as "the power of God."

But *where* do they bring this criminal? To the holy city, to the temple, into the presence of a sin-hating God, before the altar whose fire never goes out, and on which is sprinkled the blood that speaks better things than that of Abel. "And *they brought her to Jesus*."

When we come to God as convicted sinners, we find in Jesus one who is "able to save to the uttermost." These acts of Jesus, narrated in the Gospels, may bring to our remembrance the bells and pomegranates around the high priest's robe: every motion makes a sound of divine significance.

Think of that scene, with its thousands of eager, expectant faces, with Jesus sitting in the midst, and before Him the poor, law-condemned, conscience-stricken woman, surrounded by her accusers. He answers not

their question, but *stoops down*. The very act brings before us Phil. ii. 6-8: "He humbled Himself."

The judgment is set, the books are opened; the assembled multitudes look on; angels gaze in amazement; law condemns to death. But He who stoops down now writes in the dust. He is reminded of the work He came to do: "Thou hast brought me into the dust of death." (Psalm xxii. 15.) In *that* death the love, holiness, and majesty of God would all be manifested.

In the case of the jealousy offering in Numbers v., to which the Lord's thoughts must have turned, the "dust" is especially mentioned. The woman was to be set "before the Lord," as the scribes and Pharisees did with this woman. "Holy water" was to be put in an "earthen vessel;" prefiguring the incarnation of the Son of God. The priest had to take of "the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle," and to put it into the holy water. The woman had then to drink of this "bitter water;" and if she were guilty the curse entered into her. But Christ was "made a curse for us." He blotted out the handwriting that was against us, as the curses were blotted out by the bitter water.

As the scribes and Pharisees continued asking the Lord, He "lifted up Himself." In contrast with the stooping down, this may remind us of His resurrection power. Of His own life He said, "I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again." They brought witnesses into court to condemn Him, but He could say "Which of you convinceth Me of sin?" And He summoned other and greater witnesses, even their own guilty consciences.

See Jesus now standing, the woman crouching at His feet, and her proud accusers round about her. "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at

her." As consciences begin to work, their faces turn pale. An aged Rabbi turns to leave, then another, and another, until the multitude, convinced of sin, like so many Cains, "went out from the presence of the Lord," and from the altar of sacrifice. The self-righteous ones are convicted, and only the humble sinner is left. The court is cleared, every tongue has been silenced; the poor soul for whom His work in the dust has to be performed, in order to cleanse her from her sins, is left alone with Jesus. On this sinner, whom He came to save, He fixes His gaze, and we can imagine His staying the Hallelujahs of saints and angels, and saying, "Hush! a sinner needs My help; a beggar has to be raised from the dunghill; a captive must be freed from the dungeon." In keeping with this, it was to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils, that His first words were spoken after His resurrection.

"Where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" When we have gone with all our sins to Jesus, no man can condemn us. It is Christ who justifieth and He will not condemn. He was "delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification." (Rom. iv. 25.)

"She said, No man, Lord." Every tongue shall yet confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father. She is taught thus to address Him; and with authority He replies, "Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more." Through His stooping and being brought unto the dust of death we have pardon; His lifting up Himself tells of resurrection; and His last message of grace to this woman teaches us sanctification. Let us always connect these truths. "Go"—pardoned, justified, accepted—"and *sin no more.*"

## CHRIST'S WAY OF RECEIVING SINNERS

AS TYPIFIED BY JOSEPH IN GEN. xlv.

IN reading the Book of Genesis, what joy is ours when we reach the point in the history of Joseph at which he makes himself known in grace to his brethren! Then we discern "the end of the Lord," and, as in the case of Job, we learn that He is "very pitiful and of tender mercy." (Jas. v. 11.)

The truth that "these things happened unto them for ensamples, and they are written for our admonition" (1 Cor. x. 11), has a striking illustration in this chapter. What Christian can fail to be reminded of Joseph's Antitype as in the type he traces almost verse by verse that which our head-line suggests — Christ's way of receiving sinners? Let us consider first

### THE REALITY OF LOVE,

as evinced in Joseph's weeping. Seven times is it recorded in his history that he wept, but only on this occasion of making himself known to his brethren is it said that "he wept *aloud*." Is it not thus that his brethren, and the Egyptians too, would have proof of the depth of his emotions, of the intensity of his love? The guilt of his brethren had been so great that Joseph's words, kind though they were, could not banish their trouble, but when he had embraced each one with tears (ver. 15), then they "talked with him."

Are we not here put in remembrance of Christ's weeping? In Luke xix. 41, we read of His tears when beholding Jerusalem He thought of her rejection of Him,



of her not knowing the time of her visitation, and of the eighteen hundred years' treading down of the Gentiles from which she would suffer; but no thought of vengeance moved Him. Nay, the weeping over the guilty city in chapter xix. leads, in chapter xxiv. 47, to the memorable words, "beginning at Jerusalem." Again did Jesus weep at the tomb of Lazarus, in sympathy with the bereaved and sorrowing. Knowing well that He would soon restore to life His "friend Lazarus," He yet wept, for it was "a time to weep." (Ecc. iii. 4.) Thus even the Jews were constrained to exclaim, "Behold, how He loved him!" Nor can we forget the "strong crying and tears" of Hebrews v. 7, a passage which perhaps speaks to us as strongly as any other of the reality of Christ's sufferings, and hence of the reality—seeing He was a willing sufferer—of His love to us. That

#### SALVATION HAS ITS SOURCE IN GOD

is a truth prominently before us in Genesis 'xlv. To assuage his brethren's grief, Joseph declares to them that not they, but *God* had sent him into Egypt, to preserve life. So does Peter, while not in the least extenuating the wickedness of Israel, yet shew (Acts ii. 23) that Jesus was "delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." The frequent testimony, too, of John comes to our mind. He speaks often of the "Son" as "given," "sent," "sealed." In Hebrews x. we meet with a quotation from Psalm xl., the object of the Spirit being to prove that those who are "sanctified" and "perfected" receive such blessing not alone "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ," but also because such offering was according to God's "will" (ver. 9). The result is seen in our "boldness to enter into the holiest," as in ver. 19. What comfort is afforded to the heart

when it recognizes the truth that "*God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself*"! (2 Cor. v. 19.)

As salvation finds its source in God, so is

#### ITS ACCOMPLISHMENT THROUGH THE REJECTED ONE.

"*I will nourish thee*," was Joseph's message to his father, and "*it is my mouth that speaketh unto you*," was his word to his brethren (ver. 11, 12). Is not this the way of God? Turning again to Peter's testimony in Acts iv. 10 we read, "By the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole." It is this fact which gives effect to the word in ver. 12, "Neither is there salvation in any other." How humbling to man, how exalting to the grace of God!

"Thus while His death my sin displays  
In all its blackest hue,  
Such is the mystery of grace,  
It seals my pardon too."

Not only of the present, but also of the future does Joseph speak, reminding us that in Christ we have

#### ETERNAL SALVATION.

Joseph looks forward to the remaining five years of famine, and he doubts not that it will be in his power to nourish his father and all his family during that period. "Near" to him (ver. 10) it would be well with them. "Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out," are the gracious words of Jesus. Can any one who hears them fail to have assurance of salvation?

Let the reader ponder well the whole bearing of the epistle to the Hebrews. Let him contemplate the *Divine* nature of Him by whom God has in these last days spoken, and then notice the oft-repeated word "*eternal*."

The Son of God gives His own character to all that He does. Hence His salvation, His redemption, His priesthood, His Shepherd-care are all eternal. What a summary of the epistle is contained in chap. xiii. 8—"Jesus Christ yesterday and to-day the same, and for ever"!

Let us now notice

#### THE EFFECT UPON OTHERS.

The reconciliation of Joseph with his brethren was not unobserved by the Egyptians. In verse 2 we find that they heard the weeping, and in verse 16 we have further evidence of this and of its result, accompanied by the statement that "it pleased Pharaoh well, and his servants." Herein we have a figure of the blessing which, according to Psalm lxvii., will be the portion of the Gentiles when God's face shall again shine upon Israel. Even now, seeing that the Church possesses the "first-fruits" (Rom. viii. 23) of all that is to come, there is a sense in which the world both rejoices and prospers through her. Such Scriptures as Matthew v. 13, "Ye are the salt of the earth," and Acts v. 13, "The people magnified them," may be considered in connection with this remark. No one at all conversant with the history and condition of Europe can question the statement that those nations are the most prosperous which have in them the greatest number of Christians. Too often it is not good for the Church that it should be so, however beneficial to the world. Upon that aspect of the case, we need only add, that as "there arose up a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph" (Ex. i. 8), so God, if He see it to be for His children's good, can permit the world's countenance of His people to give place to its frown. (Ps. cv. 25.)

Whatever anxieties Jacob and his sons had experienced

during the first two years of famine, all their fears must have been dispelled by the

#### AMPLE PROVISION

made for them by Joseph. "The fat of the land" (ver. 18) was to be theirs; yea, "the good of all the land of Egypt" (ver. 20). How many pictures are there in the Gospels which even more fully present this truth to us. Let the two instances of the miraculous feeding of the five thousand and of the four thousand suffice. Do we not read in Mark viii. 2, "They have nothing to eat," and in verse 8, "They did eat and were filled"? Is not the amplitude seen in this, that "they took up of the broken meat that was left seven baskets"? The account of the earlier miracle in chapter vi. records similar facts. Or, let any one read the epistle to the Ephesians, and say whether there be not for him all fulness in Christ. Let him but trace through the epistle the words "rich," "riches," and he can but echo with adoring wonder the language of chapter i. 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ!" Colossians, too, one might quote, and its own emphatic summing-up of its teaching in chapter ii. 10, "complete [filled-up] in HIM." This being so, ought not the prayer of Epaphras to be answered for each one of us, that we "stand perfect and filled [margin] in all the will of God"?

Lastly,

#### THE EARNEST OF THE INHERITANCE

is seen at the close of the chapter in the "provision for the way" of verse 22, and the "good things of Egypt" of verse 23. So did Jacob regard them, for while "he believed not" the "*saying*" (ver. 26) of his sons, his "spirit revived" when he "saw the wagons which Joseph

had sent to carry him" (ver. 27). Thus was his heart set at rest. He had before him, while yet in famine-stricken Canaan, the evidence of the abundance of Egypt, the first-fruits of which he now enjoyed. "It is enough," of verse 28, may bring to our minds what we are told concerning Ruth, who, experiencing the kindness of Boaz on her first gleaning in his field, "was sufficed." "Bread enough and to spare" was a true utterance of the prodigal, as he thought of the Father's house.

The Spirit of God has been given since Christ's ascension that we may be guided into all truth, that we may know things to come, and that the things of Christ may be shewn unto us. (John xvi. 13-16.) He is thus the "first-fruits" (Rom. viii. 23), through whom we already have anticipation of the joys which will be ours in their fulness at the redemption of the body.

" That, that is the fulness,  
But this is the taste,"

is sung by many who perhaps think the "taste" is not to be regarded with much favour. But let them remember that it is a taste of the fulness itself, a present realization by faith, in measure, of those blessings which our Father will delight to bestow upon us in eternity.

All hesitation to set forth on the part of Jacob was henceforth at an end. "I will go," he says. Thus does the Spirit, through whom alone we can know that we are "risen with Christ," detach our hearts from earthly things, and enable us to "set our affection on things above." (Col. iii. 1, 2.) Through Him we are strengthened to "haste unto the coming of the day of God" (2 Pet. iii. 12), and to "run with patience the race that is set before us."

May God deign to bless this feeble portraying of some of the ways of Christ, to whom be glory and blessing for ever and ever!

J. C.

## PURPOSE OF HEART.

It is very evident from the whole of Scripture that God takes great account of the attitude of the heart toward Himself, and has true delight in beholding in His people a steady determination to please Him. One prominent feature of the blessedness of the future will be the constant service of the redeemed, without even the temptation to the least turning aside. But blessed as this must be, it will be an added joy to possess any token of approval as those who have served God faithfully on earth, where all true service implies more or less of conflict.

It will ever be one of the peculiar glories of the blessed Son of God that He lived in this world and served God, without for a single moment wavering in thought or purpose. What was stated of Him on one occasion was always true—"He stedfastly set His face." He came into the world with the word in His heart, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God;" for thirty years in obscurity and lowly toil His sole business was to please God; and then in His public ministry, in spite of the coldness and enmity of those around Him, and the opposition of the powers of darkness, He unflinchingly pursued His course. In the wilderness Satan endeavoured to turn Him from this God-appointed path by the presentation of what, simply looked at in itself, would have been pleasant to man, but He repelled the tempter with the Word of God. In Gethsemane the prince of darkness was permitted again in a special manner to assault Him, and this time apparently he tried to move Him by bringing before

Him the painfulness and awfulness of what He must endure to accomplish the will of God; but here also the Lord's strong weapon against Satan was absolute submission to His Father, whose servant He had become. And in the stedfastness of that obedience by which He has redeemed us to God, He has also set us an example.

To walk as He walked is the business of those who are His (1 John ii. 6), but one secret of such a walk is fixedness of heart and stedfastness of purpose. And though in this matter, as in all others, He who *in* grace *became* God's servant must shine pre-eminent amongst all who *by* grace *are made* such, yet will He have around Himself many who have patiently followed Him in spite of the threefold opposition of the world, the flesh and the devil. Distinguished amongst such will be that servant of Christ who finishes his wondrous argument on the certainty and the glories of resurrection with the exhortation, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."

In reading such words as these from Paul's pen we cannot forget that his own life was in accordance with them; and one secret of his stedfastness was this, that he was a man of one purpose. He could say to Timothy, "Thou hast fully known my *purpose*." (2 Tim. iii. 10.) From the moment the Lord called him by His grace, and revealed Himself to him, Paul had before him a definite aim, from which nothing turned him. What that was we learn from 2 Cor. v. 9, where, after expressing perfect confidence in the Lord touching the great things in store for His people, he says, "Wherefore we are ambitious that whether present or absent we may be *well pleasing unto Him*." This was the great aim of Paul's soul, the one

unwavering purpose of his heart. He knew he was labouring for eternity, he knew that the commendation given by Christ at His judgment-seat would be an *eternal* reward, and nothing less than this could he seek. Hence his comparative indifference to the judgment of men (1 Cor. iv. 3.), and hence, too, his ready endurance of what would have overwhelmed a man of less determination. (2 Cor. xi. 23-29.) And how fully he was enabled of the Lord to carry out his purpose we learn from his last recorded words, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing." (2 Tim. iv. 7, 8.)

Barnabas, too, knew the value of a true purpose, and he sought to cherish it in his fellow-saints. (Acts xi. 23.) Sent forth to Antioch by the Church in Jerusalem, and seeing the grace of God manifest among the Gentiles, he overcame all his Jewish prejudices, and was glad, "and exhorted them all, that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord."

Such an exhortation given in the power of the Holy Spirit was never more needed than it is now. This is a day of great activity, much is stirring around us; much true work for God is being done, and much of a very doubtful character. And side by side with this is the strong tide of worldliness that has already carried aside many who once seemed to know something of the simplicity of Christ. In the midst of all this there is but one safeguard for any of us; and that is, cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart. Let us be intent upon gaining His approval, and we shall be content to walk in a lowly, and, if He so will it, a hidden path, and shall not



be ensnared by that which, though bearing His name, is not according to His word, nor shall we be drawn aside by the world in spite of its varied attractions. We shall see it as it is, and not as it appears, and we shall see its end too. May God save us from half-heartedness, and make us like Joshua and Caleb, who, when others were turning aside and discouraging their brethren, "wholly followed the Lord" (Num. xxxii. 12), and so were approved of Him as men of faith.

The failure of God's ancient people is traced to the solemn fact that they were "a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not stedfast with God." (Ps. lxxviii. 8.) Consequently there was no stability of conduct, no evenness of behaviour. When they were moved by some special token of God's presence, as the dividing of the sea and the destruction of the host of Pharaoh, there was an outburst of enthusiasm. "Then believed they His words; they sang His praise;" but so transient was the impression that "they soon forgot His works; they waited not for His counsel; but lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert." (Ps. cv. 12-15.) Having no settled purpose, and no fixedness of heart, they were turned aside by every temptation, and were moved by every impulse.

One of the solemn features of the present day is lack of stability. Many children of God may, in a time of excitement, under some powerful influence, be very active and diligent, but as soon as the excitement is over their ardour cools, and there seems to be no power for the steady plodding course of ordinary service, that patient continuance in well doing which is spoken of as the proper pathway to glory and honour and immortality. (Rom. ii. 7.) Such a path will certainly not lead to popularity, but it

is the way in which the Master has preceded His servants, and it involves conflict with the adversary at every step.

Satan tempts us as he did the Lord in the wilderness by that which is naturally pleasant to us ; and he seeks to turn us aside from what is trying and painful as he did Christ in Gethsemane ; but for us too there is the assurance of victory in the pathway of submission to God. "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you." (James iv. 7.) And if it be asked how such wavering and feeble ones as we are can ever say "O God, my heart is fixed," a beautiful answer is found in Psalm x. 17., "Thou hast heard, O Jehovah, the desire of the lowly, Thou *establishest* their heart." (Lord Congleton's Version.) Yes, power to stablish us belongs to God (Rom. xvi. 25.), and that power may be proved by every saint.

W. H. B.

### IN REMEMBRANCE.

Lord Jesus, in Thy name  
We round Thy table now  
Remember thus Thy death of shame,  
Thy thorn-crown'd brow.

Master ! from Thy blest hand  
This broken bread we take,  
Responsive to Thine own command  
For Thy name's sake.

We in this wine would see  
The measure of Thy love—  
Thy blood pour'd forth, that Thou might'st be  
Our Priest above.

Here would we feast, O Lord,  
Here banish doubt and fear,  
Here rest on Thee, Thou Living Word,  
And know Thee near.

Keep us Thine own we pray,  
Our Saviour ; so may we  
In thought, in word, in deed, always  
"Remember Thee."

## GOD'S WAY OF FINDING FAULT.\*

“Finding fault with them He saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.”—HEB. viii. 8.

IN many an assembled company there may be no great difference as to outward appearance; but what a difference must the eye of God and of angels discern! If we could look upon the heart we should see in some a resemblance to Jesus, and in others only the ruin of fallen Adam, an abode for the god of this world! What a contrast should we see if hearts were laid open as they will be at the last day! For that day the believer is looking, and it is a blessed thing not to be afraid of a day when secret things will be made known; when a smile will not cover over a heavy heart, and when hypocrisy will not cover a deceitful one. What a day of revelation will that be when our lives will come up, with all our thoughts and our words! What a comfort not to be afraid of such a day.

Judgment is coming upon those who “*know not God*.” (2 Thes. i. 8.) Christ is coming to take vengeance—not merely on the thief, or the drunkard, or the fornicator—but on those who in heart know not God. And why to take vengeance on such? Because every one *ought* to know God. God has taken every possible means to make Himself known. If He had dwelt far distant in the thick darkness, or if men had only heard of Him with the hearing of the ear, they would not have been so judged. But God has come down to sit, to walk, to live amongst

\* From an Address given by the late Mr. H. W. Soltau in 1863.

us, so that we might not mistake His thoughts. God has been "manifest in the flesh."

If I want to know what God would be among men like ourselves, I have to look into the Gospels. He ate and drank with publicans and sinners. He did not turn them outside, but talked with them, healed their diseases, fed them when hungry, and met their need in every way in which He discerned it, and He discerned it perfectly. If I want to know how God would treat a condemned sinner, fit for death, who ought to be stoned, I read in John viii. and see how He dealt with such an one—"Neither do I condemn thee; go and sin no more." So I have no excuse for not knowing God, because I have the revelation of God in the life of Jesus.

Now, why is it that people do not know God? Because they have no interest in knowing Him; they have no desire, no heart for God. This tells us what our hearts are; and yet to know Him is life eternal.

The eighth chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews shows us another feature in the character of God—His wonderful way of finding fault. In the prophet Isaiah, He says, "My thoughts are not your thoughts; neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord." God does not think as we think; nor does He act as we act. Let us look at ourselves. How do we find fault? We get ruffled, or angry; we heap upon those with whom we find fault all the reproach of their evil conduct, and leave them. Now look at verse 8 of this chapter. "Finding fault with them, He saith, Behold the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah." Such is God's way of finding fault.

If I want to know where God finds most fault, I look at Christ crucified, and in the death of His Son I see that

He can only find fault with me. I see in the death of Christ that God has not one good thing to say of me. I see that He condemns me as full of wounds and bruises and putrifying sores from head to foot. He condemns me, not only for my sins, what I have said and done, but for my very existence. He condemns me as a child of wrath. If I want to see how God finds fault, I do not look at hell; I do not think of the judgment day when the books will be opened, and of what God might bring against me then, but I look back on the death of His beloved Son; I see Him nailed to the tree, overwhelmed with the curse, so that it made Him exclaim, "All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me." "Thy wrath lieth hard upon me."

There I learn what I am, and see that God so finds fault with me that He obliterates me out of His memory; I am so hateful in His sight, that He must get rid of me; and so He crucifies me with Christ. I may look at my ways and wish I could live my life over again; but I can never see my fault truly until I look at Christ, and see that I have been crucified with Him—until I can say, "It is no more I that live, I am gone, there is an end of me; God has blotted me out, and it is no longer *I*, but Christ liveth in me." This is God's way of finding fault, and it is a wonderfully blessed way when we understand it.

He says, "Behold the days come, when I will make a new covenant." The old covenant made us no better; it only showed us how filthy we were, and now God must bring in "better promises"—not ours, and what we will do, but His, and what He will do. God's new covenant is to this effect, I will do *everything*, you shall do *nothing*. You shall have the law written in your hearts, but I will write it there; you shall not teach one another; I will teach you, and you shall know Me. "Acquaint thyself

with Him and be at peace." If we are acquainted with God we are at peace with Him ; otherwise all is restlessness with us.

What a wonderful thing it is that God should come down upon earth in the person of His Son, to sit, dwell, eat and drink with us, to enter into our houses and associate with us, that He might teach us *Himself*, and above all, that He might at last make that wondrous closing display in *the cross* ! The cross is the last display of God, that man might fully see the wonders of His love, and now no one can be excused for not knowing God. Now, men say, "I am puzzled between this opinion and `that,'" and "there are so many creeds that I do not know what to believe." But the Bible reveals to us God manifest in the flesh, and in that coming day there will be no excuse for ignorance of God. If I allow a thought of doubt upon my heart, I allow ignorance of God, and I must charge it upon my soul as such. Can I doubt ? Can I disbelieve, after God has lifted up His Son ? As believers, how do we treat our doubts ? Do we treat them as damning sins ? We ought to do so. The condemning sin of the unbeliever is that he doubts God's mercy and God's love. As believers we ought to treat such doubts as the vile insinuations of Satan against God, as slurs on His character, for God is love. He has brought down that wondrous truth to our level, so that a child can understand it. Christ has been nailed to the tree to prove it, to make manifest that God is love. Are we not without excuse then ? See how He brings our iniquities before us, by laying them on His Son ! See how He finds fault with us, by putting us to death with His Son ! And see the wondrous eternal love of God displayed at the very time that He finds the most fault ! Oh let it not be said of us, "Some have not the knowledge of God." Let us be

fools in everything else, but not fools regarding God. Oh the fancied intelligence and wisdom of men ! They will be cast down into the lake of fire, because they know not God. This is a day when this blessed Book is being picked to pieces by wise men ; and you and I are the fools. You may see the wise and the learned taking this Book, and finding fault with it, as a foolish book ; you may see the foolish and the ignorant taking the Book *to know God*, to rejoice in God, to have life eternal. These are the two streams that are now flowing on. Oh, be a fool in the world, but be wise toward God !

God's command under the law was *TO DO* ; now it is to accept His gift, to obey the gospel ; and upon those who obey it not, and who therefore know not God, the Lord Jesus will come "in flaming fire." May we be ready for the shout, the shout of triumph that will summon saints up into glory.

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#### NOTES AND REPLIES.

*Is it right to say that Christ suffered on the cross "as man?"*

WE have to be solemnly on our guard in speaking of the person of our Lord. To say that He suffered as *a man*, if thereby it is meant that He suffered not as God, vitiates the value of the atonement. It was the God-man, Christ Jesus, who died upon the cross ; and with respect to the value of the precious blood of Christ we can say with the apostle Paul, "The Church of God which He hath purchased with His own blood." The human form had often been assumed by God and by angels, but never till the incarnation did God become man. Christ did not *assume* a human body, but the child from the virgin's womb was that "holy thing, the Son of God." (Luke i. 35.) We read that "the Word was God," and that "the Word *became* flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth ;" and from the opening verses of the Hebrews we learn that He who "made purification of sin" was then and there the "effulgence" of God's glory, and "the very image of His substance" (R.V.). To divide the person of Christ is to nullify His work.

*What are we to regard as "the gift of faith" in 1 Cor. xii. 9?*

THIS point has already been referred to in these pages, but we would again make a few observations. Faith, in Scripture, usually means man's acceptance of something that God has said; God promises, and faith accepts that which has been promised, and makes it its own. But when the apostle in the passage before us includes "faith" among the gifts of Pentecost—"The word of wisdom," "the word of knowledge," "*faith*," "gifts of healing," "working of miracles," etc., it is evident that he has in mind an especial gift of faith for some especial work or service, which enables an individual, apart from the general promises of the word of God, to take it up in the assured consciousness that God has sent him to it. This forms a very important element in the life and history of those called to any especial service, enabling them to undertake and carry it through in the calm conviction that God has called them to it. The faith thus given triumphs over all difficulties and counts on God for all it needs, knowing that He sends no one to a warfare at his own charges, and reckoning assuredly that God will carry on the work to which He has sent His servant. It was such faith, vouchsafed by God, which enabled Elijah to go and meet Ahab and declare to him the three years and a half of famine; and probably no servant of God has ever succeeded in the work he has undertaken without faith thus received as a gift from God.

*Are we to gather from Scripture that any particular form is to be invariably used in the communion of the Lord's Supper?*

IN this, as in other things in the Church of God, we have to be very careful lest we fall from the liberty of the Spirit into legal bondage as to the letter. Scripture warrants no such thought as an "*administration*" of the Lord's Supper. To speak of an administrator or celebrant, savours of hierarchical assumption, with which the New Testament has nothing in common. The Lord alone is to be regarded as the administrator, and, like those who sat around the first Lord's Table in Jerusalem, we receive by faith from *His* hands that which He gives. If this were remembered no difficulty as to any precise routine would arise. We would offer an earnest warning against a certain *ritualism* on this point which seems to be creeping in, and which never would have arisen had Christ been given His true place at His table—unseen yet present, and had we heard *Him* saying to us, "Take, eat, this is My body;" "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." Let our minds be only filled with hallowed memories of Himself and His death, and questions as to mode, time, or place will be looked at in their true light.



## THE HOLY ONE OF GOD.

JOHN VI. 69. (R.V.)

WHEN we consider that the value and efficacy of all the Lord *did*, depend upon what He *was*, we must feel the importance of a firm grasp of the whole truth as to His person. And there never was a time when the necessity of this was greater, simply because the efforts on the part of the enemy to undermine the truth were never more subtle or varied. Yet varied as they are, their object is one; for whether the Godhead of the Lord be denied, or His manhood be assailed, the glory of His adorable person is affected. But in the Scriptures eternal wisdom has given us all we need to meet the devil's subtlety.

The first two chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews have been spoken of as two pillars on which all the grand truths of the subsequent portion of that Epistle securely rest. The first chapter sets forth the true and proper Godhead of the Lord Jesus, and the second no less clearly displays His perfect humanity.

In the first chapter of John's Gospel, after setting forth the glory of the Word, the eternity of His being, the distinctness of His personality, and His true and proper Godhead, the apostle writes, "*And the Word became flesh*," thus marking both the reality of His manhood, and the personal grace in which He took the first step in that wondrous path of obedience by which He glorified the Father.

The Lord was and is both God and man. It is not true as some of old taught that He simply appeared in

human form as He had done in former days when in grace He spoke to men. Nor is it correct to regard Him as a human person in whom, at a certain period of His earthly course, Godhead took up its abode, as in a casket or temple. All such notions spring from the effort to explain what is inexplicable. "He who ever subsisted in the form of God "took upon Himself the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men." (Phil. ii. 6, 7.) Yet He did not cease to be what He ever had been. Of the glorious *form* of God He could and did empty Himself, but He could no more cease to be GOD than the Father could cease to be God. "God *sent forth* His Son" from the bosom of His love and the uncreated glory of His presence, and He, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting" (Micah v. 2.), was "born of a woman." Here is the marvellous mystery! He to whom, in fellowship with the Father, creation owed its being, and who had been the object of adoration to all the heavenly hosts from the moment of their existence, HIMSELF became flesh, and was born of the virgin.

Thus did He for ever cease to be simply in the form of God; yet it is impossible for us ever to regard Him simply as man. For though He is most truly man, and that for ever, every attribute of Godhead is of necessity His. From the moment of His birth His name was "Emmanuel, which being interpreted is "God with us." (Matt. i. 23.) The babe upon Mary's breast is "the mighty God," and the man who is smitten upon Calvary and laid low in death is "Jehovah's Fellow." (Zech. xiii. 7.) We are no more at liberty to say that Christ died *as man*, than we are to say that He rose again *as God*, for in the indivisibility of His person He said, "I lay down my life that I may take it again." (John x. 17.) He was as truly God when He "increased in wisdom," or "being wearied

with His journey sat thus on the well," as He was very man when He went up into heaven and took His seat on the throne of God. Godhead in all its fulness, and manhood in all its perfectness are united in the one person of the Christ of God, and it is this blessed *person* whom the Gospels ever keep before us, and who is spoken of throughout the whole New Testament.

Many things are said of Him which could be predicated only of one who is man, and many other things are set forth which could only be declared of one who is God; but it is of the Person who is *both* that all these things are true. We may not understand this, but those who are taught of God can believe it, and can rejoice in the assurance that eternity will not be too long to ponder the mystery of the glory of Him whose name is "Wonderful." And we should lay to heart now, what we shall instinctively feel then, that when we consider Him we are on holy ground, and that the contemplation of the worshipper with unshod feet (Ex. iii. 5) is more becoming than the speculation of the reasoner. For it is just here that so many have overstepped the bounds of Scripture by allowing the argument that because certain things are stated of the Lord, *therefore* certain other things must be true. For example, Scripture affirms that the Holy Child "increased in wisdom," but when one says "He must have misunderstood at one time what He more fully understood afterwards," he argues on merely natural grounds, and presumes to add to the inspired statement. Misunderstanding is an evidence of imperfection, and surely the statement that He who was the Wisdom of God "increased in wisdom," may well fill us with wonder without our daring to supplement it by imagining that He ever misunderstood anything. Such reasoning should be for ever silenced by that word which, speaking of Him at the

age of twelve, declares that the doctors were "astonished at His understanding," and intimates His knowledge of the mystery of His birth (Luke ii. 47, 49.), but gives no hint of His needing correction.

The same must be said of the inference that because the Word so truly became man that He could hunger and thirst, could weep and be weary, and could lay down His life, *therefore* He was subject to bodily disease,\* and consequently to death, like the natural offspring of Adam. Such teaching is often based upon Hebrews ii. 14, as though the expression "the same" signified the same flesh and blood as the children's. But the passage simply states the great fact that "as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise partook of the same (things)."<sup>†</sup> And mark the object of this. Death was the very citadel of Satan; to be perfectly defeated he must be conquered there, and He who would enter into that stronghold must be capable of dying. The Lord therefore took flesh and blood "in order that through death He might render powerless him that had the power of death." Who could do this but One who, though *capable* of death, was not *liable* to death?

"By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all sinned." (Rom. v. 12.) Everyone therefore springing from Adam by natural generation may truly be described as being chargeable with inherited guilt, and as only possessing a forfeited life. All such must either enter the dark fortress of death as captives in chains, or be delivered from its fear and its sting by a power outside themselves. But

\* These words of warning are not given without cause, as some will understand.

<sup>†</sup> τῶν αὐτῶν does not qualify, but is equal to the repetition of the words, "flesh and blood."

with no inherited guilt, and therefore under no condemnation, and with no seeds of mortality in His blessed person, did the Holy One of God come into the world. For though, of course, He was the son of Adam as truly as He was the son of Abraham, or of David, and though He was truly man, the seed of the woman, yet it was by the direct operation of the Holy Ghost, and the overshadowing power of the Highest that He was conceived in the womb of the virgin, and therefore as born of her He was emphatically a "holy thing." Here was indeed "a new thing," one who was very man, but with no stain of sin, under no subjection to death, and therefore able when the time came to offer Himself without spot to God, and "to GIVE His life a ransom for many." He thus died the only death it was possible for Him to die, the death of atonement as the substitute of His people.

It is very important to maintain the principle that all interpretation of type and prophetic experience must be guided by plain statements of New Testament Scripture, and therefore any assertions that the Lord actually suffered bodily disease may well be met by the affirmation that there is not a single verse in the Gospels that gives any foundation for such an idea; and, it may be added, all those Scriptures that speak of the perfectness of His sacrifice most emphatically repudiate it. He was "without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter i. 18), and "He offered Himself without spot to God." A leprous spot in His sacred body would have rendered Him as unfit for God's altar as would a spot of sin in His soul. In this respect also it is incumbent upon us to remember that Scripture speaks of the *whole person*. He Himself, in the entirety of His being, was *without spot*. And where a distinction is made between soul and body, it is the body that is emphatically said not to have seen corruption. (Psalm

xvi. 10 ; Acts ii. 31.) He was the Holy One at His birth, and He was the Holy One at His death, and through all the intervening years nothing defiling could possibly affect Him.

When the Holy Ghost would set forth the sympathy of our great High Priest, He puts Him in marked contrast with mere human high priests. They could sympathize with others because they were compassed with infirmity, but the very thing which gave them the power of sympathy made it necessary that they should offer for their own sins. The sympathy of our High Priest, on the contrary, springs not from inherent infirmity, but from the fact that He was "tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," that He "suffered, being tempted," and that by the pathway of varied and manifold sufferings endured in doing the will of God, He reached that position of glory and dignity which is His for ever, as the "High Priest after the order of Melchisedek." (Heb. v. 1-10.) "For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity ; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore." (Heb. vii. 28.)

As we behold Him there, let us indeed ponder the pathway of deep humiliation once trod by Him, but in so doing let us keep to inspired statements, and not add our inferences from them, lest we unintentionally dishonour Him whom it is surely the earnest desire of every thoughtful child of God to adore and magnify.

W. H. B.

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FRAGMENT.—In the writings of the disciple whom Jesus loved, and who reclined upon His bosom, we have the fulness of the truth as to the twofold nature of the one glorious Person who alone is the "Christ of God."

## THE "GARDEN" OF GETHSEMANE.

JOHN xviii. 1-12.

THOUGH there is now, through God's mercy, an unexpected time of quiet in these lands, we know that wars and rumours of wars will again prevail, and it is well to keep in remembrance the "troublous times" and sad scenes of misery and bloodshed in which our fellow-saints of other days have lived. Patriarchs, prophets and apostles could all tell us of terrible events which they themselves witnessed, and they would wonder, perhaps, at the outwardly smooth and easy lives that we have lived. Of course such troubles are not distinctively "the afflictions of Christ for His body's sake the Church;" nor are they "the afflictions of the gospel"; they are simply the evils and sorrows of a sinful world, which Christians may have to witness and more or less to share in. But even these sore calamities of war few of us have ever seen. Yet it is well to be prepared, for to the wise, to be forewarned is to be forearmed; and God's word by His Spirit clothes us with a panoply of Christian meekness and submission and patience in readiness for such a day.

Our Master Himself was painfully acquainted with man's use of the sword. Herod's massacre of the infants of Bethlehem occurred in His early years, and armed soldiers nailed Him to the cross. But concerning all such things that may have come before Him we are sure He said in *spirit* what in the "garden" He said in *words*—"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" (John xviii. 11)—and that too, when most of the weapons in view were directed against Himself.

But Gethsemane was the place of PRAYER, as well as of calmness amidst "weapons." And surely it was the depth and continuance of His prayer on that same spot which made Him ready to meet the instruments of torture and of death with which He was surrounded. As Gethsemane, that is, an "olive press," it had been to Him the place of an unutterable *weight* of woe, and He had sunk to the ground under the dreaded "cup" of God's wrath against sin. But whilst sinking He still had cried "Not as I will, but as Thou wilt." This expression shows us the dark and silent character of the olive press, but its exceeding pressure drew from Him only the oil of a self-surrendering obedience to God and of a love that was stronger than death.

Presently the whole scene changed. Judas knew the spot, and led thither a "band of men and officers"—temple hirelings—with lanterns and torches and weapons to take Him. These sons of Belial as thorns and briars (2 Sam. xxiii. 6) compassed Jesus and His disciples, and filled the garden, as John calls it, and he is the only evangelist who does so; but it was no "garden" to anyone then in it except to Him who was every moment doing the will of God: and Jesus, God's beloved Son, was to Him the only pleasant and fruit-bearing plant that the "garden" contained. In our Lord's thoughts and words and actions there was at that spot the sweetest fragrance and richest fruit to God. Taught by God's word and Spirit He knew all that should come upon Him; every utterance of His lips was only glorifying to God; and He stepped forward, the first to face the foe, and then He healed the wound that Peter's rash sword had made. Thus it was indeed a "garden," for Jesus made it such. So calm was His soul that His own prayer of John xvii. was not forgotten. In it He had said, "Of them that Thou



gavest Me I have lost none"; and now He still fulfils this word, saying, "If ye therefore seek me, let these go their way." In the "Gethsemane" character of the spot as given in Matthew, Mark and Luke, Jesus appears as a sufferer, willingly bowing, as He anticipates the cross, in the perfection of a *passive* obedience: here in John He treads the same "garden" in an *active* obedience, and bears fruit at every footstep and in every word.

How could it be otherwise? Before these murderers came the infinitely greater conflict had been endured, the conflict of His soul as to the wrath of God. He had seen a more awful "sword" (see Zech. xiii. 7) than all the swords of puny man combined—and had in spirit yielded Himself to *that sword*. In comparison with it what were the cruelest weapons of the wicked? He was abundantly ready for all that lay before Him, for He had previously submitted to the awful "*cup*" of Divine wrath (see Matt. xxvi. 39; Mark xiv. 36; Luke xxii. 42), albeit He had sunk to the ground beneath its dreadfulness. The cup of His soul's agony having been accepted, how small in comparison was the "*cup*" of His earthly surroundings at the hand of man!

Now in all this are there not deep lessons to prepare us for anything that may issue from the evil opposition and strifes of men? True, their weapons are not at present directed against us as followers of Jesus, though they soon may be; but their very presence and the well-known hatred of the natural heart bid us shield ourselves behind our Master and "abide in Him," that we also may bear fruit, and may, like Him, turn earth's perils and sufferings into a "garden" of obedience to God in thought and wish, in word and deed.

But in order to this, must we not have fellowship with our Lord in His Gethsemane woes? Not that we have to

drink one drop of the cup of God's wrath. This He drank for us : but we have to abide in Gethsemane in spirit, and to *watch* there and *pray*, if we would face the stormy days that are yet coming. Gethsemane was an olive press to our Lord, and thus it becomes God's "pot of *oil*" to us (see 2 Kings iv.) by which we can pay all the debt we owe (see Rom. i. 14), and "live of the rest."

But strength for this, and knowledge too of God's will concerning us when the scene of trial comes, is not to be gained by sleeping. Simon Peter slept whilst his Lord was praying, and as a consequence hastily drew and used the sword when the hour of weapons and danger arrived. Being ill prepared for the storm when it burst on the "little flock," he resorted to the use of the same weapons as his assailants brought.

This may have been natural for those who loved their Master with what was largely only a human affection, and who had not the Holy Ghost indwelling them; but alas for us whose privileges are so much greater, if we are found similarly unlike our Lord when the hour of danger comes! And yet we surely shall be, if in our soul's communion with our Lord we are uninstructed, and therefore are only slothful and slumbering saints.

Formalism in the closet, neglect of the Scriptures, the partaking of the Lord's Supper without emotion of soul, the slighting of fellowship with fellow sufferers—"Could ye not watch *with Me* one hour?"—these are the things which will find us either timid in the hour of trial, as Peter was before the accusing maid; or hasty in temper, as when he drew the sword.

God grant us grace, both by Gethsemane's woes and by its fruit of victory, to come off "more than conquerors through Him that loved us." Amen.

## ON THE MODE OF PRESENTING THE GOSPEL.

## NOTES OF A CONFERENCE BIBLE READING.

MAN'S obligation to obey the gospel does not hang upon his good pleasure to obey, but entirely on God's command. God's *decree* is not the question, for "God *commandeth all men* everywhere to repent." "There is one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." He is not a Mediator between God and *angels* that sinned; He is their judge.

The Scriptures make no "offer" of the gospel to men. In an *offer* there is not authority, but a kind of licence to accept or refuse. The gospel is a *command* from the king, an *invitation* from the Lord of heaven and earth; and, lastly, an *entreaty* from God the Father. There is in it the joint supplication of the Father and the Son through the Spirit. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead, Be ye reconciled to God."

An "offer" is feeble and weak, and does not belong to the gospel. It does not represent God as the Lord of lords, nor as the great King who invites to a banquet, nor as the Father of mercies. The words of God as found in the Gospels represent the claims of God, and those words which give God His true character should be used by us in preaching the gospel.

The words "offered faith" as given in the margin of Acts xvii. 31 are not a true rendering of the original, and are rejected in the Revised Version. The meaning is, that God has presented to all men a ground of confidence.

In the three ways in which the gospel may be presented the man who obeys not, is constituted a rebel against right, a refuser of grace, and a rejecter of mercy. In the one case the *throne* of God is brought before us; in the second, the *riches* which surround the throne, as seen in the banquet; and in the third, God's bowels of *mercies*. For a sinner who rejects such a gospel what can there be but hell?

In speaking to ten thousand or to one let us remember that *unbelief* denies the sovereignty of God, despises the riches of His grace, and makes light of His tender mercy and pity. Let us instruct those to whom we preach, not only as to the blessedness of faith, but as to the guilt of unbelief; so shall we represent God fitly. Man's worst sin is his rejection of the gospel. It lies at the very root of much that is called Christianity. The very sin which is the highest disobedience is the life and soul of the world's Christianity, be it Roman or Protestant.

It is the Cain altar instead of the Abel altar. We cannot join with the world in seeking to *reform* men without damaging our own communion with God. Alas! many of God's Nazarites are shorn in the Delilah lap of the world's love and approbation.

When Abraham knew the doom that was to overtake Sodom, could he have encouraged its people to improve themselves, to adorn their houses, etc.? He would have said, "Depart, for the whole place is doomed." To look at matters in this light would settle all efforts on the part of disciples of Christ to improve the world apart from the gospel, which saves *out of* it. The axe is laid to the root of the tree, and it is loss of time to seek to improve that which God has condemned as utterly bad.

The testimony of Scripture touching man's alienation from God is plainly recorded. In this respect there is no

difference between Jew and Gentile, between one nation and another, between one class of mankind and another—all are destitute of righteousness; “all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.” (Rom. iii. 23.) All the sons of Adam are in every age the same. When man stands before God he has not a shred of righteousness. As between man and man (according to Rom. v. 7), there is much which human history records of men as being both good and righteous, but not before God. And besides the state of alienation which is common to all ages and conditions of men, there is a relative progress in the hardening of man’s heart and conscience against God which the devil brings about, leading men on to despise the very goodness of God.

In Jeremiah xvii. 9, we read, “The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked;” literally it is “incurably sick.” Let us remember chapter xiii. 23. “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil.” Before the flood Scripture gives this testimony: “And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” (Gen. vi. 5.) Jeremiah gives his testimony by the Spirit after God had proved man’s heart through giving the law. So also in Isa. v. 4 we read, “What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done to it? wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes.” This puts man’s accountability in the strongest light. God had a right, and claimed His right, and the conscience of His people assented. They said at the first, “All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient.” (Ex. xxiv. 7.)

The faculty called conscience can never die. It may be

lulled to sleep, it can be corrupted, and the devil can pervert it, so that Saul of Tarsus can be persuaded that he is doing God service in persecuting saints. But with all this the conscience can never die, and when it is waked up by God's truth it does its proper office in taking part with God and justifying Him; this is what it will do in hell, it will justify God, while the will and the heart will be utterly alienated from God, and let loose on the creature himself.

Is conscience a faculty that was acquired by the fall?

If I am in health, I do not notice that I have a hand; but let it be hurt, and at once I know it. So with Adam in uprightness; his conscience came into office when he sinned; it sounded the trumpet then, but the faculty of conscience he possessed before; and it approved him when upright, and condemned him when guilty.

Think of Julius Cæsar and Judas Iscariot in hell. They must both condemn themselves. Julius Cæsar must say, "I am punished here, and am banished from my throne, because I covered it with guilt." But Judas Iscariot would have to say, "I knew the King of kings, I kissed His face, I betrayed Him!" A worm that never dies must Judas have, such as Julius Cæsar can never know. The hell of the future begins even now on earth.

Rom. ii. 1-11 shows that God has this rule of executing judgment upon man. He executes it after long-suffering; and let us remember that He did not deal in long-suffering when He cast out from their habitation the angels that sinned, but he does deal in long-suffering with man, on the ground of the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God. God does not execute judgment before warning has been given, and long-suffering has come to an end. God makes such a manifestation to man of his state as to leave no more room for long-suffering; and the wickedness of man

compels Him to arise and execute judgment. Then man's confession will be like that of Pharaoh, "The Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked." God will never fail in procuring from His enemies an acknowledgment of the righteousness of the sentence which His judgment pronounces on sin.

The evangelist must take heed to show not only the justice of God in condemning the sinner, but the equity of the punishment. Salvation is of God, but damnation is of the sinner. Oh, let us yearn over the souls of the unsaved, but let us get our yearnings in the Father's house. Then we shall go to preach the whole truth; but if we are merely driven by conscience, or if our motive is only care for souls, we shall preach a stunted gospel. If we are not in communion with the Father's love, it will not be natural for us to talk of the pleasures of the Father's house. It must be our chief business to dwell there, then we shall know the power and warmth of the Father's love, and we shall be constrained to speak of it, whether to saints or sinners, as those who "have known and believed the love of God."

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## "BE STILL, AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD."

### IN SICKNESS.

"Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus; when THEREFORE He had heard that he was sick, He ABODE TWO DAYS still in the same place where He was." (Jno. xii. 5, 6.)

"Trophimus have I LEFT at Miletum sick." (2 Tim. iv. 20.)

### IN THE STORM.

"He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side . . . and there arose a great storm of wind, and the

waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow : and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not"—"pertaineth it not to Thee" (*Wiclif*)—"that we perish? And He arose, and rebuked"—"menaced" (*Wiclif*)—"the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And He said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? How is it that ye have NO FAITH?"—"What dread ye? Ye have no faith yet." (Mark iv. 35-40—*Wiclif*.)

#### IN GOD'S APPOINTED PATH.

"Lord, and what shall this man do? . . . What is that to THEE? follow thou Me." (Jno. xxi. 21, 22.)

"They . . . were forbidden of the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia. After they were come to Mysia, they ASSAYED to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not." (Acts xvi. 6, 7.)

"Paul dwelt TWO WHOLE YEARS in his own hired house [with a soldier that kept him], and received all that came unto him." (Acts xxviii. 30.)\*

#### WHEN THE FLESH IS RESTLESS.

"We hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly; working not at all, but are BUSYBODIES. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with QUIETNESS they work, and eat their own bread." (2 Thess. iii. 11, 12.)

"Let none of you suffer as a . . . BUSYBODY in other men's matters." (1 Peter iv. 15.)

"As touching BROTHERLY LOVE ye need not that I write unto you . . . but we beseech you, brethren, that

\* Connect with this, Joseph in prison; Moses in the desert; David keeping his father's sheep.



ye increase more and more; AND that ye STUDY to be QUIET, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without." (1 Thess. iv. 9-12.)

#### IN FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS.

"Likewise ye wives be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may, without a word be WON by the behaviour of the wives." (1 Peter iii. 1.)

"So that the spirit be at rest and quiet: which spirit is before God a thing much set by." (Ch. iii. 4—*Cranmer*.)

"Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall; for the man will not be in rest until HE have finished the thing this day." (Ruth iii. 18.)

#### IN DAILY LIFE.

"He that is SLOW to wrath is of great understanding; but he that is hasty of spirit exalteth folly." (Prov. xiv. 29.)

"Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be PUT AWAY from you, with all malice." (Eph. iv. 31.)

"Charity . . . doth not behave itself unseemly . . . is not easily provoked . . . BEARETH all things . . . endureth all things." (1 Cor. xiii. 4, 5-7.)

#### BEFORE RULERS.

"Settle it . . . in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will GIVE you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. . . . In your patience POSSESS ye your souls." (Luke xxi. 14-19.)

“The Lord direct your hearts into the . . . patience of Christ.” (2 Thess. iii. 5 ; R.V.)

### IN THE CHURCH.

“Except the Lord build the house, they labour IN VAIN that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but IN VAIN. It is VAIN for you to rise up early, to sit up late, to eat the bread of sorrows : for so He giveth His beloved sleep,” or “when asleep.”

“I have planted, Apollos watered ; but God GAVE THE INCREASE. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth ; but God that giveth the increase.” (1 Cor. iii. 6, 7.)

“Now the God of PATIENCE and consolation grant you to be likeminded one towards another, according to Christ Jesus.” (Rom. xv. 5.)

“Thanks be to God, which GIVETH us the VICTORY through our Lord Jesus Christ. THEREFORE, my beloved brethren, be ye STEDFAST, UNMOVEABLE, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is NOT IN VAIN IN THE LORD.” (1 Cor. xv. 57, 58.)

“We had the sentence of death in ourselves that we should not trust in ourselves, but in GOD WHICH RAISETH THE DEAD.” (2 Cor. i. 9.)

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### THE CHURCH.

#### NOTES OF AN ADDRESS TO YOUNG BELIEVERS.

THOUGH the expression “the church” is only found in the New Testament, there are very instructive types of the church in the Old Testament.

In Genesis v. we find a very short history of Enoch : “And Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him.” This gives us an encouraging picture of the

church. As he walked with God till he was caught up, so the church is to walk with God till the Lord comes to take her to Himself. (1 Thess. iv. 14.)

Let us now turn to Lev. xxiii. This is a chapter which should be carefully pondered by every one who wishes to understand God's dealings in different dispensations. In verses 10, 11, we read of the sheaf of first-fruits of harvest being waved before the Lord "on the morrow after the sabbath." That was a new day for Israel. In the Old Testament we read a great deal about the sabbath, the seventh day, but not much about the day after the sabbath. It was in fact our "first day of the week," the eighth day, the *resurrection* day. In verses 15, 16, they were told to count from that day seven sabbaths, or forty-nine days, and on the fiftieth day, the day after the sabbath, they were to offer a "new meat-offering." Pentecost was just fifty days after our Lord's resurrection, and on that day the Holy Ghost came down, and the church began to be formed.

The new meat-offering (v. 17) consisted of two wave loaves "baken with leaven." In this we have a type of the church. When Christ is typified there is no leaven, but when the church is foreshadowed there is leaven, for sin and failure are ever found in the church. The two loaves formed one new meat-offering, and Jew and Gentile form one new man in Christ.

The church, then, was formed at Pentecost, and will continue until 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17 is fulfilled, when "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God," and living and sleeping saints will be caught up together to meet the Lord in the air.

The closing commission of the Lord to His disciples in Matt. xxviii. was to go and make disciples among all

nations, and to teach them to observe all things that He had commanded. The Acts of the Apostles show how this was done, and for those gathered out in various places the teaching of the Holy Ghost was given in the Epistles.

The word "church" in the original is *ecclesia*. A "congregation" is a people called together, but the "church" is "called out." Everything depends upon who it is that calls, and from what he calls persons out. A man may call people together, and then a man may dismiss them. In Acts xx. Demetrius gathered the people of Ephesus together, and the town-clerk "dismissed the assembly," or *ecclesia*. A person may gather people to himself, and call them a church, but it will be *his* church. God calls His people out of the world and calls them His own, and they are thus "the church of God," as the apostle Paul tells the elders of Ephesus in Acts xx.—"*the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.*" In 1 Cor. x. 32, xi. 22, and in other places this term is used, and we likewise find similar expressions, as the "churches of God" or "churches of Christ," the local assemblies, including all children of God in any place, as at Corinth, or in a district, as in Galatia.

But other names are used for those who form the church, and each one has its especial significance.

One of these is "the body." When the church is thus spoken of it is in reference to *service*, as our bodies are for service. Christ is the Head of His body the church, and the Holy Ghost is the power which works in the body. In 1 Cor. xii. 12, the Head and members are spoken of as "Christ." "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ." And we should recognise no other "body." "By one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (1 Cor. xii. 13.) "There

is one body and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling." (Eph. iv. 4.)

Again, the church is spoken of as a "temple" (2 Cor. vi. 14), "a holy temple" (Eph. ii. 21); and this gives us the thought of *worship*.

In Hebrews iii. 6, the figure used is a "house"; and this tells us of *order* and arrangement. Christ is the Son over God's house.

In Eph. ii. 15, we read of the "new man," and this teaches us the *union* of Jew and Gentile. Chapter v. tells us of the "bride," reminding us of *love, subjection and companionship*.

From 1 Cor. i. 9, we learn that it is *God* who calls, and also *to what* we are called—"to the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ our Lord"; and this will lead to fellowship one with another.

In Heb. x. 25, we are warned not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. It was the manner of some to do so even in the apostles' days, and this warning is the more needed as "the day" approaches.

When Peter had made his true confession of Christ as revealed to him by the Father (Matt. xvi.), the Lord said, "On this rock will I build My church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." This is the first mention of the word "church," and observe that Christ speaks of it in the future "I *will* build," and He calls it "*My* church." The foundation was laid in His death, and it is built in resurrection. The waters flowed over the twelve stones laid by Joshua in the dry bed of Jordan, and they were hidden from every eye but God's; so God only can estimate the value of the death of His Son. But the twelve stones taken out of the midst of Jordan were built together on the other side (Josh. iv.); and so God's living stones are now built together on resurrection ground.

It is to His own name that the Lord calls us. (Matt. xviii. 20.) "When two or three are gathered together in [or unto] My name, there am I in the midst." This was first fulfilled in John xx., when He came and stood in the midst of the disciples. So the apostle Paul writes in 1 Cor. v. 4, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ when ye are gathered together." "*Lord*" is the ruling name; "*Jesus*" is the saving name; and "*Christ*" is the enriching name. Thus we know Him in His threefold character. He is "*Jesus*," but "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye crucified, both *Lord* and *Christ*." (Acts ii. 36.) Many know Him as Saviour, who do not give Him His place as Lord, or know His enriching character as Christ.

In Col. iii. we read, "Let the word of *Christ* dwell in you richly in all wisdom"; "Whatsoever ye do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the *Lord Jesus*, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him"; and "Whatsoever you do, do it heartily as to the *Lord*, and not unto men; knowing that of the *Lord* ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the *Lord Christ*." Thus we see how significantly the apostle teaches us regarding the name as well as the Lordship of Christ. In Rev. iii. 8, we read, "Thou hast kept My word, and hast not denied My name." Let us seek that at His coming we may have this testimony of His approval, like the church of Philadelphia.

Young converts sometimes say, "What church am I to join? There are so many denominations." In Scripture we do not find any such sectarian names as abound everywhere now; and this should make anyone pause and consider. In 1 Cor. iii. 4, we read that believers at Corinth said, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ"; and the apostle asks,

“Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” It is very natural for any one to associate himself with those among whom he was converted; but when we are saved our duty is to learn the Lord’s mind from His word, and then to obey it. By His word alone all things will be tried at the judgment seat of Christ.

In conclusion, Israel may be looked at in some respects as a type of the church, though a contrast in other respects. God ordered everything for Israel. All that was required was clearly laid down for them both while they were in the wilderness and when they should be in the land. Nothing was left for them to invent or arrange. In the building of the tabernacle every detail was divinely commanded, and in their approach to God they were told what they were to offer and to do. In their journeyings the pillar of cloud guided them all the way.

Thus it is now also. God has not left His church without rule and guidance, but has given His word, and His Spirit to guide into all truth. 1 Cor. xii. is full of the work of the Spirit, and chapters xiii. and xiv. are in connection. Is any one in the church to do as he likes? No; God gives to each his place in the body and his service. We cannot do one another’s work, but need to be guided by God to fulfil our own service; yet we may learn from others. The apostle Paul was enabled to say, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ.” Wherever he went he sought out the disciples and assembled with them. With those who were gathered in Christ’s name he had fellowship and laboured, breaking bread with them and preaching the Word; and he was a willing partaker of the afflictions of the gospel. If in obedience to the word of God we have to suffer, let us rejoice that we are counted worthy to do so, and let us seek to know the power

of Christ's resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, pressing on toward the mark for the prize of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

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### NOTES.

PSALM civ.—This psalm may be looked at as meditative of the *past* in creation, descriptive and symbolic of the *present* in the life of the child of God, and prophetic of the *future* of the world's history. It is so worded as to express all these things. There is one God, who orders the natural and the spiritual world. He is the God of providence and grace, and in both He is clothed "with light as with a garment" (v. 1, 2.); for with Him "the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike." He who at the deluge set to the waters their limit (v. 9.), says regarding His people's affliction, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further;" and hereafter He will stay the proud waters of a guilty world, and bring in peace and glory. "The rocks are a refuge for the conies (v. 18.)," and God's people are, like them, a feeble folk, but He has given them the Rock of ages for their shelter. Truly we may say as we think of the past, the present, and the future, "Bless the Lord, O my soul! Hallelujah."

JOHN xiv. 19.—"*Because I live ye shall live also.*" Jesus is the life, and the medium of life to us. Whatever happens to us, the seat of our life is untouched, for it is not in us but in Him: "Your life is hid with Christ in God." (Col. iii. 3.) It was expedient He should go away, for it is better to have Him *in* us than *with* us; but soon we shall have both in perfection. We shall be able to enter into this when we are prepared for our place in the heavenly temple. Here we have to be hewn and polished by many a wilderness trial, but especially have we to feel the force of that hammer which breaks the rock in pieces—the word of God, which searches the inwards, and divides between soul and spirit, and we are made to feel the need of our great High Priest. As we are humbled in the light of His Word, and know His sympathy and power, we can say, "To me to live is Christ," and we find our own atmosphere in the sunshine of His presence. Oh the blessedness of being strong in the Lord, united to the Man of strength, Christ Jesus! Why should we be weak, seeing we have been divorced from self by the cross of Christ and have Christ in us? Every day should give us fresh discoveries of Christ, but we have to learn that hard saying—"It is the spirit that quickeneth: the flesh profiteth nothing." (John vi. 63.)

H. B. G.



## WHEN DID CHRIST BECOME THE SIN-BEARER ?

HEB. ix. 28 ; 1 PET. ii. 24.

IN much of the ordinary theology of Christendom the substitutional work of the Lord Jesus is acknowledged, but it is taken for granted that He was bearing sin all His life. Upon what Scripture this doctrine is based it is not easy to see. The statement of Heb. ix. 28 is very explicit: "Christ was *once* offered to bear the sins of many." If He had been bearing those sins all His life would it have been said He was *offered* in order to bear them? Equally clear is 1 Peter ii. 24: "Who His own self bare our sins in His own body on the tree." That "ON the tree" is the correct translation, and not "*up to the tree*,"\* as some would render it, is confirmed by the Scripture to which Peter definitely refers, namely Isaiah liii. 12, for the statement "He bare the sin of many" is *preceded* by "He was numbered with the transgressors." Now the Lord Himself at the last supper spoke of this as something future, saying "This that is written must YET

\* "On the tree" was evidently deemed the truer rendering by the Translators of 1611; it has been confirmed by the majority of the Revisers of 1881, and is defended by able scholars. The word *αναφέρω*, used for bearing sin in Heb. ix. 28 as well as in 1 Peter ii. 24, is used for *offering up* sacrifices in Heb. vii. 27 (twice), xiii. 15, Jas. ii. 21, 1 Pet. ii. 5. The *Sept.* rendering in Num. xiv. 33 is "Your children shall *bear* your whoredoms," and in Isa. liii. 12, "He *bare* the sin of many." It is evident that in Heb. ix. 28 we cannot render the word either by *offer*, or *carry up*, for we have in the same verse another word for *offer*, which occurs also in v. 14 and in many other places. The only meaning therefore can be, that "Christ was once offered in order to (els) *bear* the sins of many," and this supports the translation of Peter given above. That *ἐν* with the accusative does not always imply motion, is clear from Mark iv. 38, 2 Cor. iii. 15, and Rev. iv. 4.

be accomplished in Me, And He was numbered among the transgressors" (Luke xxii. 37); showing that it had not then been fulfilled. Nor are we left in any doubt as to when it was fulfilled, for when He was crucified between the two thieves we are told, "The Scripture was fulfilled which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors." A further proof that Peter refers to His actual death is found in the fact that the *result* of His sin-bearing is that we are "dead to sins;" "for we thus judge that if One *died* for all, then all died." (2 Cor. v. 14.)

If we turn to the great type of the sin-offering (Lev. iv. 3, 4) we find that as soon as sin was transferred from the offerer to the victim that victim had to be killed. The command is as follows: "Let him bring for his sin which he hath sinned, a young bullock without blemish unto the Lord for a sin-offering. And he . . . shall lay his hand upon the bullock's head, and kill the bullock before the Lord." (See also verses 15, 24, 29, 33.) And as an illustration of Heb. ix. 28 we may refer to Lev. xvi. 7, 9, 21. Aaron is required *first* to present the two goats before Jehovah at the door of the tent of the congregation; and *then* to transfer to them the sins of the people. The moment sin is imputed or charged to the account, judgment must follow. As one has said: "When sin is imputed, death, with its sting and woe, comes in triumphantly. Be it even the eternal God in whose person the imputation takes place; be it even the Beloved of the Father; be it the Man who knows no sin, who is holy, harmless, and undefiled, the chief among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely: sin has entered (*i.e.* by imputation), and death enters by sin. His Godhead hinders it not. His relation to the Father—oh, how near and blessed ineffably!—hinders it not. His holy beauty from the womb of the virgin, and as from the womb of the

morning, hinders it not. His perfect love to the Father, His Father's infinite love to Him—and neither is impaired or arrested for an instant of time—hinders it not. Made sin, He is inevitably made a curse."

Such was the effect of the imputation of sin even to the Lord of glory; but was this true of Him all through His life? Did He spend the whole of that life under the dark cloud of the wrath of God? Surely not. He always walked in the full sunshine of the Father's countenance, which was never obscured by any cloud of wrath. Even in Gethsemane, in that awful conflict with the prince of darkness, in that fearful anticipation of the hour that was before Him and the cup He was about to drink, there was unbroken fellowship with God, and the ministry of an angel from His presence. But on the cross, though He was never more acceptable to the Father than in that hour of supreme obedience, and though He never trusted God more fully than then, His experience was that of a forsaken one, and for the first and last time in His eternity of being He lost the sense of that Presence without which all else was to Him but as the very darkness of the pit. "My God, my God, WHY hast Thou forsaken me?" The answer is as simple as it is solemn. The sin, iniquity, and transgression of His people were laid upon Him, and His Holy Father became, even to Him, the sin-avenging God. He was "made sin," and nothing could arrest its consequences or hinder the stroke of Divine justice. Thus the "hour" of the cross stands alone, in all its solemnity and solitary grandeur, as the period when He took upon Himself the load that no creature could have borne, and sank beneath its weight, but sank only to rise again as the Finisher of the mighty work of redemption, and the accepted Surety of His people.

In accordance with this it is the habit of the inspired

writers to trace all our blessings to the *death* of Christ. We are "justified by His blood" (Rom. v. 9); sanctified "by His own blood" (Heb. xiii. 12); "made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. ii. 13); and by that same blood washed from our sins, and made a kingdom and priests to God. (Rev. i. 5, 6.) "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." (Gal. iii. 13.) "When we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son." (Rom. v. 10.) "Christ once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter iii. 18); yea, "He died for us that we should live together with Him" (1 Thess. v. 10); and when we do so we shall own His worthiness as the One who was slain, and thus redeemed us to God by His blood (Rev. v. 9), even as we now delight to sing—

"For ever be the glory given  
To Thee, O Lamb of God!  
Our every joy on earth, in heaven,  
We owe it to Thy blood."

The word "obedience" in Rom. v. 19 is often appealed to as though it taught that by Christ's obedience to the law His people are made righteous. But the verse is so closely linked with v. 18 that it must be explained in accordance with it, and thus we learn that the "obedience of the One" by which the many are constituted righteous is the same as the "one righteous act" (R. V.) which results in "justification of life." The word *dikaiōma* strictly means *a thing righteously done*, and, to quote the words of another, it "expresses a completed act, a finished righteousness, and must refer not to a variety of actions spread over a whole life, but to some deed of perfection, in itself complete, which has made righteousness manifest in every possible sense, in every variety of aspect. Such was the cross of Christ."

Let it not be supposed that we make light of the matchless *life* of our adorable Lord, or imagine that its perfectness and fragrance were at all in the background when He “offered Himself without spot to God.” His life tells out what He was; and in all the unspeakable value of that life, as well as the infinite worth of His glorious person He “gave Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour.” (Eph. v. 2.) Of that life we cannot now speak, but we may rest assured that we shall neither learn out its perfections, nor magnify Him who lived it, by attributing to it what God does not attribute to it, but detract thereby from the value and sufficiency of that death of atonement which gives all the redeemed an eternal standing before a Holy God, and makes them for ever worthy of His own blessed presence. May He, by His Spirit, teach us more of its preciousness!

W. H. B.

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“THIS LIGHT BREAD,” OR, “WHAT THINK YE OF CHRIST?”

“*Man did eat angels' food.*” Such was God's estimate of the bountiful supply of heavenly manna which He rained down for Israel through the opened doors of heaven. It is spoken of as if it were bread made from the very corn of heaven, reaped by angel hands, and prepared by them for the sustenance of God's pilgrims in the wilderness.

At Mount Sinai the children of Israel had almost seen God face to face; they had heard His voice from heaven, and had received the holy ordinances of a divinely-appointed ritual which pointed onwards to that spotless sacrifice to be offered up by the Son of God in the fulness of time. But scarcely had they recommenced their journey towards Canaan before the memory of Egypt's

food filled their minds, and we find them saying, "Our soul is dried away; there is nothing at all beside this manna before our eyes." In reply to this, quails were given as the sand of the sea, but the graves of Kibroth-hataavah bore witness to their lust and to the wrath of a holy God.

Well nigh forty years after this guilty preference of the food of Egypt to the food of heaven, and when they were on the very borders of the land, they yielded to the discouragements of the way and spoke against God and against Moses: "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water, and our soul loatheth *this light bread*." (Numbers xxi. 5.) Thus unchanged, undisciplined, and untrained, their tastes were still the same. The manna was to them at the end of the forty years what it had been at the beginning, unpalatable and unsavoury; albeit it is described as being sweet to the taste and like the fresh oil.

In John vi., when the blessed Lamb of God had spoken of giving His flesh for the life of the world, to be meat indeed, and His blood to be drink indeed, we read, "Many therefore of His disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is a hard saying: who can hear it?" and as the result, "from that time many of His disciples went back and walked no more with Him." Thus they showed that they were in heart just like their forefathers.

In contrast with this (Rom. i.) we find the apostle Paul exalting the righteousness of God in comparison with the righteousness of the law, and saying, "I am *not ashamed of the gospel of Christ*, for it is the power of God unto salvation." In the same spirit, when writing to the Corinthians, and contrasting the wisdom of God with the wisdom of the world, he says, "I determined not to know anything among you *save Jesus Christ and Him crucified*."

To the heart of the apostle the truth of Christ crucified remained the bread of heaven still, and it had lost neither its sweetness nor its freshness. There is no surer sign of spiritual growth, or of inward communion with God, than when the heavenly manna is increasingly relished as days and months and years roll on. He who has thus been feeding on Christ will be truly found growing up into Him in all things, through the divine assimilation of that heavenly food which conforms the recipient to itself, and makes the learner like the Master. (Eph. iv. 20, 21.) This is but another form of the truth couched in those repeated words of our Lord in John xv., "Abide in Me, and I in you."

There are various ways in which we may test ourselves, as to the measure of reality in which we feed on Christ, or abide in Him. We need to remember that we may be occupied with the things of God, engaged in the work of God, and delighting ourselves in the word of God, and yet all the while we may know but little of that *abiding* of which our Lord speaks, or of that eating and drinking of the flesh and blood of the Son of man which is the one condition of our daily renewal of life.

This is a day of false Christs. We may have an *intellectual* Christ, who may in a certain way enlighten our intellects and please our imaginations; we may have a *religious* Christ, and make Him the centre of formal worship and prayer; we may have a *moral* Christ, and set Him before our eyes as the object of our imitation, expressive of the highest code of morality; yet all these may be but *ideal* Christs, and not the living Christ of God. This is well expressed in the following extract:—

"There are many who are firmly persuaded that they are abiding in Christ, who are not yet in Christ at all; nor is it likely that they will awake from their delusion until the hour when He shall say unto them, 'Depart

from Me, I never knew you!' The cause of their remaining so hopelessly bound in their delusion is, that they are abiding in another Christ whom they choose to regard as the true Christ. They invent for themselves a Christ after their own hearts, by obliterating some of the features of the gospel Christ, and adding some from their own fancy. They ignore a number of His commandments. They reject a portion of His testimony concerning their sin, their dependence, their blindness, their danger, and concerning the character of the world, its pleasures, its riches, its honours. They leave out certain conditions of the promises. The heart is deceitful above all things, and its triumph as a deceiver is most surprisingly seen when it binds an individual all his life long in the unfaltering conviction that the Christ of his fancy is the true Christ. How many are thus led captive! How incomparably difficult their deliverance! They believe in Christ—that is, their own Christ; they obey him; they honour him; they preach him; they are zealous for him; they make converts in his name; perhaps they raise up a church for him. And Satan opposes them in this work only just so far as may be necessary in order to give them thus an additional evidence that they are in the way of truth. Oh, how great will be their astonishment when they shall at length be ushered into the august presence of the true Christ! The scales will then fall from their eyes and they will awaken to a sense of their tremendous guilt in having trifled with the revelation of the Saviour in the gospel."

When the question was first put to us in the days of our unregeneracy, "*What think ye of Christ?*" had we answered in truth, according to our soul's consciousness, we should have replied according to the words of Isaiah liii: "He is a root out of a dry ground, having neither form



nor comeliness." Our estimate of Christ would have corresponded with Israel's estimate of the manna. But when God shined into the heart, giving the light of the knowledge of His glory in the face of Jesus Christ, we were ready to exclaim with Peter, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Henceforth this became our creed; but creeds are one thing, and living confessions another. A creed may become as cold and as lifeless as the very paper on which it is written, or as the intellect that holds it, and hence the importance of receiving the question afresh every day from God the Holy Ghost: "What think ye of Christ *to-day*?" Is Christ this day to us

"A living bright reality,  
More present to faith's vision keen,  
Than any outward object seen;  
More dear, more intimately nigh,  
Than e'en the sweetest earthly tie?"

Christ will then be no secondary object to the soul. He will fill its entire vision, and earth and heaven, the world, things present, things to come, will be looked at in His light. We shall then find that we have a warfare to wage, and with weapons mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds we shall seek to lay low all our former imaginations and every high thing of creature reasoning that would exalt itself against the knowledge of God, and every thought will be brought captive to the obedience of Christ. The heart will then be satisfied because the will is satisfied, and the intellect will be satisfied because it is overruled by the Holy Ghost.

As one looks around, and sometimes when one looks within, it is painful to feel how rarely the affections, the mind, and the intellect are absolutely and completely satisfied with Christ; and yet He is the infinite gift of God, given to us, His ransomed people, that He might fill

and satisfy us, and prove Himself to be what we hold Him to be in our creed—our all in all.

There is a great danger in the present day, as in every period of intense intellectual activity, of holding Christ for our soul's salvation, and of turning away from Him to satisfy the intellectual cravings of our being. To the consecrated intellect, whatever branch of science may be taken up, a divine pathway leads us from nature to Him whom God has given as the revelation of Himself; for all nature and all true science find their harmony and their rest at the throne of God and of the Lamb.

Not, however, without much heavenly conflict will those who have learnt to put on the whole armour of God be able to overcome the proud and lofty reasonings of a more than Greek wisdom and self-conceit which are now flooding the arena around us. But the heart must be brought into that implicit and loyal obedience which Christ absolutely requires from those who are His, for then only can He unfold to us the riches of His grace, revealing to us, as we are able to bear it, the infinite wisdom of God.

It is not to be wondered at that the depths of divine knowledge are so little fathomed, the heights of divine love so little scaled, the breadth of the all-sufficiency of God so little compassed, when the Christ of God is so little known, and the fulness treasured up in Him is so little proved. As we read the word of God in its gracious unfoldings to us of His calling and His glorious purposes in Christ, the most stupendous statements are brought before us that could fall on mortal ears, spoken by the God of truth, breathed into us by the Spirit of truth, and sealed unto us by the blood of Him who was emphatically *the Truth*. Alas! how feebly do we lay hold of them; how little do we often get out of them! There must be a

reason for all this; it was not designed by God to be so. As the manna that fell round Israel's camp was ever fresh and satisfying, so should the Christ of God ever be found by the exercised soul what God has revealed Him to be—the brightness of the Father's glory and the express image of His person; the all-satisfying portion of His people; the One "in whom dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."

Let us seek of God that what we know of Christ from the Bible may by the Holy Ghost be made real to our own experience. Thus shall we be able to say in the closing words of John's first epistle, "*We know* that the Son of God is come." He will be to us a living and present Christ, and we shall, by that divine faculty which He has given us, know Him as the true one, that is, the eternally real one in all that He professes Himself to be, and in all that God in the pages of Holy Writ declares that He is. We shall then receive the demonstration in our own souls that we are in Him who is true, because ourselves also true, and thereby able to appreciate the truth and the reality that is in Him. "This is the true God and eternal life," the apostle adds; and as if the Spirit of God foresaw the danger of an ideal as opposed to a real Christianity, and an ideal rather than a real Christ, John closes his epistle with these words, "Little children, keep yourselves from idols." The possession of the real alone keeps us safe from the substitution of the ideal, which is idolatry. May God in His grace give to our Christianity a reality by making Christ more and more a living reality to our souls. Then out of a full heart we shall be able to respond to the question, "What think ye of Christ?" in the very language indited by the Holy Ghost: He is "the chiefest amongst ten thousand;" "yea, He is altogether lovely."

H. G.

## NOTES OF CONFERENCES AT LEOMINSTER.

MAY 18th to 21st, 1885.

## SIN AND LOVE.

Mr. DYER.—In the Epistle to the Colossians the apostle exhorts us to admonish one another with “psalms and hymns and spiritual songs.” I will therefore repeat a hymn written by a child of God nearly 250 years ago.

“Philosophers have measured mountains,  
Fathomed the depths of seas, of states and kings,  
Walked with a staff to heaven, and traced fountains;  
But there are two vast and spacious things,  
The which to measure it doth more behove;  
Yet few there are who sound them—Sin and Love.

Who would know *Sin*, let him repair  
Unto Mount Olivet; there shall he see  
A Man so wrung with pains, that all His hair,  
His skin, His garments bloody be.  
Sin is that press and vice, which forceth pain  
To hunt his cruel food through every vein.

Who knows not *Love*, let him assay,  
And taste that juice which on the cross a pike  
Did set again abroad; then let him say  
If ever he did taste the like.  
Love is that liquor sweet and most divine,  
Which my God feels as blood; but I as wine.”

This reminds us of David's spiritual songs of solemn sound. Sin and Love! As I know the one I learn the other. As I realize the sin which belongs to me, so I appreciate the love, the boundless love of the sinless One. If we saw a fellow-creature lying by the wayside bleeding to death, or a soldier whose life-blood was fast flowing from his wounds, should we not immediately seek to staunch the wounds, and to stop the bleeding? But we

turn our eyes to Calvary and behold the sinless One bleeding, groaning, dying, pouring out His soul unto death; and yet none dare interpose. Pity could not be shewn Him. Mercy and alleviation must be withheld from Him. If those wounds are stopped, there could be nothing but hell for us on account of our sin. Deliverance from death to Him at that solemn moment would have resulted in eternal perdition to us. It was for our sin He died, and it was His mighty love that led Him to undertake the work of our redemption. As we gaze at that solemn scene we exclaim, "He loved me and gave Himself for me." Sin and Love! Who can fathom the former? Who can fully grasp the latter? Oh, fellow-saints, what will it be to see Him in the glory! To fix our gaze upon His face, once marred more than any man's, and to bathe in the unclouded sunshine of His smile for ever! What love will fill these hearts when with unveiled face we gaze into those eyes which were once dimmed in death for us, but are never to be dimmed in death again.

"How shall I meet those eyes?

Mine on Himself I cast,

And own myself the Saviour's prize—

Mercy from first to last."

#### SONGS FROM THE CROSS.

MR. H. GROVES.—All the songs in Scripture are more or less connected with the cross of Christ, whether we look back to that lovely one in Exodus xv. or onward to the new song of the redeemed in Rev. v. And we can never get real heart-singing to God [unless our songs spring out of our heart-fellowship with God about the cross of His Son. In Isa. liii, we have the cross, and then the very first word in ch. liv. is "Sing!" As we learn our sin it humbles us into the dust, that dust into which the mighty love of Christ's heart brought Him, and then as those

raised up by Him out of the dust of death, we can in resurrection sing praises unto our God.

If we compare Isa. liv. 1 with Gal. iv. 19-v. 1, we shall see how this singing is to be brought into our everyday experience. Isaiah liii. realized, brings the soul at once into the glorious liberty of the New Covenant, placing us in the position of the true Isaac before God, and delivering us for ever from the bondage of sin and death. It was because the Galatians lacked the knowledge of sonship and liberty that the beloved apostle was so burdened concerning them, and was led to travail in birth again for them, as at their first conversion. He wanted to see Christ formed in them, the Isaac character fully developed, for then, as out of the grave of Isa. liii. would arise that resurrection song which would show that they could no longer go back to the law and to the flesh. The apostle knew something of the cross of Christ experimentally when he said "I travail in birth." As a living Christ is formed in us by the Holy Ghost, and we by faith enter into our true Isaac place (Isaac means "laughter"), then shall we have these songs in our experience.

In Isa. liv. 1, the Holy Ghost takes up the symbol of the barren woman as a figure of the helplessness and hopelessness there is in ourselves, and then gives the song that proceeds out of the anguish of the cross. Verse 2 shows what the church of God needs to-day—a lengthening of the cords and a strengthening of the stakes; but let us beware of the present tendency to lengthen cords without strengthening stakes, the end of which can only be weakness and disaster. Enlargement of heart and strengthening of faith must flow out of the wondrous cross, as in chap. liv. This breaking forth "on the right hand and on the left" is blessedly exemplified in the early chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, where we see

first the 3000 converted, then 5000, and then multitudes of Gentiles accepting the Gospel. Thank God, His hand is not shortened now.

“Fear not; for thou shalt not be ashamed.” Shame is four times mentioned in verse 4, and when we look at our sins we might well be ashamed before God. But the cross is the divine remedy for all, and we forget the shame. “For thy Maker is thine husband.” This God is our God. Israel’s God, the God of the whole earth, is our God. May He enable us to put these words into song, both individually and collectively, and may we sing with spiritual intelligence and with spiritual power.

This can only be on the other side, the resurrection side, of the cross, even as Israel could only sing on the other side of the Red Sea, when separated by that sea from Egypt and its bondage. Philippians iii. 10 explains how this is to be reached experimentally, and as we ponder the apostle’s words we shall feel something of that “fellowship” in the cross of Christ which is needed to enable us to attain a present experience of resurrection power, and to sing that song which becomes us, and which so few know how to sing.

#### JOY FROM CROSS-BEARING.

Dr. MACLEAN.—In the Epistle to the Philippians we read much about heavenly joy, and much also about the cross. In Romans we have the doctrinal aspect of the cross as connected with justification, but in Philippians the condescending grace and lowly obedience of the Lord are especially portrayed in connection with the cross. The apostle tells us how in this he sought to imitate his Lord, and in so doing, in seeking to know the fellowship of His sufferings, his joy evidently abounded. Early in the work at Philippi we find Paul and Silas in the inner

prison, in the stocks, suffering for Christ, and with the suffering was a joy so great, that it told itself out in singing. "At midnight" — in the darkest hour — "Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises to God;" and soon their joy was shared by the jailer and his household.

As any one suffers for Christ, He pours into the heart the oil of joy and gladness. This was His promise to the disciples in Matt. v., "Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for My sake. *Rejoice and be exceeding glad.*" The words in Luke vi. are even stronger, "Rejoice ye in that day, and *leap for joy.*" Another fulfilment of this is given in Acts v. when the apostles were beaten, and departed from the presence of the council "rejoicing" that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name.

The joy which characterized the Philippians at the first appears to have continued, and the mutual joy of the apostle and themselves was great. They had evidently learned to suffer (chap. i. 29) and therefore to rejoice, and the apostle also, again after many years a prisoner, but this time at Rome, still overflows with joy of heart.

If the truth of the cross in Isaiah liii. leads to the joy of chapter liv., may we not expect that as that truth is carried out in our experience, and we enter experimentally into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings, so will our experience of joy increase? Let us seek, then, to learn songs of praise in fellowship with Christ. He sings, in Psalm xxii., after the awful experience of the cross, and as we in our little measure take up our cross and follow Him, we shall learn to sing also. Love led Christ to suffer for us, and love will enable us to suffer for Him.

In Phil. iii. 10, 18, the cross is again referred to, but in the latter verse it is not with joy but with tears—"of



whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ." As the cross, gloried in and loved, leads to joy, so enmity to that cross leads to shame and sorrow, and we should learn, with the apostle, to weep over such as manifest this enmity.

Joy is the fruit of the Spirit of God (Gal. v. 22), and the more we understand the cross, by the Spirit's teaching, so will our joy become more deep and more full.

#### THE SOURCE OF LIFE AND GODLINESS.

MR. A. R. FENN.—We were reminded last night that our songs come out of the cross, and we were referred to the Epistle to the Galatians. That Epistle shows the cross to be the fount of all our life and godliness, the spring and source of all our power for service.

Let us read chapter i. 4, which seems to be the key to the whole epistle. Christ gave Himself to deliver each one of us from this present evil age, as well as from an eternal hell, and this, according to the blessed will of God. We must not form our own idea of what constitutes "the world," but must take God's thoughts, "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world." (1 John ii. 16.) Holiness of life and godliness in our behaviour, spring out of the cross.

In verse 6, the apostle marvels that they are so soon removed from Him that called them into the grace of Christ unto another gospel. In ch. ii. 20, we see that life is connected with the mighty sacrifice of Calvary, "I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless I *live*." Faith is the living link that connects my daily life with the life of the Son of God. In chapter iii. 1, the apostle again marvels at their being bewitched, that they should not obey

the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ had been evidently set forth, crucified among them. Paul had so preached to them that cross, and the scene at Calvary, that it appeared to have been enacted in Galatia, instead of at Jerusalem, and thus it was they so readily believed ; but now they had left the fountain of living water for broken cisterns that could hold no water. In order to overcome the world, they had gone back to rites and ceremonies, and had thus fallen from grace. In chapter iv. he shows that law and grace cannot go together ; and in chapter v. the utter impossibility of blending the flesh and the Spirit. They are as wide apart as the antipodes, and as contrary as light to darkness. He then describes the fruit of the Spirit. Having been crucified with Christ, they were to keep the eye on Christ in resurrection, and walk in the power of the indwelling Spirit, and then this rich cluster of precious fruit would appear to God's glory.

He then exclaims in chapter vi. "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The world had become a *dead thing* to Paul, and he had become a dead thing to the world. It had no charms, no attractions to him. He had counted, and was still counting, all that he could boast of as a man in the flesh as but dung and dross for the sake of Christ. Reputation, learning, friends, and worldly position were all eclipsed in the presence of the cross of Christ. This is the only place of power still, whereby we can overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil. Paul was a man of prayer, and was continually drawing upon the great bank of heaven, and had done so for many years ; and as Paul the aged, the cross was his only glory. May we too get a clearer view, and a deeper realization of the cross ; then we shall go forth with renewed power for service.

## “THE CITY WHICH HATH FOUNDATIONS.”

HEB. xi. 10.

AMIDST all the difficulties and trials by which we are surrounded here, we need, as children of God, the sweet assurance that

“All, all beyond is bright ;  
 ’Tis but a little while,  
 And then eternal light  
 Will cheer us with its smile.”

If we could not rise on the wings of faith and hope, we should often be sorely cast down, and even overwhelmed. We need the blessed consolations of eternity to sustain and uphold us when we look within and find so much there to mourn over ; when we look into the condition of the Church of God, and see so little that is Christ-like ; when we take a wider range and look into the world, and see sin and rebellion waxing bolder and more defiant of God every day.

It was thus that “the sweet psalmist of Israel” felt when, in uttering His last words, he had to groan out in bitter disappointment—“My house is not so with God.” Sin and sorrow, crime and bloodshed, had stained his family history, and now, on his dying bed, he has to take his eyes off all below, and to trust in the immutability of God’s eternal mercies. Resting in this precious assurance—“Yet hath *He* made with *me* an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure,” he could dry his tears and say, “This is all my salvation, and all my desire, though He make it [my house] not to grow.” God will not fail, David could say, though my house has failed.

It was so with Daniel, the man "greatly beloved." When the apostacy of his people was revealed to him with the long days of sin and sorrow that would intervene before the fulfilment of the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, he was assured that God would yet give to Israel their promised inheritance, and that he would stand in his lot at the end of the days. Israel's failure would not cause God to fail.

So also when Paul looked around upon the Church of God, and foresaw that false teachers from within and wolves from without would mar its beauty and corrupt its testimony, he rested on the sure foundation of God and in His perfect knowledge and care for those who were His. (2 Tim. ii. 19.) God would not fail though the Church failed.

Thus David, Daniel and Paul were taught the humbling truth of the utter break-down of everything around them, that they might look onward to that which God would build on His own eternal foundation. In infinite wisdom God has allowed man to build and to fail, again and again, that we may learn that He alone is the true Builder, and that we may look forward to the coming of Him who will rear His heavenly church and His earthly kingdom on a foundation that cannot be moved.

There are many sorrowing children of God, many disappointed ones it may be, who need to listen to the last song of "the sweet Psalmist," that they may raise their tearful eyes and contemplate the heavenly home with its exceeding joy.

In many of our sorrows and trials there is a hidden purpose which we shall never understand until eternity dawns upon us, and God unfolds the doubling that covers all He does, and enables us to read underneath that which we never shall read on the surface. To this Zophar rightly

directs Job's attention in chap. xi. 5, 6 of the book of Job. We would paraphrase the passage thus—

“Oh that God would speak,  
And open His lips unto thee,  
And that He would shew thee the secrets of wisdom,  
That there is a doubling over  
Of that result which shall be.”

It is this doubling over and thereby rendering invisible that we have to be content with now, awaiting the time of unfolding hereafter. God requires of us this in return for that boundless love which He has manifested towards us. Then would Habakkuk's closing words be fulfilled in our experience, and amidst sorrow, disappointment, want, storm or tempest, we should be enabled with hinds' feet to walk on our high places.

H. G.

# “WORDS OF THE WISE.”

(FROM LETTERS OF THE LATE MR. J. L. HARRIS.)

Matt. iii. 17.—The Lord Jesus was eighteen years in obscurity; He was a home child. These words, spoken *before* He began His public ministry, are God's sanction on home duties—“This is my beloved Son, in whom I am *well pleased*.” Oh, that the young people of this nineteenth century would try and think of this!

Rom. xiv. 17, 18.—God's great principles are shewn by little things.

“*Swallowed up*” (2 Cor. v. 4) is a very forcible word in the Greek. We see an illustration of it in the wreck of the *London*; that was a specimen of death swallowing up life, whereas what the child of God is waiting for is, for *life* to swallow up *death*. This soon *must* be the case; all we want is to realize it as the glorious hope before us.

Sorry to find you are still an invalid. Patience must have its perfect work, and the Lord will help you to endure and to submit to His will—two difficult but precious lessons.

Protestantism and Christianity are two different things. The one *protests* against what is wrong; the other *confesses* what is right. Many protest against evil without confessing what is good.

We think very little of what the early Christians thought very much of—the kingdom of God and Christ as Lord. People now-a-days grasp Him as a Saviour, but they do not confess Him as Lord.

Phil. iv. 3.—Out of hundreds of *workers* we can seldom find one *yoke-fellow*. There may be plenty of fellow-workers, but we may not get yoked together with any, like a pair of oxen bearing the same yoke.

The only *real* high-church people are those who acknowledge Christ as their Head and themselves as His members.

Phil. iv. 3.—Did you ever think of having your name written in the "book of life"—in *God's* registry, not man's?

The believer, Christ says, "hath everlasting life," "shall never perish," "shall not come into condemnation," "is passed from death to life." What wonderful words! What consolation to the sorrowful, the bereaved, the sick! Nothing shall separate us from the love of Christ. Though we realize sometimes that "flesh and heart fail," and that through much tribulation we are entering the kingdom, we need not be troubled or afraid. *Five minutes with Christ will make up for all we can endure below.*

Phil. iv. 6, 7.—It is easy to rest one's soul upon God, and trust in the all-atoning blood of Christ, but how few Christians act up to this verse and make God their *care-bearer*—bringing every care to Him and *leaving* it with Him. Only such as do this know what it is to have the peace of God, which passeth understanding, keeping heart and mind. We are apt to be troubled with this or that care, but here is the remedy, "casting all your care upon Him."

Others can bear trials, sorrows, and sickness, but it is the privilege of God's people only to "glory in tribulation" and things that are contrary to the flesh. And the Lord generally meets us in those things that are most contrary; as an old

writer says: "We are never met to any purpose till we are met in our Isaacs."

Phil. iv. 8.—"Whatsoever things are lovely." A Christian should never be outdone in good manners. He should always commend himself to the conscience of every man.

How the Gospel raises one above circumstances and surroundings! If trial or sickness comes in the most trying form, we have a God to whom to bring every complaint, and we know that He is making everything work together for good to them that love Him.

The Bible is a most wonderful book and will bear the most strict scrutiny. No word too much, no expression redundant, but all written with a view to our instruction, and exhibiting the only perfect workmanship of God that we can see. All creation is marred, and the new creation is still encumbered with the old; that is, we Christians, who are the new creation, are burdened and crippled by the flesh. But the Word of God is perfect, and it is a great comfort to know that we have *one book* which we need not peruse with doubt and suspicion, but where truth and only truth is to be found.

If you are not gathering unto Him you are scattering: "He that is not with Me is against Me."

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### NOTES AND REPLIES.

*What instruction is conveyed to us in Ex. xxxiii. 7, by Moses' taking the tent "without the camp," and what tent was it?*

There can be no doubt that this tent had some moral connection with the goats' hair tent, called in the A.V. the "tabernacle of the congregation," but more properly, "*the tent of meeting*," as the expression is first applied to this tent. The name was doubtless suggested by God's word to Moses (Ex. xxix. 42, 43), "There will I *meet* with the children of Israel." At this time defilement had come into the camp by reason of the golden calf, and as there was as yet no altar, Israel's sin obliged God to leave the camp, and, in sympathy with the mind of God, Moses pitches outside the camp the tent to which the people had been accustomed to come to enquire of God through him, and "everyone who sought the Lord" went out to this tent. Never afterwards, so long as the altar occupied its place before the tabernacle,

did God go outside the camp, however heinously Israel sinned. The altar secured access, and therefore while the altar remained in Shiloh or in Jerusalem, there was always a ground of recovery, and it was not until the altar and temple were destroyed, first by the Babylonians and afterwards by the Romans, that God forsook the land of Israel and gave His people over into the hands of their enemies. The truth of atonement, represented by the altar, is all important in these days, as indicating the only ground on which God can bear with the sinner or meet him in his need. The altar must always be connected in our minds with the mercy-seat (or atonement-seat), as they are connected by the blood which was sprinkled on both.

*Why is David called in 2 Chron. ii. 15, the seventh son of Jesse, while in 1 Sam. xvi. seven sons pass before Samuel, and David seems to have been the eighth?*

Jesse, it is said, "made his seven sons" (rather than "seven of his sons") pass before Samuel, but only six may have actually passed, and perhaps the absence of the youngest was considered a matter of no importance. The principle in the human heart of setting aside that which God sets His heart on, may thus be illustrated, for God was about to anoint David as His king. It is possible, however, that one of Jesse's sons had died, leaving no issue, and his name was therefore omitted in the genealogy of 2 Chronicles.

*What is the faith that is made shipwreck of in 1 Tim. i. 19?*

In this epistle as in some others, "faith" often means, not the subjective principle whereby we lay hold of God's truth, but the object on which faith rests, or the whole revelation of God. Those spoken of in this passage had ceased to hold the object of faith in a good conscience, and, as the result, had made shipwreck, and were in danger of being lost, like stony ground hearers, who believe for a while and then fall away.

*Of whom are the words in Rev. xxii. 18, 19 spoken?*

Verses 6 to 21 of this chapter contain our Lord's final words to the Church of this dispensation, typified by the seven churches of the earlier chapters. If anyone shall add to the words of this book, God shall add to him, we are told, the plagues that are written in it, and if any man shall take away from its words, "God shall take away his part from the tree of life, and out of the holy city, which are written in this book." (R.V. comp. v. 14.) In either case the person would be lost, and therefore wilful apostacy, on the part of one who has professed the truth, is contemplated; something similar to the sin against the Holy Ghost. This solemn warning needs to be remembered in this day, when there is so much wilful rejection of God's truth, and so much wilful adding thereto.



## THINGS SECRET AND REVEALED.

THOUGH the twilight of former ages has so given place to the full blaze of noonday brightness that it can be said "the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth" (1 John ii. 8), yet the statement of Moses still abides: "*Secret things belong to the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us*" (Deut. xxix. 29); and if we are simply bent upon taking possession of the latter we shall have neither time nor wish to intrude (Col. ii. 18) into the former. The most instructed saint of God is yet but as a child waiting for the day of true manhood, even touching the understanding of things revealed, albeit a child walking in the pathway of true wisdom; but if we turn from things revealed to speculate upon what is not written we forsake the path of wisdom for that of folly, to our own damage, and to the dishonour of that Spirit of truth who, by the written word of God alone, guides into all the truth those in whom He dwells.

A few centuries back there was much discussion on the question whether the incarnation of the Son of God might have taken place apart from the necessity of redemption; and in our day we have a revival of this in the suggestion that redemption was no part of God's original purpose, but that if sin had not entered into the world the Son of God might have become incarnate and have taken man (*i.e.*, Adam's race) into union with Himself. It is well therefore to be reminded that we have nothing to do with questions as to what God *could* or *would* have done if man had not sinned, and we need to be warned that Satan may rob us of the profit and blessing which arise from

contemplating what God has done and is doing in circumstances which exist, by leading us to spend our time in vainly trying to imagine what He would have done in certain other circumstances.

It is a simple, though a solemn fact, that sin did enter the world and mar the original work of the Creator, and unless we are disposed to question His absolute sovereignty, and to think that anything could take place without His permission, we surely must believe that He permitted sin to enter for high and holy reasons, and that He will be more glorified in dealing with a race destroyed by sin, than He would have been had man kept his pristine state of innocence. Perhaps no one will deny that the existence of sin, with all its awful consequences, is a mystery which we cannot at present comprehend, and it makes us feel that there are depths in God's ways that we cannot fathom, as well as heights that we cannot scale. But we have to do with what *is*, and not with what might have been, and no one is justified in saying that "God has assuredly not done *more* for man fallen than He would have done for man in a state of obedience." "Who hath known the mind of the Lord," except so far as He has been pleased to reveal it? Who can say what God would have done if man had not sinned? Where can the faintest hint be found in Gen. i. and ii. of anything higher for sinless man than Eden with its beauties, and perfect dominion in this terrestrial sphere?

We may further ask, Could there be such a thing as *union* between the Creator and the creature simply as a creature and on the ground of creation? In 1 Cor. xv. 47, 48 we have an essential contrast drawn between "the earthy" and "the heavenly," irrespective, apparently, of the question of sin, for the first man as formed "of the earth" was not a sinner, but still was "earthy" and "natural."

Now those who are "of God" (1 Cor. i. 30, 1 John v. 19) cease to be earthy; they own a heavenly birth, and are themselves heavenly, and for them is in store the fulfilment of that word, "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."

The promise that the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent (Gen. iii. 15), which contained an intimation of the mystery of the incarnation of the Eternal Word, as well as of the death of the Incarnate One, was given after man sinned; and statements of the New Testament emphatically declare that He was sent forth from God, and was born of a woman, in order that by His death of atonement He might redeem us to God. This is the Gospel of God which, received in the power of the Holy Ghost, brings salvation; but it is possible to miss this great reality while reasoning about God and His ways in the exercise of mere human wisdom.

There was, indeed, in Eden the type of something greater than creation could show, even a type of the union of Christ and the Church, the Bridegroom and the Bride, but only as the fruit of His death, and therefore involving the whole scheme of redemption. And seeing that the Lord was *alone*, and must have remained alone but for His death (John xii. 24), and that the Church is joined to Him as the Risen One, the type of this in Eden shows clearly that the redemption effected by His death, and resulting in the union of His Church to Himself, was part of the Divine purpose before man sinned, and if before man sinned then part of God's original purpose.

It is very clear to the simple reader of Scripture that redemption was not only *part* of God's original purpose, but that the deepest and highest purpose of His heart was to manifest Himself and to glorify His beloved Son as the Head of a redeemed people, who should in resurrec-

tion be united to Him as the very "fulness of Him who filleth all in all." (Eph. i. 23.) Peter reminds believers that they are redeemed "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," meaning, surely, foreordained *as the lamb to redeem* (1 Pet. i. 18). Paul speaks of "eternal life which God, that cannot lie, promised *before the world began.*" (Titus i. 2.) This can only mean that eternal life which is the fruit of redemption. Again, we read that our being blessed in the heavenlies in Christ is "according as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world," that choice itself implying that God took the fall into account, and formed the purpose of redeeming a people out of the fallen race.

This teaching neither makes light of sin, nor regards the fall of man as an advance, but it magnifies the wisdom, power, and grace of God, and shows that His ways are as eternal as Himself. We are not warranted in saying that it was God's purpose to conform man to the image of His Son *irrespective* of the fall, but we are bound to say that when God predestinated His elect to this high estate (Rom. viii. 29), He did so with the perfect knowledge of *all* that would transpire. He well knew that sin would enter the world; it was consistent with His counsel to *permit* it to enter. He formed His wondrous purposes with a perfect estimate of the whole cost of carrying them out. Hence He could never be baffled by any foe; and Satan will see and know for ever that His mightiest efforts against God have been made but stepping-stones to the fulfilment of the counsels of Him whose standing title is the MOST HIGH, and whose intention no creature can turn aside.

"O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the

mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counsellor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? FOR OF HIM, AND THROUGH HIM, AND TO HIM, ARE ALL THINGS: TO WHOM BE THE GLORY FOR EVER. AMEN."

W. H. B.

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## NOTES OF CONFERENCES AT LEOMINSTER.

MAY 18th TO 21st, 1885.

BIBLE READING:—SATAN'S FIRST DEVICE.

THOUGH Satan uses various devices, they are all exposed in the word of God, and what we need is, to make good use of the warnings furnished in Scripture concerning our arch-enemy. Thus we find that the apostle Paul had constantly in mind the manner in which Satan succeeded with our first parents, and his watchfulness against similar wiles is apparent in several of his Epistles.

The apostle's allusion in Rom. xvi. to the temptation in Eden may not at first strike us, but a careful consideration of verses 17-20 will make it manifest, especially if we bear in mind the scope of this Epistle.

The Epistles to the Romans and Ephesians both have reference to God's *new* creation. In the latter it is seen from above, and in the former the foundation is dwelt upon. In both, the union of Jew and Gentile is brought out, but in Romans xv. especially in its practical aspect. Jew and Gentile are equally brought in guilty in chap. iii; God's one way of salvation for both is laid down, and then in the oneness of the new creation they are taught to act as members one of another, being "one body in Christ."

In chap. xv., having enlarged upon God's early purpose of uniting Jew and Gentile, as seen in the words of Moses, "Rejoice ye Gentiles *with* His people," and in other scriptures, the apostle asks the prayers of the saints at

Rome that his service of taking the gifts of *Gentile* churches to *Jewish* saints at Jerusalem may be an acceptable one. By this means he sought to cement their union.

In chap. xvi. his heart is still full of the practical carrying out of this oneness in Christ, and he sends to Jewish saints at Rome the salutation of "the churches of Christ," mainly composed of Gentile believers.

A beautiful picture is thus given us of God's new creation, and the apostle, remembering how the first creation was marred through the wiles of the tempter, warns against the efforts that he would surely make to mar this new creation. In the old creation Satan estranged man from God; in the new he seeks to divide that which God has joined together, and to estrange saint from saint, as well as saint from Saviour. Subtilty and lies succeeded with Eve in her innocence, and the "innocent" (v. 18 R.V.) are warned to beware of the "good words and fair speeches" (smooth and fair speech, R.V.) with which their hearts might be beguiled.

Service to our Lord Jesus Christ is professed by men who are Satan's tools, but their real object is to "serve their own belly" (a word reminding us of the serpent in Gen. iii. 14), that is, their own will and interest.

Those who do not follow on to apprehend the mind of God, and who do not grow in grace and knowledge, are especially liable to be deceived, and the apostle's word, "I beseech you" (v. 17), shows how difficult it is to put such on their guard.

In tempting Eve, Satan quoted *part* of God's words, and this is his device now, when there is much knowledge of the *letter* of Scripture. "Good and evil" were God's words connected with that tree of which our first parents were not to eat. These words Satan quoted, but he did *not* say that they would know good and have no power to do it, and

that they would be conscious of evil, but without any power to overcome it.

How different is the apostle's way, "I would have you *wise* unto that which is *good*, and *simple* concerning *evil*;" he evidently uses the words with reference to the scene in Eden. Compare verses 19, 20 with Gen. iii.

"Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and *avoid* them," the apostle adds; and the doctrine is that which he lays down in this Epistle. If the work of any causes division, contrary to the truth of Christ, do not listen to smooth and fair speech, though it may be in the form of lovely gospel and eloquent addresses; do not parley with such, but avoid them; be simple concerning "evil," while you gladly seek to learn all that is really "good."

God's purpose is to "gather into one the children of God that were scattered abroad" (John xi. 52): Satan's object is to scatter and devour. "He that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad," said our Lord (Matt. xii. 30). "That ye may with one mind, and one mouth glorify God," says the apostle. (Rom. xv. 6.) "Divisions and offences" are the result of the devil's schemes.

When Paul speaks to the Ephesian elders of the blood-purchased flock he similarly has the work of the enemy in view—"From among your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them: watch ye therefore."

The word "bruise" is a clear allusion to the promise in Gen. iii. with reference to the serpent. The Seed of the woman "shall *bruise* thy head;" here it is, "The God of peace shall *bruise* Satan under your feet shortly." In the perfect union of the Head and all the members, this will soon be fully and eternally accomplished; but we should seek after it in measure now, and should defeat our foe by

together putting our feet on him when he seeks to divide us.

The title "God of peace," which so frequently occurs at the close of Paul's Epistles, seems to point to that knowledge of God which would foil the enemy in his efforts to stir up heart-burnings and strifes.

Solomon said, "A whisperer separateth chief friends," and "when there is no whisperer contention ceaseth." (R.V.) The word for "chief friends" is really "guides;" hence the sects and parties of Christendom to-day.

In Eph. vi. 18 we find that "praying for *all* saints" immediately follows the warning against "the wiles of the devil;" without prayer he is sure to overcome us. Our greatest blessings are in heavenly places, and it is there that the conflict especially lies, for Satan and the hosts of darkness are there. In verse 12 the word "against" occurs four times, showing how diverse and yet how united are the powers with which we have to wrestle—"against principalities, *against* powers, *against* the rulers of the darkness of this world, *against* wicked spirits." All are arrayed against the child of God, to quench his light in the world.

Not only are we in danger of the wiles of the devil in public ministry, but in our family circles. Hence in the Epistle to the Ephesians we find direct exhortations as to our every-day family life and social relationships; and the loving greetings to individual saints in Rom. xvi. point in the same direction. If we are not ready to give such greetings, has not the enemy already gained an advantage and inserted the narrow edge of his dividing wedge?

When Eve was ensnared, and Adam had knowingly transgressed the solemn word of the Lord, he was led to speak slightly of the helpmeet God had made for



him, and of whom he had said, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh." So Satan still gets between the soul and God, and between fellow-saints, and unkind thoughts and hard speeches arise against those we profess to love, and for whom we ought to lay down our lives. May we take heed and rather be like Daniel, who confessed his people's sins as his own. Be careful of divisions, Paul tells us in the last chapter of Romans, and in the previous one, be careful of the feeblest saint.

It is interesting to enquire whether the saints at Rome listened to the apostle's words of wisdom and entreaty. If those who first read his words did not give heed to them, how great must be *our* danger! Alas, the result in the case of the Roman believers is but too manifest! After four years the apostle found himself at Rome. He had had a stormy voyage, but he there found something worse. There were a faithful few who had received his words, but many were delighting in envy and strife, and glorying in division. Christ was preached, but not of good-will, and they thought to add affliction to his bonds. As in the first creation, so in the new, the tempter had succeeded, and he still succeeds, as we learn very plainly from God's word. May we better understand the Lord's exhortation, "Be ye therefore wise as serpents, harmless as doves."

In 2 Cor. xi. the apostle has the temptation in the garden again before him as he thinks of the Corinthians, "I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity [and the purity, R.V.] that is in Christ." Paul knew that among the careless and unwatchful Corinthians Satan would find easy opportunity of entering and marring the manifestation of oneness which the figure of the chaste virgin expresses. In Eve's act in Gen. iii. we see, first, disobedience to God's word, and as

the result, a corrupt state of mind. Listening to the tempter, she thought that God was a hard God. Satan used his wiles at Corinth, transforming himself into an angel of light, and sending his false apostles.

In the Old Testament we see the power of wiles with fair speeches in the case of the Gibeonites in Joshua's day, and of the old prophet of Bethel in the days of Jeroboam. The young prophet had withstood the word of the king, but when the old prophet spoke with assumed authority he was deceived.

Satan's quotation of Scripture to our Lord prepares us for the use he makes of it in our day. When he brings in errors, such as that called "annihilation," while God's certain texts are quoted and words are emphasized, many plain and simple statements are avoided.

We have to be on our guard against the devil's charity and the world's wisdom. Men may come with something very like the gospel of God, but really "another gospel:" the spiritual mind will, however, detect Satan's device. In the present day many are caught by him through love of something new, like the Athenians. The manna which God has given is neglected, then some novelty in doctrine is easily swallowed.

There is an old saying that for any error that may arise there is some small pebble in God's word that will meet it, as David's pebble entered Goliath's forehead and brought him low.

The apostle was jealous over the Corinthians with a godly jealousy. There can be no true jealousy without real, intense love. May we know more of this jealous love for all who are Christ's.

Time will not allow us to pursue this subject or to search for other allusions to Satan's work in Gen. iii.

## THE SYMPATHIES OF CHRIST.

MR. E. K. GROVES read 2 Cor. ii.—Before saying a few words on this chapter, I would remind you of an expression in Phil. i. 8, that embodies most varied sympathy, which comes out in detail in Phil. ii.—“The bowels of Jesus Christ.” It is not John, the beloved disciple who leaned upon the bosom of Jesus, that makes use of this remarkable expression, (though he does speak of shutting up *our* bowels of compassion against our brethren,) but it is Paul, whose first sight of Christ was as the glorified One, and whose first word from Christ was a word of reproof. Yet this is the apostle who delights to use this phrase in his writings, and whose great aim was to exemplify it in his life. We have been warned against the devices of the enemy, and exhorted to seek the *mind* of Christ, and I would add also, “The *bowels* of Jesus Christ.”

In 2 Cor. ii. mention is made of one who had been ensnared by the devil, yet the Apostle’s bowels of compassion extended to even such an one. In verse 1 we read of his determination not to go to the Corinthians “again in heaviness,” being jealous of his very countenance, lest his words should lose their weight and effect. This is one characteristic of “the bowels of Jesus Christ.”

Then in verse 2 we see his tenderness—“If I make you sorry.” Brethren, as we review the past, do we remember the harsh word spoken to some poor erring child of God, perhaps with the thought in our mind, “we can get on very well without you?” This was not acting “in the bowels of Jesus Christ.” The Apostle dealt with the sin, but he could not be happy until he saw the erring one restored.

He had admonished and reproved the Corinthian saints in his former epistle, which was written with many tears, and until he saw the blessed results of a godly sorrow

wrought in them he had a heavy heart. (2 Cor. vii.) In his public ministry he had to speak strongly, but in secret, before God, he wept bitter tears. His joy was their joy, and their joy was his. They could not be really happy until they knew of his joy.

In verse 4, "anguish" is a very strong word; it implies a man with his hands on his loins, suffering extreme pain. God knew the anguish of Paul's spirit, and saw his tears of sorrow, though the Corinthians did not, nor are those tears mentioned in the first epistle. In this we have another characteristic of "the bowels of Jesus Christ." It causes pain to the one who uses the rod.

In verse 7, we find an utter contrast to the thought of the "keys" being in the hands of ecclesiastics. "Contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him and comfort him, lest perhaps such an one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow." They were not to wait for a direct command from the Apostle to restore him to fellowship, but they ought to have done this when they saw that discipline had done its painful, though wholesome work. In ch. vii. we see what a real case of sorrow it was, and overmuch sorrow may drive to despair. Here again, "the bowels of Jesus Christ" are manifest in the apostle. From verse 17 we learn that "the bowels of Jesus Christ" will not permit the Lord's messenger to tamper with the Lord's message. He did not alter God's terms to a perishing world, nor take away the solemn and eternal results of rejecting those terms—"we are not as many, who corrupt the word of God." The word "corrupt" literally means, acting as a tavern-keeper, who either drugs or dilutes that which he sells.

#### ON SUFFERING WITH CHRIST.

MR. DYER.—Our subject this morning was, "The devices of Satan," and to-night we have been reminded

that those devices must be met in "the bowels of Jesus Christ," especially in connection with our church work. It is worthy of notice that the very first time the word "*church*" is used in Scripture, there is immediately a direct reference to Satan, which tells us that Satan not only hates Christ, but also that church which belongs to Christ. Directly the Lord had revealed (in Matt. xvi.) His intention of building His church, He tells us of His own path of suffering, which was to end with the cross, and of the believer's association with Him in that path. Then comes Satan's temptation to avoid the cross and the shame; and in the Lord's reply to Peter we have the secret how to treat the suggestions of the wicked one. Dear fellow-child of God, are you willing to tread this path of suffering, and to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ?

In verse 13, "Who do men say that I the Son of man am?" the title "Son of man" brings our Master before us as the once despised and lowly One; yet it was a title in which He gloried, and by which He loved to call Himself. "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," was Peter's confession. The title, "the Christ," gives rest to our souls; He was Jehovah's Anointed; and "Son of the living God," gives us strength day by day. Compare 1 John v. 1-5. Believing that Jesus is "the Christ," I am born of God. Believing Him to be the "Son of God," I derive strength to overcome the world.

He loved us that we might in return love Him, and also might love those who belong to Him, and should thus make manifest "the bowels of Jesus Christ," even as did that mighty man of God, Paul, who could not rest until that lamb of Christ's flock at Corinth had been delivered from the paw of the lion.

The expression here used, "My church," is literally my

"called out" ones, as Israel was called out from Egypt. The words "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it," tell us that a real fight and struggle will go on until the God of peace bruises Satan beneath the church's feet. Till then we are to be receiving grace and wisdom from on high as to the binding and loosing in our acts of church discipline. The church as a "body," as a "building," could not be formed until after the death and resurrection of Christ; and the apostles and prophets, who were the foundation of the building (Eph. ii. 20), became so through suffering and death.

It was this that Peter did not relish, and seeking himself to escape cross-bearing, he rebuked his Lord.

Think how much anguish of heart and many tears those sixteen chapters to the Corinthians cost Paul; yet we are privileged to come together and discuss them so comfortably. Paul was enabled to tread the world, the flesh and the devil beneath his feet in his church work, so closely did he become a follower of his Lord; so also in his gospel work. The Lord had to suffer before He could either preach that gospel, or have that gospel to preach, and if we are to have real fellowship with that gospel it will involve suffering and shame. Paul could say in that same 2nd of Corinthians, "Henceforth know we no man after the flesh." It was a path of resurrection power and victory, although of earthly shame and loss. We shall find church-work to be costly work, in having to deal with the stubborn, and the ignorant, and to restore those who are out of the way. By means of Peter's soft words, Satan was seeking to place a stumbling-block in the path of Christ. Beloved fellow-saints, let us follow our Master's footsteps, and bid Satan get behind us; we shall then be quite safe, whatever stumbling-blocks he may lay in our path. Taking up our cross daily, is not receiving

one stroke of the sword and thereby entering the glory; it is dying by inches. To cheer and encourage His disciples the Lord immediately unfolds to them the glory on the mount, and they behold a once suffering Moses, and a once suffering Elijah. The former dared to face a blaspheming Pharaoh, and had to endure the unbelief of his faithless people. The other, too, had to withstand a wicked Ahab, and to suffer at the hands of that most wicked Jezebel, but both speedily entered their rest, and were seen by the disciples in glory with their Lord.

## POWER TO RESIST CORRUPTION.

Dr. HADDON read Mark ix. 30-50.—On Monday evening a thrilling question was put to us, which I repeat: "Brethren, we preach the gospel, but do we really *know* the gospel? We tell others it can save them, but *how far* has it saved us?" In these verses we have just read, we find the possibility of the salt losing its saltiness, and there is a great danger of the eternal truths which we learn losing their separating, sanctifying influence on our life and ways.

Ever since the fall, humanity has been but a corrupt and corrupting mass, but the blessed gospel comes and puts a stop to the corruption in those who receive it. As believers we have been judicially dealt with in the person of our Substitute, and now we are eternally saved from hell, and have become a new creation in Christ Jesus. But we still have mortal bodies, and shall have until they are either laid down in death or changed at our Lord's return. Brethren, until this becomes true in our experience, we have within us that worm of corruption which will continue to do its sad work, unless the truth of God is continually applied to our hearts and consciences. These disciples were on the way to the cross with our Lord, and we find the worm of corruption working within

their breasts. They were disputing among themselves who should be the greatest.

Unless the gospel comes home *with power* to our souls, it does not effectually do its work. And how terribly solemn the thought is concerning those to whom we preach, that if they reject Christ the undying worm of corruption continues to work in them through this life and then will do so through a never-ending eternity. In the natural body, the worm can only live so long as the body lasts upon which it feeds, and when its food ceases it must die ; but here we read of a worm which never dies. The body raised and consigned to the lake of fire will never cease to be, and the worm of corruption will never die.

My fellow-servants of Christ, if we are satisfied with mere intellectual knowledge of these divine truths, then the worm of a corrupt mind will do its sad work in our souls, and, like the disciples of old, we shall seek to be the greatest. Our only safeguard is the keeping of the truth of God in its entirety in our hearts and minds. The salt must be fresh to retain its saltness. Only let our own thoughts work, and corruption will breed within. So long as we are in these mortal bodies there will be a needs-be to continually apply the salt of the Word, otherwise corruption will do its awful work in our souls, and we shall fail in that very purpose for which we have been left here below.

#### FRESH MANNA.

Mr. H. GROVES.—Our brother has reminded us of the solemn fact that the flesh will breed worms, unless its corruption is kept under by the cross of Christ and the power of the Holy Ghost. Hence we find Paul saying, “I am crucified with Christ.” Brethren, this too is our only hope. Mark you, it does not say, “I *was* crucified,” as a thing of the past, but “I *am*,” a present thing ; it is the



cross brought into every-day experience. The Holy Ghost speaking of our "old man" says it "*was* crucified," (Rom. vi. 6,) but the believer exclaims of himself personally, "*I am* crucified."

I would ask you to turn to Exod. xvi. 19. God's explicit command regarding the manna was, "Let no man leave of it till the morning. . . . But some of them left of it until the morning, and it bred worms, and stank."

A practical realization of the cross of Christ in the power of the Holy Ghost is what we need, as having defilement within and defilement around us. This is the exact teaching of the nineteenth chapter of Numbers. The ashes of the red heifer were kept in readiness for the defilement of God's people of old, but they had to be freely mixed with *living* water before any defiled person was sprinkled. We have corruption working within, and sin and failure on every side, hence the deep need of the practical application of the water of purification; and it is the office of the Holy Ghost to apply constantly, in living power, the death of Christ to our hearts and consciences.

It is a very easy thing to hold truth in the head, and to sing with the lip, "Clean every whit," but we have need to guard against the very truth of God becoming but stale manna in our experience. We may know the security of our life in Christ, and yet there may be very little of Christ in our life. We may triumph in our position before God in Christ Jesus, and yet be manifesting very little of "the bowels of Jesus Christ." If both are to be true of us we must be daily feeding upon fresh manna. That which a person eats becomes incorporated with him; so the believer, feeding upon the word of God, has, by the Holy Ghost, Christ *inwrought* into his very being, and *outwrought* in his daily life.

We may enjoy our Bibles intellectually, and yet

spiritually be starving. God permits Israel's mistakes to be recorded as wholesome lessons to us. Friends, is there not a stinking, lifeless Christianity about us, yea, oftentimes in our own souls? Truths which we have grasped but mentally have become like the manna which bred worms. And is there not such a thing as stale manna in our ministry? Are we not sometimes guilty of feeding the Church of God with it? In our own closet life we want to gather the blessed Word of God fresh every morning. The youngest Christian can discern the difference between the fresh and the stale manna.

Our Lord's words in John vi. are instructive on this point. He there uses two expressions, "I am the living bread which *came* down from heaven," and again, "The bread of God is He which *cometh* down from heaven." Not only a past but a present thing—a living Christ coming down daily into our hearts, by faith, in the power of the Holy Ghost. This will deliver us from headiness and highmindedness, and there will then be no striving as to who shall be the greatest.

The Lord give us an increased watchfulness as we handle these hallowed truths of God. Of all Christians we most need to be watchful. While many of our fellow-saints do not know their Bibles, we are in imminent danger of becoming profanely familiar with the things of God in the head only, and not in the heart and life.

In Matt. xvi. 18, we read, "Flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but My Father which is in heaven." Thank God, we have still the Holy Ghost to be our Teacher and our Guide. Let us be careful how we grieve or hinder Him in His blessed work of teaching. May He give us each more of these divine, humbling revelations of God and of His precious Word. No one can be proud in God's presence.

## THE BREVITY OF OUR TIME FOR SERVICE.

Mr. DYER, at the morning reading, spoke on Psalm cxxvi.—Now is the time for going forth with our seed-baskets, to scatter the precious seed broadcast. We may have painful steps in serving, but according to these will be our steps of gladness and rejoicing. It is still true that every place on which the sole of our foot shall tread is to be eternally our own. This precious little Psalm is one of the songs of degrees sung by the remnant in the days of Haggai. Some of these Psalms are deeply penitential, but this one overflows with that joy in the Lord which imparts power to endure the tears and sorrows of the way, and to continue in our service here below. God's wonderful deliverance of His people was as smooth and pleasant to them as a dream in the night, and yet it was a bright reality. God had so completely done the whole thing that there was nothing for them to do but to burst forth into singing to Him who had accomplished such a deliverance for them.

The prayer in verse 4, "Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south," reminds us of our own dependence upon that One who has delivered, and who does deliver, and who we trust will yet deliver. There must be renewal of blessing and strength day by day if we would know this sowing and reaping, and it is beautiful to notice this in the next Psalm also. The work may be prepared in the field, but the Lord must build the house; reminding us of our entire dependence upon God in all our service, whether it be in sowing the good seed in our evangelistic work, or in building up the saints inside the house. God alone can give the increase to the former, or effectually build up the latter, yet it has pleased Him to use human instruments for both these things.

Another thing in Psalm cxxvi. is the *moving* character

of our service. In verse 6 we read, "He that goeth forth." The work in which we are engaged is a moving, passing work, often bringing us in contact with persons whom we may never see again in this life. This was true of the ministry of our divine Master, which was prophetically termed but a *visit* by the Holy Spirit. In Luke i. 78, we read, "through the tender mercy of our God, whereby the dayspring from on high hath *visited* us." Our Lord's life here below was but a brief visit, a moving, passing work, and so He spoke of it Himself in Luke xix. 44, where we find judgment and desolation pronounced upon Jerusalem and its people, "Because thou knewest not the time of thy *visitation*."

The same thing is true of God's work upon earth by the Holy Spirit, as seen in Acts xv. 14: "Simeon hath declared how God at the first did *visit* the Gentiles to take out of them a people for His name." The gospel work during this dispensation is thus termed a *visit*, and Peter reminds us in his First Epistle (chapter ii.) of our moving character and of the brevity of our time here below: "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims abstain from fleshy lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of *visitation*." This brief gospel day will soon be followed by eternal night to many. As it is with the sun, which runs its course through the heavens and shines as it goes, but is followed by the darkness of night, so is it with our brief, passing gospel ministry. Shall we then dim our light? Shall we hide our testimony? It was only a passing visit which our Lord paid to Jericho, but during that visit He drew out Zaccheus. God grant that we may not hide our light or lose a single moment of our

little life here below. Jonah lost two-thirds of his time in Nineveh; he only preached one day, whereas he might have had three, and two-thirds of the Ninevites did not see his face, or hear his voice, although God in grace accomplished His own blessed work. We, too, are in danger of doing likewise. Let us, then, seek grace day by day to spend our blood-bought moments for Him who loved us and who gave Himself for us.

BIBLE READING.—FALSE DOCTRINE.

ONE chief thought in our Bible reading yesterday was false conduct; it might be profitable for us to consider now the subject of *false doctrine* from such Scriptures as 1 Tim. i.; iii. 14-16; iv. 1-8; 2 Tim. ii. 15-20; iii. 13-17; iv. 1-8.

God's order is, first, to reveal His truth; this has to be grasped and held by faith; our life is then affected by it, and a good conscience is the result. In 1 Tim. i. 19, "holding faith" refers to the faith concerning the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ as revealed in the word of God. That word when applied by the power of the Holy Ghost brings to the soul divine certainty, for it is the word of an unchanging God, who cannot lie.

Even in Paul's day some had turned aside and made shipwreck of faith. Jude exhorts that we should "*earnestly* contend for the faith *once* delivered to the saints." God will make no addition to His wondrous revelation.

In the epistles to Timothy, faith and a good conscience run side by side. Many hold the truth in the letter who do not walk in the truth. The godliness that characterized our Lord should be stamped upon His people. The doctrine of God our Saviour is to be *adorned* by us in all things.

We must not add to, nor take from God's word. The enemy is ever trying to do one or the other, becoming thus

a liar or a thief. There are many things which will remain mysteries to us until we are in the glory; then we shall know even as we are known.

The Psalmist says, "I hate thoughts (opinions) but **THY LAW** do I love." Therein alone is divine certainty. In 2 Tim. iv. 2, the word "preach" means to herald with authority, to give out certainties, backed up by the word of the King.

When the Preacher had shown in Ecclesiastes the confusion of everything under the sun, he pondered, and sought out, and set in order "acceptable words." This may remind us of the proverb, "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in baskets of silver." God holds us responsible to present the truth in a clean vessel.

Solomon also says "the words of the wise are as goads." Our teaching often lacks this *goad* character, it does not go home to the consciences and urge on those who hear; our words are not like "*nails*" well fastened, which is the characteristic of "the words of the masters of assemblies, which are given from one Shepherd." (R.V.)

One of the marked features of the last days is "itching ears," and professing Christians are heaping to themselves teachers, not being content with God-given ministry; and indeed this is not sought for according to God's word.

The world is full of books and in their study is weariness. The devil makes many volumes, God has made *one*. May we by the teaching and power of the Holy Ghost know more of its blessed contents, its sixty-six portions.

While books may be profitable, servants of Christ are sometimes in danger of giving up toilsome pastoral work, and settling down to book-writing or book-reading in a self-pleasing spirit. This is a snare which has caused not a few to drift from the faith and to imbibe deadly error. May we learn more than ever to take heed to God's word and to *tremble* at it; so shall we learn to care for fellow-

saints, and rightly to feed the flock which He has purchased with His precious blood.

Seducing spirits are abroad, watching the opportunity to do their subtle work. The apostle John warns the saints against those who would seduce them from Christ, and reminds them that they have the *word* of God and the Spirit's *anointing*—two things which must not be severed. Those who have great knowledge of the word of God, but who lack the anointing, are in especial danger of being led astray.

John seems to have looked beneath the surface and seen these seducing spirits, as Micaiah saw the lying spirit go forth into the mouths of Ahab's prophets, who were as fully persuaded of their lies as Micaiah was of God's truth.

We must learn to use the word of God as a plummet. This is the meaning of the word "correction" in 2 Tim. iii. 16. All scripture is God-breathed and is profitable... *for correction.*" By it we are able to test all that we hear.

The demoniac in Mark v. was but the mouthpiece of the demons, and to-day there are unmistakeable Satanic agencies at work. Hence the need of the two-fold exhortation, "Stand fast," and "Hold fast."

In Rome's teachings we have a specimen of the corrupting of God's word; but this evil will wax worse and worse. Amid the growing confusion in early days, Paul exhorted Timothy to shun profane and vain babblings, and the teachings of those who had departed from the truth, whose word would eat as a canker.

Our souls and our whole lives must be salted with the truth of God, and only so can we at all stay the growing corruption. If we merely have intellectual knowledge we shall be like the salt that has lost its savour, the world will look upon us with contempt, and we shall fail in the very purpose for which God has left us here.

*Are the persons spoken of in Heb. vi. 4-6 regenerate ?*

Five things are predicated of these persons which are possible to the unconverted : (1) Enlightenment ; compare with this what Balaam says of himself in Numbers xxiv., "having his eyes opened" (or "uncovered"). (2) Tasting of the heavenly gift : compare such with those who believe for a while, and then fall away ; Luke viii. 13, 14 ; 2 Peter ii. 20-22. (3) Being made partakers of the Holy Ghost ; compare this with what is said of Saul in 1 Sam. x. 6 ; and also of Judas in Matt. x. 4-8. (4) Tasting the good word of God ; compare with stony-ground hearers in Matt. xiii. 20 ; xxv. 11, 12. (5) Tasting the powers of the world to come ; see Matt. vii. 22, 23. These five points, we may say, are seen in the histories of Balaam, Saul and Judas, and in perhaps a less marked degree in the records of others who have come very near the Kingdom of God and been finally lost. Heb. x. 26-29 is often coupled with this portion in chap. vi. There wilful apostasy from Christ is the subject, and those guilty of it are said to be sinning wilfully ; not from a sudden temptation as when Peter denied his Lord, but in a continued course of rejection of Christ, for whom, therefore, there is no other sacrifice for sin, and no salvation. These are reckoned among the adversaries, of whom the apostle says three things, that (1) they have trodden under foot the Father's gift, the Son of God ; (2) they have rejected the love of the Son, by disregarding His precious blood ; (3) they have done despite to the Spirit. This constitutes an awful three-fold rejection, and the condemnation of such is sealed, and the vengeance of God is all that they can look for. Paul adds (v. 39), "but we are not of those who draw back to perdition," and in chap. vi. 9 he says, "but, beloved we are persuaded better things of you, though we thus speak." He thus excludes from the fearful coming doom those whom he was addressing, while warning them that it would be true of many.

#### "WORDS OF THE WISE."

I know not how you feel, but I am daily sighing more and more for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our glorious Head. Oh, what a marvellous privilege, what stupendous grace, that we should be able to anticipate that great day with delight, and to know that God will never bring to light any sin which you and I confess !

Phil. iv. 11.—Where did Paul learn his lesson of contentment ? Not at the feet of Gamaliel, but at the feet of Christ. Have we learnt this lesson ? Are *we* content with our circumstances ?

Phil. iv. 11-19.—Paul never received anything from any other church but this. Their little present of money was a burnt-offering unto *God*. God pays good interest for all money put into *His* bank.

God's love is unselfish ; human love is ever selfish.

If we do not let God serve us, we shall never properly serve Him.



## SEVEN-FOLD PRECIOUSNESS OF THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.

See I. PETER i. 18-21.

THE cross of Christ is the foundation and measure of the believer's blessing; the heart and centre of his affections and hopes; the source and fulness of present and everlasting joy. There it is that we learn the eternal love, the infinite wisdom, the intrinsic holiness, the inflexible justice, the unswerving truth, and the almighty power of the triune God. It is to the believer the end of all "old things," and the beginning of every new thing, and it has power to mould his life for God. All divine truth being ranged around the cross as its centre, it reflects its light over the past history of man, explaining the dealings of God with him; and it throws its light onward into the future, revealing God's purposes in grace concerning him. It will be the theme of the eternal song of all who trust in Christ, the bitterness of the eternal wail of all who reject Him. To the Lamb slain will be poured forth, as the voice of many waters and mighty thunders, the joyous song of the redeemed, unnumbered multitude, the holy song of angelic myriads, and the echoing song of all creation; and the eternal ages will increasingly display and magnify the infinite perfection and glory of the work of the cross of Christ.

We are familiar with the apostle Peter's frequent use of the word "precious," and it may be profitable for us to consider the seven-fold manner in which he seeks to enhance in our eyes the value of "the precious blood of Christ."

1.—It is precious, as contrasted with the most precious things of earth—"silver and gold"—which are corruptible; while that by which we are redeemed is of imperishable and eternal value. No Israelite could be set free from the vanity of unmeaning traditions, nor be cleansed as to his conscience from dead works, by anything short of the blood of Christ. He could not be released from the law of ordinances, nor delivered from fruitless strivings after righteousness, nor redeemed from the curse of a broken law, except by Him who, having fulfilled all ordinances, and having been made a curse for us, has become the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth. How precious, then, must be the blood by which vain human effort is set aside, and redemption without money, without works, and without merit is established!

2.—It is precious because He who shed it is the Christ, the 'Anointed of God, the "Lamb without blemish and without spot." It derives all its worth from its being the blood of the Son of God, who carried all His perfections into the work effected by that blood-shedding. When an Israelite brought his lamb to the priest for an offering it had been selected from among the flock because of its fitness. The priest carefully examined it to see that there was no blemish without; and having killed it and cut it into its pieces, again most carefully scrutinized it to see that there was no spot or taint within; otherwise it could not have been an acceptable sacrifice. So with the blessed Lamb of God's providing. He was perfectly tried throughout His life here, and in His death on the tree, by man, by Satan, and by God, and proved to be without blemish and without spot. God the Father opened the heavens to announce that He was "well pleased" in Him; demons testified that He was "the Son of God;" and His human judge declared there

was "no fault in Him." His perfections shone forth with greater lustre the more severe and perfect the test became. He was the perfect Man of faith, enduring to the utmost the trial of faith; the perfect Servant of God, who perfectly did the will of God, and glorified His name; and when He had finished the work given Him to do, and declared the words given Him to speak, He through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God. How precious must be the blood of One who, searched and tried to the utmost, was proved to be absolutely spotless, stainless, and perfect!

3.—It is precious because He who shed it was "foreordained before the foundation of the world." God's thoughts from all eternity were thoughts of peace, salvation and glory for man. Before time was He devised the means by which His banished should not be as outcasts from Him. When man had destroyed himself by his sin and hidden himself from the presence of God, then God announced that the Seed of the woman should bruise the head of Satan, who had allured man to destruction. In the counsels of eternity it was foreordained that the Son of God should be the Lamb of God, and that He should become man, to redeem by blood-shedding and death the creature whom God had formed for Himself, but who had turned against Him by listening to the whispers of His enemy. Man must have been left to himself and Satan, to perish eternally, had not the Son of God undertaken the whole work of his redemption, and the maintenance of the righteousness and glory of the throne of God. How precious must be the blood of One who, equal with the Father in will, in power, in holiness, in love, in majesty, gave Himself up to be crucified and slain, as the only way by which our redemption could be effected!

4.—We learn its preciousness because He "was manifest

in these last times" for us. When after a long course of sin and rebellion man had come to his weakest and his worst; when he had been tried with a free will in Eden and had exercised that free will in transgressing against God; when he had been tried without law and had proved himself corrupt; when he had been tried under law and had broken that law; when under a just and beneficent providential rule he had exchanged the glory of the Creator for an image of a corruptible creature; when he had turned to be the enemy of God, and had sunk lower than any of His creatures—then it was that the Son of God stepped from the eternal throne of His glory, emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant, that He might stand in the sinner's stead, to bear the sinner's sin, and for him be put to death under the curse of a broken law and the load of man's accumulated guilt.

Far back in the ages of eternity, before man was, and before the world was, He had been daily the delight of God, "rejoicing always before Him," "rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth," and His "delights were with the sons of men;" and in the fulness of time He came forth, and in Him, the Child born, the Son given, the Man Christ Jesus, "God was manifest in the flesh." His words and works revealed God, and told out His truth and mercy and grace. His spotless life, His gracious words, His pity, His sympathy, His compassion, His condemnation of the false, His approval of the true, His exhaustless zeal for God's glory, His untiring energy for man's blessing, His almighty power put forth to destroy the works of the devil, all spoke His worth and testified to His being the only One who could perform the work eternally purposed by God for the salvation of the lost. This was the Second Man, the Lord from heaven, the Son who dwelt in the bosom of the Father, by whom He made the worlds, the

One reserved in God's purpose, the "polished shaft" hidden in God's quiver, to put away sin, and abolish death for all who believe in Him, to spoil the principalities and powers of darkness, and to reconcile the sinner to God. How precious must be the blood of Him who, as the Word of God, revealed God in the perfections of His mercy, truth, righteousness, and love ; and as the Lamb of God satisfied to the full the claims of those attributes, that the sinner who believes in Him might be redeemed from all the consequences of his sin, and have a standing of perfect righteousness and peace in the holy presence of God !

5.—Its preciousness is proved by the fact that God "raised Him from the dead." The resurrection of Christ, the Lamb of God, was God's testimony to the value of His blood, and showed His approval of the work He accomplished. On the cross God had laid on Him all the sin, transgression, and iniquity of His people with all its guilt and curse. The spotless One endured to the utmost the smiting, bruising, and wounding which were due to us ; stripe upon stripe was laid upon Him who was made sin for us, wave upon wave of wrath went over His soul, until the last claim of divine justice was satisfied. When the will of the Father had been completed, and the cup of wrath had been drained to the last bitter drop ; when eternal redemption had been accomplished, and everlasting righteousness had been wrought out by Him whose righteousness met the righteousness of God ; then the Lamb of God, in the assurance of His perfect victory, said, "It is finished." Heaven heard, and the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom ; earth heard and quaked ; hades heard and graves were opened. With this triumphant word upon His lips He calmly and deliberately yielded up His life, and going down into death He nullified "him that had the power of death." The

Son had glorified the Father, the Lamb had atoned for sin, the Good Shepherd had laid down his life for the sheep, the Saviour had wrought salvation for the sinner; and from that death He was raised on the third day by the glory of the Father, and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness. How precious must be the blood of Him who fulfilled in His death all the counsels of God concerning salvation, and then was raised as the First-begotten from the dead, the first-fruits of them that slept, that everyone believing in Him might also be quickened and raised from spiritual death, and receive eternal life and finally eternal glory!

6.—Because the blood of the slain Lamb was so precious, God “gave Him glory.” The glory thus given Him was the reward of His mediatorial work. He sits on the throne of God in the uncreated brightness of that divine glory which He had with the Father before the world was (John xvii. 5), and He is also seated on the right hand of the Majesty on high as the sin-purger. Having made expiation of sin according to the requirements of God’s holiness and the integrity of the throne of God, He has laid a foundation of righteousness upon which God can in justice justify the sinner, and pour out on him the riches of His grace; and now, raised up far above all heavens, He has a name given to Him which is above every name, and is crowned with glory and honour.

There He awaits the time when He shall again step from that throne into the air to gather His redeemed ones to Himself. The bride, the church for whom He bled and died, those who through His death and resurrection are quickened into life as sons and co-heirs with Himself, members of His flesh and bones, His body and fulness, will be glorified with Him when He comes to gather up His purchased possession as Son of God, Son of man, Seed of

the woman, Seed of Abraham, Son of David, King of Israel, King of nations, King of Righteousness, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, in whom all nations and families on earth will be blessed, to whom every knee shall bow, and whose sceptre as Lord and Christ shall bring peace and righteousness, liberty and rest to all creation.

How precious must be the blood of Him who because of it will be thus glorified, and through which we are made competent to be partakers of His glory !

7.—We set our seal to its preciousness when, as the fruit of His resurrection and glory, our “faith and hope” are “in God.” This is the ultimate rest of the soul. It is from God we have strayed ; it is against Him we have sinned ; with Him we have been at enmity, and against Him we have warred. It is from God therefore we have merited judgment, fiery indignation, and eternal wrath ; but on the ground of the precious blood of Christ we have reconciliation and peace, we are brought nigh to God, and can now rest in Him as the God of love who will never change nor forego His promise, as our Father in Christ Jesus, as God who has justified us and as surely will soon glorify us ; who loves us with the same love wherewith He loves His Son, and who has prepared for us an eternal home that we may be with Himself, to be filled with His own joy, and delight ourselves in Him while He delights Himself in us. Oh, the preciousness of the blood which has given us this rest of heart, this bright prospect of glory, that we might have in God Himself our exceeding joy and our eternal home !

Let us remember, in conclusion, that this instruction as to the infinite cost of our redemption is given to strengthen the exhortations to holiness of life and to a humble, God-fearing walk as strangers and pilgrims on earth.

W. H. C.

## THE TWO WAYS.

## PSALM. i.

THE first Psalm, which is like an introduction to the whole book, brings before us the two classes into which the human race has from very early days been divided. (Gen. iv.) This distinction, briefly but powerfully drawn, runs through all dispensations, is ever visible to the eye of God, and will, in the eternal state, be fully seen by all,

“ When good and ill unmixed  
Flow on for ever,  
Each in its distant channel fixed,  
An everlasting river.”

The first part of the Psalm shows us the rule of the new creation (Gal. vi. 16), a path known only to those who are justified by God's grace and renewed by His Spirit. One only ever trod that path *by nature*, and none but the Holy One of God ever trod it perfectly; but it is the path trodden with divers measures of faithfulness and persistency by all who are delivered from the old creation of death and ruin, and are brought into the new creation of life and glory.

The opening sentence is an exclamation, as though the writer had been dwelling upon the subject, and suddenly declared his conviction of the “blessednesses” of the godly man. The word is plural, and expresses the fulness and variety of his happiness. We have first the negative side of his character set forth, and then the positive, though the former grows out of the latter. In a world whose course is contrary to God, and whose principles are formed under the guidance of the powers of darkness, the



people of God are distinguished as much by what they abstain from doing as by what they do. Non-conformity to this world is the first business of one who presents the body as a living sacrifice to God, though the secret of such non-conformity is being transformed by the renewing of the mind. (Rom. xii. 1, 2.) Such an one will prove the "blessednesses of the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful."

To walk in the counsel of the ungodly, or the lawless, is to listen to and adopt their maxims and principles rather than those of the word of God. To stand in the way of sinners implies fuller association in action with those who, missing God's way, take their own and follow out the counsels of their hearts. To sit in the seat of the scornful is openly to set at nought the authority of God and His revealed will. A solemn warning is thus furnished against the first step in a downward course. How many young men, and women too, who have been brought up under godly training, and with a reverence for the sacred Scriptures, and have even professed to know and receive Christ for themselves, have been led into this path! They perhaps began to think there was no harm in doing what they saw others do, who made no definite profession of submission to the will of God; then, the barrier of separation being broken, intercourse was allowed and associations were formed; and before long they shrank not from the allowance of sceptical questioning of the truth and authority of holy Scripture. Those who try this path discover that it is no path of happiness, and that it leads to no satisfaction.

The first step in such a path is shunned by the man of God, for he proves the joy and satisfaction of a better way; "his delight is in the law of Jehovah, and in His law doth

he meditate day and night." The word "law" takes in the whole revelation of God, but it presents it in a special aspect. It reminds us that it is the word of a King, a voice from the throne of the Most High; that it comes with absolute authority, and calls for equally absolute submission. And this is a fact that the child of God recognizes with gladness. He rejoices that, though surrounded by so much that is uncertain and changeable he has one book in which there is nothing uncertain, one utterance that will stand when heaven and earth shall have passed away, one voice that is of sovereign authority to command faith and obedience, and to give assurance as to the end of those who listen to it. In this he delights, and delighting in it, he is ever occupied with it. And as a natural result it imparts to him its own stability, and makes him "like a tree planted by the rivers of water," ever green, ever fruitful, and ever prosperous.

In Psalm xxxvii. 35, the lawless one is described as flourishing like a tree growing in its native soil, but his end is solemn and sudden. The man of God is not growing in his native soil; he has been *planted*, and that in soil expressly prepared. All the Lord's people are the work of His own hands, "trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified." (Isa. lx. 21; lxi. 3.) By means of the Word the believer gets the constant flow of the living water; the Spirit of God by that Word reveals Christ in all His fulness, and abiding in Him there is fruitfulness. What the streams are to the tree, the word of God is to His people when it is listened to as the living voice of the living God. And as the tree spreads out its roots to draw nourishment from the streams of water, so the believer by prayerful meditation receives nourishment from the Word.

The prosperity here assured implies resurrection, and

is something very different from what the world would deem prosperity. Was Abel a prosperous man in human estimation? or Jeremiah? or Stephen? Was even the One who perfectly answered to the description of this Psalm prosperous to the human eye? Yet we know that in the truest sense He did prosper, for His cross was the way to the throne, where we now see Him at the right hand of God. And as it was with Him so is it with His people in their measure. Trials, afflictions, poverty are no evidences of lack of prosperity, judged by a heavenly standard. He who makes pleasing God the business of his life will consider himself prosperous according to the measure in which he fulfils that aim; and while he will value the testimony of his conscience that he has no lower aim, he will be content to wait for the coming day when the verdict of his Lord shall declare the amount of his success, and *His* hand shall bestow the eternal evidence of his prosperity.

But whatever may be declared of the righteous it must always be said, "The ungodly are not so!" The man who does not bow to God, who does not submit to the authority of His word, is indeed *lawless*, and having nothing fixed and unchangeable to guide and control him, his fit emblem is one of the lightest and most worthless things in nature. To the outward eye he may seem to be flourishing, he may even be religious, may subscribe to a creed, and be regular in the observance of ordinances, but if he has never been uprooted from the native soil of self-will and self-sufficiency, and planted in the new soil of grace, God has but to blow upon him and his work, and all will be shown to be as feeble and worthless as chaff. But especially in the coming day will this be fully seen, for "the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous." When God brings everything to the

test, none but those who have accepted His standard and submitted to His will will be able to stand. The one who has never been bowed in self-condemnation here, will find no acquittal there, but will fall for ever before the stern sentence of the righteous Judge. His very way will perish, as that which has been utterly fruitless. He has walked according to the course of this world, and he will see an end of all he has ever lived for, and as a naked empty-handed sinner he will receive from a righteous God the eternal retribution of a life of self-pleasing and disobedience.

And then in eternal distinctness will the congregation of the righteous shine forth. No sinner shall be there. Though all who form that congregation were sinners once, that is their description no longer. Having learnt to take their place as such in the presence of a holy God they have been justified by His grace, and shall shine for ever as witnesses to the power of redeeming love. For that they wait, and meanwhile rejoice in the assurance that "Jehovah knoweth the way of the righteous." The word *knoweth* expresses both intimate acquaintance and approval. He knoweth their way, for it is His own way, the way that He has made for them and in which He ever leads them. It is the way that leads straight to Himself who must ever be the supreme object of their delight and worship. It is "the way everlasting," lying for a time through the wilderness where snares and foes abound, and where trials sharp and varied are experienced. It is a narrow way, often rugged and difficult, but soon opening out into the level, broad way of "the city of our God," where no difficulty shall ever again be known, where no foe shall ever be met, and where no snare can ever be spread. There they shall indeed own how in every step the way they proved the grace that first turned their

feet into it, and shall delight to ascribe all the glory of their salvation to God and to the Lamb.

Dear Reader, are you *quite sure* which path you are in ? If not, be entreated to leave no longer in uncertainty a matter involving such momentous issues. And if, through grace, you are in the way of the righteous, may you, with the writer, prove increasingly the true blessedness of that path.

W. H. B.

### JERUSALEM.

“Jerusalem which is above”

WHILE we wait the hour to enter,  
Joy we in her loveliness,  
Praising Christ, the crown and centre  
Of her happiness.

On her twelve foundations seated,  
See her shining golden bright ;  
All her mansions fair completed,  
Filled and crowned with light.

Gates of pearl by angels guarded,  
Streets within transparent gold ;  
Happy saints, to be rewarded  
In that blessed fold !

In the midst the living waters  
Flowing from the Throne of God,  
From the Throne of Him who bought us  
With His precious blood ;

And on either side the river  
Grows the fair twelve-fruited tree,  
Shadow of the great Life-giver  
Through Eternity.

Happy place of rest and pleasure,  
Free from sickness, free from pain !  
There earth's kings shall bring their treasure,  
There the Lamb shall reign.

There His voice who cried "forsaken"  
In His hour of agony,  
Shall triumphantly awaken  
Songs of victory.

Lamb of God, and Lord of glory,  
Fill us with adoring love,  
While we tell the wondrous story  
Of Thy Home of Love.

E. S. W.

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## NOTES OF CONFERENCES AT LEOMINSTER.

MAY 18th to 21st, 1885.

### GOD'S LIVING WALL OF LOVE.

MR. DYER.—This forenoon we were considering Satan's assaults on the church of God in points of doctrine, and God's remedy for meeting these assaults. This can only be done effectually as we cultivate abiding in Christ, and walking with God, holding fast His precious Word, and building ourselves up in our most holy faith. I would now turn to the First Epistle to Timothy, which was written by Paul in full view of the last difficult days and also of the eternal glory beyond. The roaring lion might kill his body, as he maintained the truth by lip and by life, but this would only send his spirit to heaven.

Let us read in chapter i. "Grace, mercy, and peace." The word "mercy" has a very prominent place in these Epistles to Timothy, and tells of God's provision for him and for us in difficult days. The servant of Christ has to fight against false teachers with their "vain jangling," yet he is defenceless all the time, that is, speaking after the manner of men. In Zech. ii. 4, 5, Jerusalem is seen as a city without walls, but God will be to her a wall of fire round about, and the glory in the midst. So the believer is encircled with the wall of God's love, and he

can dispense with man's wall of ordinances and human learning; he has a living wall, through which the devil cannot enter. This is the sole defence likewise of our assemblies when gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus.

Satan is ever seeking to get the eye and heart off Christ. Small, petty questions crop up which divide the children of God. The enemy seeks to get believers occupied with *things*, and not with the *Person* of Christ; the wall of love grows thin and weak, and Satan gains an advantage over us. But faith lays hold of and cleaves to God's certainties, like the ivy to the forest tree, or the limpet to the rock, and remains unmoved, whatever may be the surroundings.

"Now the end of the commandment is LOVE out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned." The object of God's promises, from Eden down to the close of time, is to draw man's heart to Himself, the mighty changeless Lover. Why did God send living voices before Moses, and then this inspired Book afterwards? Was it that we might grasp some of His mighty truths mentally? Nay; but to win our *affections*, and to draw out our hearts to Himself. God's divine certainties are living truths of love.

The limpet has but the cold rock to cling to, but God's love warms the soul that cleaves to Him. In this living Word we behold God's wondrous love to us, and we love Him in return. Then we seek to love one another with a pure heart fervently. A "pure heart" hates sin, and a "good conscience" hates the works of the flesh, and both are the fruit of "unfeigned faith." God will not only have a new heaven and a new earth as the fruit of His wondrous love, but a people for ever with Himself, who will eternally love Him and one another. When with our Lord in that bright glory, we shall see the results of His

cross, and behold myriads of redeemed fellow-saints loving Him and each other without let or hindrance, that will be the climax of eternal life.

Love, then, is the "end of the commandment." But some had turned aside, even in Paul's day, and had become law-teachers. Beware of such; they will chill your love, and turn your steps aside from divine simplicity.

In verse 15, the apostle reminds Timothy of that simple glorious gospel which through grace we have received. This is a faithful or abiding saying, and worthy of all reception into the very depths of our souls. It is like the ladder which Jacob beheld, reaching from earth to heaven.

But why does Paul make the gospel so prominent? Is it not to keep the love in our hearts burning as a flame? He confesses his own sinful condition—the "chief" of sinners, a first-class sinner, a Pharisee sinner!—worse, far worse than the harlot and publican. He had been forgiven much, and consequently loved much. The moment we lose sight of this, our love will be on the wane. We may be regular at meetings, but we shall only be like a lump of ice when there. Our head-knowledge may be very deep, but our hearts' affections will be very shallow. But as I know my own heart better than any one else's, I ought also to exclaim, "I am the chief of sinners," and magnify the grace that could save even me, and I should then find my heart aglow with love to God and to fellow-saints.

As the prodigal looked upon the robe, the shoes, and the ring, and feasted upon the fatted calf, how his heart would burn with love to such a father! So with the five-hundred-pence debtor in Luke vii.; she loved much, because much had been forgiven her. So again with the church in Canticles viii.; her love is likened to a flame of Jah, which all the floods could not drown. It was this



love that the apostle Peter had in his mind when he wrote those words, "See that ye love one another with a pure heart *fervently*." If in the assembly I see myself as chief of sinners, I shall be the least of all. I know the *inside* of myself, whereas I can only see the *outside* of others, and therefore I should the more love that One who, when I had nothing to pay, frankly forgave me all; the One who loved me, and gave Himself for me.

If my love is going out to all saints, can the devil get in between me and any? We are only safe from all his assaults as our love is in exercise, and as we are following God's word. Then will our hearts also go out to a doomed world. If the grace of God could save me, it can save others, but if our hearts are cold, it will be but a freezing gospel that we shall proclaim. Only let this mighty love of the changeless Lover flow into our souls, and we shall be going forth into the lanes of the city, seeking to compel some to enter into God's house and share His gospel supper, and we shall not be found cavilling over questions and endless genealogies which gender strife.

The Lord work in our souls a deeper sense of our indebtedness, and increase our love to Himself, to His people, and to a poor dying world!

#### SANCTIFICATION THROUGH THE TRUTH.

Mr. FENN read Titus i. 1, and ii. 11-15. When contemplating this morning the errors of the last days, we saw that the final apostasy comes about by believing a lie, and this follows the rejection of the truth, and we have just been hearing that the measure of faith in God is our love to Him and to His people. The Epistle to Titus agrees with this; in it we read of "the truth which is *after godliness*," as in our blessed Lord's own words in John xvii. 17, "*Sanctify them through Thy truth; Thy word is truth.*" All truth tends to holiness of life; truth rightly learned

must tend to our sanctification ; if it does not, we have not rightly learned it of God. This applies to the fundamental truths of the gospel, and to truths which we learn as we go along our Christian course, whether it be our heavenly calling or the coming of the Lord. If these blessed truths do not make us more holy, they have not their right effect in us. The letter of Scripture may be grasped intellectually, and yet not be held in the power of the Holy Ghost. There are men who carry on large businesses on borrowed capital, and often, alas ! they come to a smash ; whereas some small traders go on quietly with the little they can call their own, flourish and prosper. We get blessing, not from the amount of knowledge of Scripture we acquire, but in the keeping of His commandments. If we measure our state of soul by the Divine test, where are we ? Have we not known some who were once very prominent, but where are they to-day ? They did run well, but Satan has gained an advantage over them, and they are hindered.

Are we less worldly in our own life than we were, and more upright and just in all our transactions with our fellow-men ? It may be that a Christian next door to us has not so much light and knowledge of God's word as we possess, and yet puts us to shame in practically carrying out that word in every-day life.

Brethren, if the blessed truths we have been listening to do not lift us Godward, and make us more like Christ, then we shall miss the mark. They may have entered into the outward ear, and reached the mind, but not entered into the soul. To be of real profit to our souls, and to become real gold to us, they must be applied to our hearts and consciences by the Holy Ghost, and lived out day by day in the power of the same blessed Spirit. There will be a deeper humility of mind and an increasing hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and a less

desire to turn aside to the right hand or to the left. Thus will God's name be glorified, and our souls receive eternal good. This is the teaching of grace and the result of godliness. May God the Holy Ghost enable us to get nuggets of gold out of our three days' digging into His precious word, for Christ's sake.

## ON SPREADING THE GOSPEL.

Dr. BAEDERER.—I would like to say a few words to link on to what our brother has said, especially in the prospect of the Lord's second coming, which grace teaches us to look for. The time is very short which our God has given us to serve Him in the gospel, whilst waiting for the realization of our hope. During this little while God has given us mighty privileges in gospel work, and marvellous treasures in Christ Jesus to enjoy. But are we enjoying them? Do we use them as we might? In the south of Russia there was a very poor man, who appeared to be in the direst poverty. He went about gathering the refuse of the city, and begged dry crusts from door to door. Clad in rags, he lived in the filthiest condition in one little room, or kind of hut. One day the door was kept closed, and the neighbours, becoming concerned about him, burst open the door and found the old man quite dead. A large box was the only piece of furniture in the room, and served for table and bedstead, and upon this the lifeless body was lying. They decided to put the body, which was in a filthy condition, into the box and to bury it therein. But when they came to lift the box they found it exceedingly heavy, and locked. The key was found hanging around the old man's neck, and the box was unlocked, when it was found to be full of money; and yet that man had lived on dry crusts! He had riches stored up, but he died as a penniless beggar. Brethren, we have been hearing that God has given to us such a Gift—a Gift that contains all other gifts,

for in Christ dwells all the fulness of the Godhead bodily ; but are we *using* our riches ? The gospel placed in our hands to carry to the heathen is not a poverty-stricken gospel, but the very richest, choicest gospel. What are we doing with it ? We can go and tell the perishing thousands of that salvation which grace has brought unto us, and oh, what is our salvation ? It is a salvation which will fill eternity with its praises !

More than this, we have a mighty power indwelling us to enable us to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts ; and then we have the glowing prospect of our Lord's coming. All these blessed truths are given to the feeblest babe in the family, but how much do we use them ? Are we living like the poor beggar ? Do you say, " But I am so feeble ? " Need we exclaim, " My leanness, my leanness ? " Oh, to lay hold of God's strength and to be receiving continually from God's fulness !

The prophet Elisha commanded the poor widow to borrow empty vessels not a few, and so long as there were empty vessels there was no end to the oil in her pot.

We have just read that " salvation hath appeared to all men," and yet think of the millions who do not know, and have never heard of it ! Think, too, of the woman in the fourth of John, who, when she had learned a little bit of this salvation, left her waterpot and ran wherever people were to be seen, to tell them of this newly-found Saviour who was imparting the living water to thirsty souls. It is a good thing to eat the fat, and to drink the sweet, but we must not forget to send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared. God has given to us a worthy portion, incalculable wealth ; do not then let us live as the poor Russian beggar, but let us remember that the coming of the Lord draweth nigh, when an account will have to be given of those riches which He has committed to our

trust. The young converts at Thessalonica had just received the gospel, and they sounded out that gospel to others. They became channels of the living water. They were *waiting and working*.

## WITNESSING FOR CHRIST.

MR. DOUGLAS RUSSELL.—I would like to say a few words to the babes in the family of God, as to our being left down here to be witnesses for our absent Lord. It is well to ask ourselves, "What am I left here for?" When at the Lord's table, we may ask ourselves this question. Do we not go there to praise the One who has saved us, and to worship God in the beauty of holiness for His wondrous salvation? The same question meets us in our home circle. What am I here for? Is it not to be a witness for God? Whether it be as parent or child, as master or servant, we should seek to witness a good confession for the Lord Jesus Christ both by life and by lip. In Acts i. 8, He says, "Ye shall be witnesses unto Me." This applies to each one of us to-day in that sphere where God has been pleased to place us.

In Rom. i. 20, we read, "The invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." God has His witnesses in creation. Earth in all its parts bears testimony to the goodness and munificence of the Creator. The heavens declare His glory, and sun, moon and stars witness for God in their appointed spheres. Again, in Acts xiv. 17, "Nevertheless He left not Himself without witness." God is continually lavishing His mercies upon this world, causing His sun to shine upon the just and upon the unjust, and sending His rain, and giving fruitful seasons. These are God's providential witnesses. And this God is our God and Father, who gave His only Son

for us, and saved us by His grace, in order that we might be witnesses for Himself.

But in Rom. x. 15, we read, "How shall they preach except they be sent?" This is a quotation from Isaiah, where we have the pronoun "*him*," but the apostle changes it into "*them*," teaching us thus of our fellowship with Christ in this blessed work, for it is to this that God has called each one of us. (1 Cor. i. 9.)

Peter's testimony concerning Christ in Acts x. 38 was, "He went about doing good." This is our mission until Christ Himself shall come. God is good; Christ went about doing good, and we are exhorted in Heb. xiii. 16 to "do good." The power of a godly life is felt wherever we go.

"OCCUPY TILL I COME."

MR. GROVES.—I would briefly refer to a verse or two in Luke xix. 12-14, to send home to our hearts what we have been hearing. These words, "Occupy till I come," were uttered by our Lord about four days before the crucifixion, and should ever appeal to our consciences with solemn power. We have been hearing of barren lands and dying souls, and in this chapter we are told that each servant is entrusted with a pound to use during the absence of our blessed Lord. It is not here the different talents, as in Matt. xxv., but it is the one pound given to all, to be put to usury till Christ shall come. This sets forth our common privilege in the gospel. We have heard that gospel, and rejoiced in it, but how far have we been occupied in the spread of it to the needy and the dying? If the question is asked, "What am I here for?" Christ's answer to us all is, "Occupy till I come," whether our time be long or short. I remember hearing Mr. Müller speak to this effect: "If the Lord said, 'George Müller, you must die; your work is done,' I

should be very glad. If He said, 'George Müller, you must stay and serve me for a hundred years more,' I should be very glad, and go on with my work.

During this little space of time we have one of the greatest blessings conferred upon us which it is possible for God to bestow, even the confession of Christ to our fellow-men. Alas! brethren, we have low thoughts of it and we allow many grand opportunities to go by unheeded.

A Christian officer was ordered out to India. He went on board the ship at Liverpool, feeling sad and lonely as he left home and friends behind him. Opening his Bible, his eye fell upon the Lord's word to Peter, "Feed my sheep." This word continued to ring in his ears. He met another Christian man on board, and they went down and read the Word together, and he sought to feed that sheep of Christ's flock to the best of his ability. Others on board were attracted, and he was enabled to forget that which he had left behind, and to go on day by day teaching and preaching Christ. When the vessel arrived at Calcutta, there was only one unconverted man on board. There is a rest and joy in service which many know nothing of. May the Lord stir up our hearts and enlarge them, that we too may hear and heed the Lord's own word, "Occupy till I come." We have to give an account to Him of how we have used our pound. May we more and more realize our debt of gratitude to Him, and consider our responsibility in this glorious gospel work. Every man must bear his own burden, just as every ship carries its own freight. Brethren, what are we freighted with? We are destined for the haven of eternal rest, and the land of everlasting glory; there our cargo will be emptied out, and all will be seen in its true colours and stamped with its real worth, and we shall be losers or gainers for eternity. The man whose pound had gained ten pounds heard the words "Well done!" but these words

were not said to the man with the five pounds. May God give us grace to learn the lesson, and diligently to occupy till Christ shall come. God is training us for our eternal destiny in the glory. May we seek to be guided by His eye, and not have need of bit and bridle, and then, watching the movement of God's eye, we shall be guided aright as to service. Paul was guided by the Spirit where he was to go and where he was not to go. He desired to go into Asia to preach the gospel, but the Spirit suffered him not; but two years afterwards he was permitted to visit Asia and remained there three years preaching and teaching, and much people were saved. Let us have more patience as we wait upon God in prayer, and all will be well. Men at the gold diggings have become discouraged and given up in despair, after labouring long, and others have followed up their labours and in a little while have made a fortune. God knows exactly where the nuggets are. All the results that may attend our labours should redound to His eternal praise. God often has to break our hearts, for a broken-hearted man cannot be proud. The kind of service we are engaged in is not the important point, but our wholeheartedness to God in it. A servant in a family, by watchfulness and prayer, may get ten pounds, and the Master's "Well done!" May such be the gain of one and all of us for Christ's sake.

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FRAGMENT.—As the oil, in 2 Kings iv., never stayed so long as there remained a vessel to be filled, so Christ's fulness (Col. ii. 9) will never be exhausted so long as there are any of His people to draw from it. When "all fulness" dwells in Him, what folly it is to go to other sources!

To ask is easy, but 'tis hard to wait,

And waiting, to ask on, and seek, and knock;

But faith can rest in God—He cannot fail;

Delay is not denial; His promise must prevail.



## THE ETERNAL HALLELUJAH.

## PSALM CL.

IF the first Psalm may well be regarded as a fitting introduction to the whole book (see page 217), we may surely say that the last Psalm is as suitable a conclusion. The first brings before us the two classes that are found throughout the book, often in conflict, always distinct; the last carries us forward to the time when, these two classes being for ever separated, there shall rise to Jehovah from "the congregation of the righteous," and from every part of a new creation, one unbroken and eternal Hallelujah. Between the first and last Psalms we not only see the course of the righteous and the course of the wicked traced; we discern also in prophetic language the humiliation, the sufferings, and the triumph of that One through whom alone any child of Adam can know "the way of the righteous," and "praise God in His sanctuary."

The hundred and fifty Psalms are divided into five books, and each book, except the last, has appended to it an expression of praise that belongs not simply to the Psalm to which it is attached, but to the book which it concludes. In the fifth book the last Psalm takes the place of the briefer doxology, and fitly concludes the whole. It is quite possible that these books represent different collections made at different times, the whole being finally arranged in its present form by some servant of God in later days. The Jews attribute this final editing of the Psalter to Ezra, whose interest in and love for the word of God is so evident in the book that bears his name and in that of Nehemiah.

The several divisions of the Psalms and the concluding doxologies are as follows :—

(1.) I.—XLI.

“Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel,  
From everlasting to everlasting,  
Amen, and Amen.”

(2.) XLII.—LXXII.

“Blessed be Jehovah God, the God of Israel,  
Who only doeth wondrous things.  
And blessed be His glorious name for ever :  
And let the whole earth be filled with His glory.  
Amen, and Amen.”

(3.) LXXIII.—LXXXIX.

“Blessed be Jehovah for evermore.  
Amen, and Amen.”

(4.) XC.—CVI.

“Blessed be Jehovah, the God of Israel,  
From everlasting to everlasting :  
And let all the people say, Amen.  
Hallelujah.”

(5.) CVII.—CL.

The last book begins and ends with praise.

There is something very suggestive in the simple fact that each division thus closes with praise, and that in the end of the whole book everything gives place to praise. The book of Psalms is a book of deep and varied experience of the ways of God. We find in it the experiences of Christ and His people. The sufferings and glories of Christ are set forth very clearly in many of the Psalms. In others we see the chastenings, the repentings, the sorrow, humiliation, triumph and final glory of the true Israel. And, though there are some Psalms which the Church of God, by reason of her peculiar calling, cannot fully take up as her own language, yet most of them serve as the utterances of saints of God of every dispensation. But whatever the unfoldings of God's ways may be, or whatever the experiences of Christ or His people, the *end* of all is *praise*. They are not simply followed

by praise, but they lead to it, and the deeper our experience of God and His ways now, the richer will be our eternal song.

The natural path of the child of God in a world that "lieth in the wicked one" (1 John v. 19) is a path of tribulation. "The way of the righteous" is of necessity a narrow way, and must be a way of conflict so long as foes, seen or unseen, withstand him at every step ; but all must soon give place to rest, triumph, glory ; and that for ever. Not only so ; the children of God need discipline, and therefore, in the ordinary circumstances of life and its daily events, the hand of God is often upon His people, to humble them and to train them. Their ways are at times hedged up with thorns to save them from snares of which they are yet ignorant, and they are made to feel the emptiness, the uncertainty, and the vanity of earthly things, that they may set their heart more truly upon what is heavenly. And thus God leads His people to a knowledge of Himself, His care, His tenderness, His power to sustain and deliver, which but for a wilderness pathway they could never have had. As one has beautifully said,

"In the desert God will teach thee  
What the God that thou hast found ;  
Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,  
All His grace shall there abound."

But present discipline is a pledge of the holiness that shall be ours (Heb. xii. 10), "for surely there is an end, and thine expectation shall not be cut off." (Prov. xxiii. 18.) That end is unbroken peace (Ps. xxxvii. 17), undisturbed joy, and never-ceasing praise. Therefore as we reach the close of the book of Psalms, everything gives place to praise. The humiliation of Christ has led to His eternal glory ; the many tears of His

people have been wiped away by the hand that alone can dry them up for ever ; the enemy and the avenger has been for ever silenced (Ps. viii. 2) ; the groan of creation has been hushed ; and heaven and earth are filled with the praises of Jehovah.

Each of the last five Psalms begins and ends with the word "Hallelujah," and each sentence in the last Psalm is a call to praise. It begins thus—

"Hallelujah.

Praise God in His sanctuary :

Praise Him in the firmament of His power."

That holy word Hallelujah is, alas, in our day sadly trampled in the mire, and we cannot too often be reminded that it is a word for God's sanctuary alone, and should never fall from our lips without our being in spirit there, where irreverence or lightness never enters. Nothing can be more joyful and stirring to the spirit than these psalms, yet solemnity and reverence characterize every expression in them ; for deepening joy in God of necessity leads to growing reverence in worship, which is the fruit of joy. The sanctuary below was but a type of that above, in which the Lord's people are now called to worship in spirit and will soon worship in resurrection glory. And the praise which begins in the sanctuary, where redemption is fully known and all its wondrous results are being learnt out, will extend to "the firmament of His power."

But He Himself is the theme of praise as truly as its object, and therefore we read,

"Praise Him for His mighty acts :

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness."

In His mighty acts His excellent greatness has been displayed. Creation was a mighty act, but for the full display of His excellent greatness we must look to His *new* creation. Hence when the resurrection of Him who

is the Beginning of that creation is spoken of we have a wondrous expression of omnipotence. In Eph. i. 19 three words are used, of which the literal meaning is, "the *energy* of the *power* of His *might* which He wrought in Christ when He raised Him from the dead." And He who raised up the Lord "will also raise up us by His own power." (1 Cor. vi. 14.) Then shall we know our God as we have never known Him before, and growth in the knowledge of Him means growth in worship.

The following verses (3-5) set forth the energy with which God is to be praised.

"Praise Him with the sound of the trumpet ;  
Praise Him with the psaltery and harp ;  
Praise Him with the timbrel and dance ;  
Praise Him with stringed instruments and organs ;  
Praise Him upon the loud cymbals ;  
Praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals."

All classes of instruments are specified, and the summary is expressive of the putting forth of all our powers in this great ministry. It was as much in accordance with a ceremonial worship to use instruments of music as it is in harmony with the simplicity of the present dispensation to dispense with them. Disregard to dispensational truth has led many to argue that because God appointed an elaborate tabernacle, and afterwards a magnificent temple in which to receive the worship of His people in former days, He is now pleased with splendid buildings and ritualistic worship; and with such an idea the introduction of instrumental music is quite consistent. But all such arguments ignore the fact that the cross of Christ has set aside the old order of things, and has introduced a new order which is essentially *spiritual*. The only worship recognized in the New Testament is that which is rendered by those who, standing in the relationship of *children*, are able to give thanks unto the Father. (Col. i. 12.) Even

in the closing verse of this Psalm we pass from lifeless instruments to living voices, by which alone acceptable worship can be rendered to Him who is worthy of the adoration of all His creatures :

“ Let everything that hath breath praise Jah.  
Hallelujah.”

There is something very grand in this final call to universal worship, and we know that the time will come when the response to it will be perfect. In Rev. v. we see the worship beginning in the sanctuary by those whose place is nearest the throne, and then the circle extends till it embraces every spot of God's new creation.

Of that new creation “the lake of fire” is no part; the abode of the lost is called the “outer darkness,” as being outside the sphere of light and love; it is the one spot of the universe that can never be gladdened by a ray of light from His glorious presence. Redemption from this deserved and awful doom will ever be remembered by all His redeemed as one of the mightiest of God's acts, and the remembrance will never fail to call forth a joyful and sacred “HALLELUJAH!” With this deep note of the sanctuary the book of Psalms closes. May every reader, possessing the knowledge of God as revealed in the cross of His Son, be able from the heart to say, “AMEN!”

W. H. B.

## FAITHFULNESS IN THAT WHICH IS LEAST.

DANIEL I.

THE connection between obedience and the increase of spiritual life and power is very clearly seen in the history of Daniel, but it is possible to study this book in order to understand its prophetic teachings and yet to overlook the very instructive lessons in the life of the servant whom it pleased God to employ as His penman. If we do so, we

fail to use this Scripture rightly. If we may divide what divine wisdom has joined we would say it is better to fail in understanding the prophecies than the means whereby Daniel was prepared to write them. We should never forget that the fitting of the vessel precedes its being filled. And the power by which Daniel wrote is the power by which we receive what he has written; "for the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness unto him." Hence the importance of attention to the way by which this man, beloved of God, was fitted for the honoured place of prophet.

We notice that everything in Israel was out of course. The Lord, because of their sin, had sold them into the hand of those who hated them. His wrath had come upon them to the uttermost; they were out of the land; His house had been defiled, and its goodly furniture carried away to Babylon.

Yet all this could not alter the fact that Jehovah was the God of Israel. The law was broken, and the people were suffering the results of it; but failure on the nation's part could not set aside divine faithfulness on behalf of such as sought to be obedient. Jehovah was God to Daniel, and he would own Him in the land where divine judgment had placed him. The results of Israel's transgression Daniel had to endure, in common with others, though himself personally free from much that he confessed. Yet, because of the unity of the nation he would participate in its sorrow. Have we not something of the same kind now? "If one member suffer, all the members suffer with it." Personal uprightness will not save us from the consequences of that departure from the living God so manifest in the church. But the consequences will afford us an opportunity for showing our subjection to Himself and His word, and will thus become bread for

us. It is a part of our heavenly wisdom to get profit out of our difficulties, and to turn the hard stones of affliction into bread of nourishment for our souls.

Next we notice that Daniel and his fellows were children of the king's seed (v. 3); but this of itself would not fit them for receiving divine communications. Others of the children of Israel might share this honour with them ; yet, lacking inward consecration, they were unfitted to receive from God and to be used by Him. Nobility of birth, coupled with natural gift, might make them desirable instruments for Nebuchadnezzar, but would be of small import in the work which in the purpose of God lay before Daniel. Egypt's learning conferred little fitness upon Moses for the work of guiding Israel ; and Saul's armour would not have helped David in his conflict with Goliath. So these earthly advantages of exalted birth and natural qualification were of little service in fitting the vessel to receive the heavenly treasure.

It was in the allowable things of this life, as men would say, that the trial first came to these honoured servants of God. In after chapters we have the trial of their faith in the command to bow to the idol, and in the prohibition of prayer to their God ; the one leading to the fiery furnace, and the other to the lions' den. But before these greater trials came they were proved in the minor matters of daily life, the sphere in which *we* especially need the word, "Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth." Consecration, if it be real, will bring God into the little matters of life. Respect for one's own reputation may preserve from the grosser sins of the flesh, thus keeping the outside of cup and platter clean ; but the heart's purpose alone, born of the grace of God, will keep the inner parts for Him who looketh upon the heart.



Daniel's purpose not to defile himself was ready when the temptation came. The commands of his God were as real to him in Babylon as they had been in Judæa. Morals do not change with places. "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," was for all times and for all places; and these sons of the princes purposed to abide by it. Nothing helps to keep the heart quiet like a settled purpose to do the right thing. If the double-minded man is unstable in all his ways, as he certainly is, it is equally true that the double-minded man is unquiet in all his thoughts.

We notice also how graciously the Lord smooths the path for His servants. "Now God had brought Daniel into favour and tender love with the prince of the eunuchs." "When a man's ways please the Lord, He maketh even his enemies to be at peace with him." We have other instances of God's dealing similarly with His servants. "The Lord was with Joseph . . . and gave him favour in the sight of the keeper of the prison." (Gen. xxxix., 21.) "Julius courteously entreated Paul." (Acts xxvii., 3.) We are but fools when we trim our ways to seek the favour of men, which, if found, oftentimes proves a snare of Satan. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." (Matt. vi., 33.) Let our aim be the doing of His will, and we may leave all the rest to His arrangement. He cannot fail those who put His honour first.

The defilement connected with eating the portion of the king's meat and drinking of his wine, was not in the things themselves, but in the use the king made of them; for doubtless they were first placed upon the altar of his god, and consecrated to its service. Daniel's wise and godly action would give great offence to the more liberal and pliable sons of the princes. To them the idol was

nothing; they gloried in their freedom, and ate the king's meat, but we do not read that they received divine communications, or heard the words, "*O man greatly beloved.*"

It is a sad fact that obedience to God in all things is not the rule of all who name the "worthy name" of Christ. Many, indeed, shut their eyes to certain lines of divine truth, and regard those who seek to maintain them as narrow and hair-splitting. Comprehensiveness is often pleaded in these days, but it is well to be reminded that, in so far as it is at the expense of truth, it is comprehensiveness without God, and savours of the spirit of the world, which is leading on to that confederacy of which the Antichrist will be the head.

The statement, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much" (Luke xvi. 10), finds perfect illustration in Daniel's history. His faithfulness was shown first in the least matters, and afterwards in the greater, because faithfulness to his God was with him a settled principle. Habits are soon formed, and if we reserve our faithfulness for great occasions we shall find it wanting when the occasion comes. Moreover, may we not say, that a keener spiritual perception was needed to discern and judge the evil of eating the king's meat and drinking the king's wine, than to discern and judge the sin of bowing down to the image of gold? We do not read of any refusing to do the second except those who refused to do the first. Their faithfulness in the thing that was least, strengthened them for the greater trial which soon followed, while the unfaithfulness of the others in the matter of the meat and wine darkened the perception of their consciences, and weakened their power to refuse doing what every Jew must have known to be contrary to the commandments of the Lord.

“As for these four children, God gave them knowledge and skill in all learning and wisdom” (v. 17). The lesson lies upon the very surface—they had honoured their God, and He would honour them. They had acted without reference to results, but they proved the truth of those words, “Thou meetest him that rejoiceth and worketh righteousness.” (Isaiah lxiv. 5.) The Lord met them, not to confound and turn them back, but to encourage and fit them for further usefulness. We need never fear if obedient, for though the path be rough, and obedience may increase its roughness, yet the presence of Him who said “Lo I am with you always,” will more than compensate for it all.

J. C.

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## NOTES OF CONFERENCES AT LEOMINSTER.

JUNE 28th TO JULY 2nd, 1885.

### BIBLE READING.—The DIVINE and IMMUTABLE AUTHORITY OF SCRIPTURE.

It is not possible that man, left to himself, could have invented one single doctrine of the Scriptures. To begin with, What man would have invented the doctrine of man's ruin, as seen in Rom. iii., Ps. liii., John ix. 39–41, Acts xvii. 16–19? It is not possible for man to present such a picture of man's heart as is to be found in the Scriptures, for the simple reason that he would be condemning himself; and the natural man will never do that.

In Rom. iii. 9 we read that both “Jews and Gentiles . . . are *all* under sin;” and look at those solemn, comprehensive words which follow, “There is *none* that understandeth, there is *none* that seeketh after God. They are *all* gone out of the way . . . there is *none* that doeth good; *no not one* . . . There is no fear of God before their eyes.”

In John ix. 39, some of the Pharisees, who were the

princes of the people, say, "Are we blind also?" Jesus says, "If ye were blind ye should have no sin : but now ye say, We see ; therefore your sin remaineth." In Acts xvii. when God's servant Paul was at the city of man's wisdom, "he saw the *whole* city given to idolatry," and when he bore testimony for God they said "this babbler." In John ix. we have man's heart in the wise Jew, and in Acts xvii. man's heart in the wise Gentile. In our day Satan is working, through the books of human wisdom, to puff man up with the pride of wisdom, and, through outward religion, with the pride of righteousness, which is the fairest of all pride, and the most hateful to God. Modern society and university teaching set the so-called classics in opposition to God's Word, and make silly and abominable fables a basis of human learning. And this we might expect from Satan's first lesson to man, "Ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." Antichrist will fulfil this.

Then again, as to God's retributive justice ; it is not possible for man to conceive such a truth, and he rises up against it. Many are denying the truth of everlasting punishment, but Acts xvii. 31-32, John xvi. 8-11, and other passages, assure us that there will be an equitable retribution.

Who would ever have invented the doctrine of the atonement? The heathen have their idea of sacrifice, but whence did they get it? During the first ages of the world's history we know of no written Word of God, but the truth of sacrifice was doubtless handed down from Noah, and Noah's ritual was carried on by the heathen without Noah's faith.

Man must be religious ; it is not possible for man to be quietly an atheist ; he cannot settle down on atheism. This will be true even of the Man of sin, for though he will set himself up as God, he will yet worship a strange god.

If the Scriptures are correct, man's philosophy must be wrong. We are not called upon to reconcile the facts of geology with Scripture; but we are called to begin and end with the Scriptures, for they bear their own testimony. "The law of Jehovah is *perfect*," that is, complete, and it needs no proving. There is a native authority in the Scriptures, and if I go outside Scripture to prove Scripture, I am in a quagmire. It would be as foolish as to seek to prove that the loaf on the table was bread. If Scripture required proving, it would be a human thing; as one has said, "If I could *prove* the Bible to be true, I might begin to doubt."

We receive the Scripture as a revelation from God for the same reason that the sceptic rejects it—that man cannot understand it. If man could understand the Bible he might make a book like it. The Word of God is so contrary to man that he cannot receive it naturally.

Man's religion is taken up with doing what God does not do; that is, attempting to bring a clean thing out of an unclean.

We are bound, as God's witnesses, to testify that the world is blind; but we are not called upon to prove it, nor to allow men to take the place of judges of God's word; the Word is to judge man. Most important is the consistency of our Christian life; the world believes nothing else.

John vii. is full of the world's questioning and debating concerning our Lord. He does not attempt to prove that He is Christ, nor does He work any fresh miracle; but His answer is, "If any man thirst, let him come unto Me and drink." This gives us an example; let us invite the weary sinner to taste and see; but let us not be occupied with proving to the unbelieving sinner what he does not wish to see. But people are of course responsible for external evidences, as we learn from John v.

If we put Scripture doctrine before men, let us put it in God's way, and in God's language ; not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth. Man does not dread our reasoning, but he dreads God's word.

The eternal Sonship of our Lord is a truth plainly revealed to us by the Spirit of God, but the natural man receives it not. The Jews were enraged against Christ when He bore testimony to this.\* The boast of Mahometanism is "There is one God," and God cannot have a Son ; and some who take the name of Christian deny the truth of the eternal Sonship on which salvation depends.

In the Old Testament the Godhead was revealed according to the partial light then given. The early chapters of Genesis contain the first record. The plural word for God (Elohim) is used with reference to creation, "Let US make man in OUR image." In regeneration, a triune God is needed to save a single sinner. The Son must be God in order to redeem, and the Spirit must be God to fashion the sinner for God.

There can be no Fatherhood without Sonship. Adam only became a father when he had begotten a son in his own likeness. Abraham is an especial type of the Father. His hands held the fire and the knife, the instruments of avenging justice, but he was not permitted to offer up his Isaac. In the anti-type, the Father could only act as sin-avenging judge at Calvary.

In the blessing pronounced upon the children of Israel in Num. vi. 24-26, the three-fold character of Jehovah is revealed.

Isaiah's words, "Mine eyes have seen the king, Jehovah of hosts" (chap. vi.), are shown in John xii. to have

\* Those who speak of Christ to Jews now, feel the need of being able to prove this truth from the Old Testament Scriptures, to which they profess to bow.

reference to Christ: "These things said Isaiah when he saw His glory and spake of Him."

The language of Micah is also unmistakable, "Out of thee [Bethlehem-Ephratah] shall He come forth unto Me, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." (Micah v. 2.) With this corresponds the description of Wisdom in Prov. viii., in which Christ is personified: "Jehovah possessed me in the beginning of His way." Creation was a platform for redemption, as Col. i. 16 tells us, "All things were created by Him and for Him," that is, the Son.

The New Testament fully reveals the eternal Sonship, though we do not find the expression "God the Son," because God does not teach theology after the order of the schools. God the Father could not shine forth, except by and through His Son.

The term "Only-begotten Son" (John i. 14-18; iii. 16-18; 1 John iv. 9) shews us Christ's eternal and essential relationship to the Father.

In John v. 17, our Lord said "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work;" and the Jews saw that His claiming Sonship was of necessity claiming equality. Paul, who in his unconverted days would have vehemently taken part with his unbelieving people, rejoices in Phil. ii. to dwell on the equality of the Son—"who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." In John xiv. 28, Christ says, "My Father is greater than I," for He had laid down His authority, and stooped to the place of subjection, taking upon Him the form of servant.

Fatherhood is the great subject of John viii. The Jews claimed that God was their Father, but denied to our Lord His place as "the Son," and He has to tell them that their works proved who their father was.

When He told them that Abraham rejoiced to see His day, and said, "Before Abraham was I AM," they took up stones to cast at Him.

The incarnation of the Son of God is a mystery, which we cannot fathom, though we joyfully accept it; we cannot understand how the Babe in Simeon's arms could be the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, nor how, when He was the Victim on the cross, He could be "upholding all things by the word of His power;" but we believe and adore.

A corresponding truth, very far above man's thoughts, is *our* sonship to God. Fellowship and friendship with God are not possible to angels; they may be above man, but in relation to God they are creatures only. In 1 John i. we see a fellowship beyond all human thought. "Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ." In Eph. i. 3-5 we read, "Having predestinated us unto sonship by Jesus Christ unto Himself." Who could have dreamed of that word "right" or "authority" in 1 John i. 12? "To them gave He the *right* to become children of God;" the authority is found in the next verse; it belongs to our birth—"Who were born *of God*."

Outward Christianity has two ways of making a child of God—by priestly act, "the will of man," in infancy; and by intellectual advancement. We need to give testimony to our sonship by being well-pleasing children of God.

#### THE LIFE OF TRUST.

MR. R. C. CHAPMAN read Psalms xvi. and xvii.—Oh the fulness of the word of God! Oh the unsearchable riches in these two Psalms! "Preserve me O God: for in Thee do I put my trust." (Ps. xvi. 1.) Man as created was a worshipper; to be, and to worship, happened both at the same time, but he was every moment dependent upon God.



He had no need to *find out* God although He was but scantily revealed. We, on the other hand, through sin, need all the fulness of God in Christ, in whom it dwelleth bodily.

"Thou art my Lord," my sovereign Lord (*v* 1); "my portion" (*v* 5). Adam knew nothing of the fulness of such fellowship. Oh, how blessed it is to put in contrast the two men—the man made out of the earth, and the Son of God who took upon Him the *form* of a servant—the only servant who could ever do that. Satan could have had glory as a servant, so also could Adam; yet both failed. But the Son of God took upon Him the form of a servant, and in obedience went down to the lowest depths, which we can never fathom.

In verse 1 the Lord gives us what characterized His whole life—"In Thee do I put my trust." "I live by the Father" was His word in John vi. 57, and in chap. x. 15-17, He said, "I lay down my life;" not the life which Adam possessed, but the life which He had in the bosom of the Father. The death must be estimated by the life.

Faith is almighty with God, because He so delights in it. Do we like to be trusted? Let our delight in the confidence which others place in us, teach us to learn of Christ, whose all-sufficient plea before God was, "In Thee do I put my trust." Whatever be my failing, let me deal truthfully with God and confess it, but let me put far from me that worst of all evils, the limiting of God, who is the God of all grace. When David's men lost their wives and children at Ziklag, they spoke of stoning him, but David went at once to God, and the answer came with a double portion of blessing. After confession is made, God must honour faith which does not limit His grace.

In Rev. iv. 6-8, we have a wondrous picture of the living ones with eyes before, behind, and within. Jesus.

had all these—looking back at the glory, forward to the cross, and inward. “My reins also instruct me in the night season,” He says in *v.* 7, and in *v.* 11 He looked beyond the cross to “fulness of joy,” and “pleasures for evermore.”

In Psalm xvii. 15, we learn to say, “I shall be satisfied”—satisfied when, having Thy likeness, I shall be capable of enjoying Thy presence. Jehovah Elohim had all joy in Himself, Father, Son and Spirit. But the Father having deigned to extend the fulness of that joy by the giving up of His Son, He now seeks the fellowship of His redeemed sons and daughters. But, in order to please God, I must in my thoughts entirely separate the first Adam from the Last Adam, the Second Man. Let us also remember that no tender-hearted earthly parent is so easily pleased as is our Father in heaven by His children’s trust. What a pattern the Lord Jesus presents to us in this, beloved, and as we exercise ourselves to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man, the more shall we hear the voice of God, not as the voice of thunder, but as the still small voice from under the mercy-seat. If the Lord has to stand at our door knocking, knocking, we ought to think more of His loss than our own; and let us bear in mind that since it has pleased God in His grace to make us His own, He *needs* us as His children. Christ also needs His brethren, His members, and will not receive His full satisfaction till He receives us unto Himself.

#### LOVE TO ALL SAINTS.

Mr. DYER.—The end of Psalm xvi. tells me of the joy of the eternal home; the end of Psalm xvii. indicates the kind of person I shall be when I am there—“I shall awake in Thy likeness.” In Psalm xvi. God is my portion; in Psalm xvii. God’s word is my safety. “By

the word of Thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer." In Psalm xvi. our Lord's thoughts turn to the "saints that are in the earth," as they do in His prayer in John xvii.; and He knew that they needed not only the laying down of His life, but His living care for them. Our love is likewise to go out to the "saints that are in the earth." Does God give us trying saints to deal with? Yes; but our Lord had trying ones when on earth, and He still has such. What said the apostle to the Corinthians, who specially tried Him? "I will very gladly spend and be spent for you; though the more abundantly I love you, the less I be loved." Let us seek communion with the Lord through His word, and not desire to make a Spartan kingdom of strong ones only.

## ON LEARNING OBEDIENCE.

MR. H. HEATH.—The path of faith leads through trial to the glory, and our Lord presents the full type of the stranger and pilgrim treading that path. The witnesses to the power of faith in Heb. xi. lead us up to the Author and Finisher of Faith in chap. xii., and in chap. v. 8 we see the obedience in suffering of the perfect Son. What a contrast with Adam's failure or ours! None other than the Father's equal could have so obeyed and so suffered. He took upon Him flesh (chap. ii. 11), but it was not *the flesh*. He was neither contaminated by His birth, nor did He purify His mother. In His humbling of Himself He took the place of a learner, and as the anointed Man He quoted Scripture, using it by the power of the Holy Ghost as a perfectly fit weapon.

What must have been the suffering of Christ at the constant presence of Judas? "I cannot sit down with that brother," says many a saint. Is there not a Scripture which reads thus—"Every one must be perfected as his

Master?" Suffering is our portion, but we may distinguish whether the suffering is for correction or for training. If it is for correction, there will be the rebellion of the flesh at once; if for training, there will be patient acquiescence. Paul's thorn in the flesh was not because of his pride, but to keep him from it, "*lest I should be exalted above measure.*" As our Lord learned obedience by the things which He suffered, so let us learn daily to bow to His will concerning us. "What lesson am I now to learn?" should ever be our prayer, remembering that our life-long privilege is obedience, in imitation of Christ. He now is ever giving to us the fruit of His obedience unto death, and we shall be able to give like fruit to others by our obedience and suffering.

#### ON SPIRITUAL HEALTH.

MR. STANCOMB.—There is a tendency in these days to ascribe all suffering in the body to sin, and to seek a fulfilment of the promise made to Israel, "I will put none of these diseases upon thee which I have brought upon the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that healeth thee." (Ex. xv. 26.) But this is only a form of return to Judaism. We are not in the flesh, but in the new creation; therefore we can glory in infirmities which put a weight upon the flesh. How does the sick chamber glorify God? By the patience manifested in the sick one, by the triumph of the spirit over the flesh. As saved in the spirit we wait for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. But let us take heed that we do not suffer from spiritual diseases; for these there should be healing, though there may not always be for diseases of the body.

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