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Bridal Aspects Of the Church

As seen in the Old Testament.

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FOREWORD.

It is obvious to the thoughtful mind, and by that expression one does not mean the natural mind unwrought upon by the Spirit of God, but the renewed mind (or what Romans viii. 6 speaks of, as the spiritual mind being life and peace)—it is obvious that the various types and shadows seen in the Old Testament were simply a foreshadowing of those grand and glorious truths seen in all their fullness and preciousness in the New Testament. Christ having become an "High Priest of good things to come," (Heb. ix. 11), has altered the whole aspect of everything for God and man.

In this present attempt the thought before the writer is not to enter into the controversial side of things, or the many ramifications of doctrinal truth, but rather to present Christ. The Scriptures reveal what God is in His nature morally, and the dispensations in which He glorifies Himself in the sight of the heavens and their inhabitants; they lay bare too, the secrets and state of the human heart, and at the same time unveils before it, things invisible. They give us too, blessed be God, the ground work of new relationships with Him, according to what He is in infinite love, unfolding sweetly and simply the plan of redemption based on suffering love. This and much more, infinitely more, the Scriptures reveal, and it is well to get back to the bedrock of the holy mind and will of God as thus revealed in His word. Various and discordant sounds fall upon the ear, so that many simple souls know not what to think, or what to do, and alas the sheep are scattered up and down, in fear and uncertainty. "My sheep hear My voice," however, is still our happy privilege to know, and the circumcised ear may still discern the Shepherd's voice, calculated to give peace, in the midst of the terrible confusion prevailing.

In presenting these seven viewpoints of the Church (so dear to the heart of Christ), it is the thought of the writer, that this book going forward, to use a simile, on a voyage of discovery, might be graciously used of God in developing bridal response to the love claims of Christ. There is a golden chain suggested in these types which, linked together, indicate how much He has loved us, for we derive all from Him. Eve, given to Adam before sin came into the world; Rebekah unfolds the heavenly side of the truth; Asenath tells us that Christ is depending on us to afford Him satisfaction, and that we are to be fruitful in every good work and word; Zipporah confesses His authority as Lord; Ruth delineates for us the value of union; Abigail says: "Christ is everything in a scene of confusion and despisal of God's anointed?" the Shulamite breaks forth and exclaims that relationship can only be enjoyed through communion.

One word more. It is the writer's very earnest desire that as these chapters come before us, the Scriptures themselves may be read in conjunction therewith, thus you, my kind and patient reader, might "prove all things and hold fast that which is good." 1 Thess. v. 21. We have ever to bear in mind that "the form of sound words" is the proper foundation on which to build, and that personal devotedness is the proper superstructure to erect thereon. Nothing should hinder us in our personal devotedness to Christ, inasmuch as we can follow Him, though we have not the countenance or support of another, at the same time we are all called upon to close the door with a firm and vigorous hand against the introducer of unsound doctrine. May the Lord keep us true to Himself in a very evil day, for His name's sake.

F. A. PERIGO.

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Bridal Aspects of the Church as seen In the Old Testament.

CHAPTER ONE.

EVE OR PART OF HIMSELF “ BONE OF HIS BONE.”

Gen. i. 26-27; ii. 20-25; Matt. xiii. 46;
Eph. v. 25-33; Rev. xix. 7: 8; xxii. 17.

THE importance of Eve as setting forth the Church given to Christ as the result of divine counsel, before the thought of the incoming of sin, is at once seen in the Scriptures read, for they carry us from Gen. i. to Rev. xxii. Paul says in Eph. v. . . “ This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.” The command which he addresses to wives, that they are to submit themselves to their husbands, immediately suggests the relationship between Christ and the assembly, not now as a subject for knowledge, but to unfold His affection and tender care. We know well that it was on the Cross that this giving of Himself was accomplished. But here, that glorious work is not exactly viewed on the side of its atoning and redeeming efficacy, but on that of the devotedness and love to the assembly which Christ manifested in it.

Eve is a true type of the church given to Christ, before the thought of sin came into this creation. Though perfectly distinct from Adam, she was a part of Adam, formed out of himself; a help-meet suitable for him, "and the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He (or builded He) a woman."

THEIR NAME—ADAM.

Gen. i. reveals the council chamber, v. 26: "Let us make man, etc.," then in v. 27 we get "... male and female created He them." We will now pursue this thought in Gen. v. 2. "Male and female created He them and called their name Adam in the day when they were created." What thought for sober contemplation. The Church was viewed from all eternity in Christ, her Head and Lord, as we read in the first chapter of Ephesians, "Chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world," thus early showing the importance of the Church as of divine workmanship as the companion of God's beloved Son the Man Christ Jesus—helpmeet for Him. In chapter 2. 21, we see in type the Church born through death, the "deep sleep" of Adam, corresponding to the death of Christ. For although looked at as one—"He called their name Adam"—the people of God are never looked at apart from Christ; they have no life in themselves, but are "light IN THE LORD." (Eph. v. 8) that wonderful epistle where we get outlined in all its preciousness the building of the bride. In this connection we may ask "why" the "side" of Adam as pre-figuring Christ? Surely because it was the nearest point to the heart. What deep and profound truth, and yet how blessed. "For this cause shall a man

LEAVE HIS FATHER

and his mother and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be ONE flesh." So the Lord Jesus in

the type left His Father, (only as to the glory scene). He never left His Father as to relationship and communion, and He Himself was, and is, ever the Son, hence the cherubim overshadowing the mercy seat (Ex. 25.) suggests on the one hand the complacency and delight of heaven in His wondrous pathway here and on the other, His Holy Person ever guarded.

The quotation above mentioned from Genesis ii. confirmed by our Lord in Matt. 19. 5. was used by Adam when he received from God the precious workmanship of the woman, his bride. They are very remarkable words, and one cannot doubt that Adam was divinely inspired to utter those words that the Spirit might through them enlarge to us what Christ has done for the church. For is not this what our blessed Saviour has done? Has He not left His estate in glory? Has He not come into manhood perpetually, that He might cleave to His wife. Incarnation is no incident, it is a divine reality, and in that sense our Lord Jesus Christ has left all to come into manhood. His incarnation involved His going down to the lower parts of the earth, involved also His ascending up where He was before that she might share with Him in every position He fills. And here one may remark that it is the light of Christ's love to the Church that alone can enable us to take up the relationship of man and wife and carry it through. As one views this thought from "the top of the rocks" one is led to exclaim: "What hath God wrought?" Man thought fit to cut Him off after having lived a third part of a century, but He lives in the freshness of perpetual youth as Man, and the companion of that glorified Man can have nothing less. And here, be it noted, the Church is not united to Christ viewed as the Son, but it is united to Him as the glorified Man, and as Man, Christ has length of years for ever and ever. As

divine, He is eternal in being and in person, but as Man He has years for eternity. At the end of the first Book of Psalms, we have man's thought (Ps. xli. 5): "When shall he die and his name perish?" But God takes up that challenge and at the end of the Second Book of Psalms (Ps. lxxii. 17) the word is "His name shall endure for ever."

Gen. 2. 25 would suggest that out of all the families, heavenly and earthly (Eph. iii.) there is a precious bond of nearness and intimacy known and shared by us which other families will know nothing about, and this I think because we have been given by the Father to the Lord Jesus during the moment of His rejection.

In Matt. xiii. 46, we have an indication of the valuation He places upon us. Earlier in the chapter, the Lord had spoken of the outward and visible results of His sowing; then in the parable of the tares, He sows good seed and through the carelessness and infirmity of men, the enemy found time to sow tares, and in truth this has been effected by the energies of Satan through bad doctrines, bad teachers and their adherents. This produces imitation, for "tares" are "darnel" which is a useless weed resembling wheat. Then we have the grain of mustard seed sown, which leaving its place in nature as a herb becomes a monstrosity to be seen and admired by men. After this we have the Kingdom of Heaven as under man's administration, likened unto leaven, and in Scripture, leaven is always used in a bad sense by the inspired writers.

But now the Lord sends the multitude away and goes into the house that in the privacy of the home He might interpret all things to His disciples (mark the word disciples, not believers merely), and then He opens up His mind as to the "treasure" and the

“pearl.” The treasure I believe to mean the New Creation and refers to God; the “pearl” refers to what He secures—His Bride.

The Treasure.—This new treasure induced the One who had discovered it to sell all that He had that He might gain it. In fact Christ forsook everything. He not only emptied Himself to redeem us, He renounced all that belonged to Him as man, as the Messiah on earth, the promises, His royal rights, His life, to take possession of the world which contained in it this treasure, the people whom He loved. And we as His people to-day express that in its present sense “If any man be in Christ he is a new creation.”

The Pearl.—Here we have the same idea but it is modified by others. A man was “seeking” goodly Pearls. Thus Christ has found in the church by itself a beauty and a value which caused Him to give up all to possess it. He bought no other pearls. But as soon as He sees it, its value decides Him, for He knows how to judge:—His mind is made up. He forsakes all for it. He looks at us apart from the extraneous side of things (the oyster) and sees us precious, selling all He had.

“BUILDED HE A WOMAN.”

This gives us Ephesians truth, where the building of the Bride is seen. One has thought why Ephesians, which is obviously the topstone of Paul’s ministry—the cream of his fourteen letters? But the appreciation of Christ forms a basis in the soul for all divine truths, and we find that while Judas valued Him at 30 pieces of silver (Judas of Kerioth, a small town in Judah reminding one of Judah himself, suggesting that his brother Joseph be sold for 20 pieces), the Ephesians, in Acts xix. 19 give as their appreciation 50,000 pieces of

silver. To such a company of Saints, Paul declared the whole counsel of God. In Ephesians ii. 10, we have the expression "Good Works." This is very precious. God, as it were, spreads for us the Royal Carpet, for us to walk. "Good works" were seen in their fulness, and beauty in Christ, but we are now to walk thus. "Good works" lie in the appreciation of Christ, Mark xiv. 6: "She hath wrought a 'good work' on Me." We who carry the secret of this glory, let us not fail to link it up with the shadow and suffering of Calvary. A word distinguishing Romans and Ephesians; Romans does not take us doctrinally beyond the plains of Moab, (Romans viii.), but gives us an appetite for the land, hence we have the Spirit of God and the Spirit of Christ. Now we cannot have the Spirit of God apart from the House of God and Temple of God; or the Spirit of Christ apart from the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ, and these are spread out for us in Ephesians.

Then Paul's ministry is to produce a CHASTE VIRGIN betrothed to Christ (2 Cor. xi.), and this corresponds to the present moment. John, however, presents THE BRIDE (Rev. xix.) as showing the thought of divine purpose and love.

In Eph. iii. we have the heart of the bride, and now we come to the purification side, Chap. v.: "Gave Himself" **yesterday**; "that He might sanctify and cleanse it" **to-day**; "that He might present it to Himself" **for ever**.

ESTHER.

How it reminds one of Esther ii. Esther was presently to be presented at Court, and for that, preparation was necessary, 6 months' oil of myrrh (His suffering love), and 6 months' sweet odours (His wondrous life), God's side, then things for the purifying of the women. (**Our** side, i.e., "Cleanse

ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit perfecting holiness in the fear of God.") There must be the perfect balance of things. How often we give 7 or 8 months to the oil of myrrh and 4 to the sweet odours which tends—such are our hearts—to make us sentimental. Then we might devote 7 or 8 months to the sweet odours, with 4 months to the oil of myrrh and this will make us legal and exacting. Be it remembered that the oil of myrrh gives us the **basis** of worship, whilst the odours (or spices) give the **character** of worship, for it is the spirit of another man, Christ Himself, that finds acceptance.

I do not think Esther is a type of the church, because Mordecai, who is a figure of the Lord Jesus in relation to His earthly people and about to deliver them, was cousin to Esther and not husband. There are, however, very sweet and precious features about her, which suggest what we should be in subjection to our glorious Redeemer.

The Spirit of God has been sent here by the Father, in order that Christ might be produced in His Own. He has been sent to indwell us that Christ Himself might be **before** us as Object, and **in** us as life. What then shall we say in response whilst there is still time? Shall it be true of us as of the professed saint's spoken of by the beloved Apostle Paul in Phil. iii. 18: "Enemies of the Cross of Christ . . .

WHO MIND EARTHLY THINGS" ?

Just that; no gross worldliness or wickedness, but earthly things, and verse 20 gives us the secret "Our conversation (or as it should read, citizenship) is in **heaven.**"

And Paul tells the Philippians even weeping. Imagine ministry like that, which affects the heart!

The Lord has a desire that there should be a bright answer to all the ministry that has come to us, and He is raising questions as to our associations and links here—not only with the world but the earth also. As we read in James, the wisdom **not** from above is “earthly, sensual, devilish.” The more spiritual one’s walk, the more limited it becomes as to things here, but there is a brighter spiritual outlook, and so one would be glad to part with still more on account of the precious compensations the Lord delights to bestow.

In Rev. xix. we have the marriage supper of the Lamb. “His wife (verses 7 and 8) hath made **herself** ready, and to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness (or righteousnesses) of saints.”

How can we possibly

MAKE OURSELVES READY

when the teaching of Calvary is that God has dealt with the whole question of fitness—sin and sins dealt with for ever, to the eternal glory of God’s holy throne—?

The answer is that this contemplates not **imputed** righteousness but **practical** righteousness.

One finds “imputed” righteousness set out in detail in Romans iv. Abraham believed God and it was counted unto Him for righteousness (v. 3). David also supports this testimony and speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom the Lord does not impute sin, to whom righteousness is imputed without works. This thesis is developed in the chapter, then we find (v. 22) “it was imputed to him for righteousness” . . . and to us also it shall

be imputed if we believe on Him that raised up Jesus, our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offences and raised again for our justification." Here it is not faith in Jesus, but in Him who came in power into the domain of death, where Jesus lay because of our sins, and brought Him forth by His power, out from under all sin's consequences.

By believing God, who has done this, we embrace the whole extent of His work, the grace and the power displayed in it. It is not only a resurrection of the dead, but

FROM AMONG THE DEAD

—the intervention of God to bring forth in righteousness the One who had glorified Him. By believing in such a God we understand that it is He Himself who, in raising Christ from among the dead, has delivered us from all that our sins had subjected us to; because He has brought back in delivering power Him who underwent it for our sakes, "raised from the dead by the glory of the Father." In Him risen, we see all our enemies conquered, and their power destroyed and this gives peace, just as by beholding their enemies dead on the seashore the children of Israel had peace by the shores of the Red Sea and could sing!

But "practical" righteousness flows from affection for Christ, and in that sense the bride is making her wedding dress now. **RIGHTEOUSNESS** affects my conduct, **HOLINESS** my state, and "without holiness no man shall see the Lord."

May I illustrate it from Exodus xxxv. 25. Here the women who were wisehearted spun with their hands the priestly garments, the tabernacle curtains and the vestments belonging to the tabernacle

system, in order that Jehovah might dwell amongst His redeemed people. Stitch by stitch this precious work was carried on in patience. Something that the eye of God could rest upon as suggesting some particular feature of His beloved Son for what He was personally and intrinsically are to be seen in us characteristically whilst waiting for Him. Thus they "brought that which they had spun, both of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, and of fine linen."

1. The "Blue" speaks of Christ as the heavenly Man, for it is the heavenly colour, and we are to be heavenly in character, walk and ways. John's gospel gives us the "Blue."
2. "Purple" is the reigning colour, and tells us that the true King of Kings and Lord of Lords is Christ Himself. If we are to reign in the coming day of glory we must learn what suffering for His sake is now. "If we suffer we shall reign." Matthew's gospel gives us the "Purple."
3. "Scarlet" is the true glory of man in contrast to all that is vain glory. This true glory, which belongs to Christ alone, has been borrowed by the religious man and will appear full blown in the beast and the clothing of the great harlot (Rev. xvii. 3). Mark's gospel gives us the "Scarlet."
4. "Fine Linen" would speak of the even texture of a life where everything is in perfect adjustment Godward and manward—seen so detailed and perfectly in Christ the Righteous One. Luke's gospel gives the thought of the "fine linen."

These things, worked out in a practical manner, will constitute the adornment of the bride in that

day, and how the Lamb will delight to see His wife thus arrayed. Yet all is of Christ and the result of occupation with Him: this means that her bridal beauty will be incorruptible and unfading. Thus turning to Rev. xxi. 2, we find that after the thousand millennial years of bliss, the Church, as the Holy City, **New** Jerusalem (in the millennium she is shown as the Holy City Jerusalem because everything is in accord with holiness, but now everything is **new**), we see her portrayed "prepared as a bride adorned for her husband." There is no diminution of the glory and freshness of beauty derived from Him, the wonderful Bridegroom lover. Although a thousand years have gone by—no sign of old age, no spot or wrinkle.

This, beloved, is our prospect, our portion. Well may our hearts say: "What shall we render unto the Lord for His goodness—we will take the cup of salvation." In other words, there is a call for us to be loyal and faithful to our Saviour and Lord, whilst He is still absent, and this not for reward, even though He has said: "I come quickly and my reward is with me." But just to hear Him say to each heart, "you were loyal for my sake alone." This should be sufficient for us.

Taken from His side,

Part of Himself.

"A great mystery," says Paul, "but I speak concerning Christ and the Church." Eph. 5. 32.

I remember hearing of one of the early brethren, endeavouring to put into poetry what he enjoyed as prose. He saw one morning a mouse creeping through a small hole into a barrel containing meal. After its feed it endeavoured to creep out again,

but was too fat. Thereupon he left on record for the saints, the following:—

“ If I myself deny
 What I would gratify
 I suffer bitterly.
 But sweet is liberty.”

Crude, of course, but the sense is there. We ourselves much need in these closing moments of the church's history on earth to deny that which only ministers to the flesh, that we may enjoy these precious things “ freely given ” to us of God.

In conclusion, one would add that the Epistles give to us the woman for the man, whilst the Gospels give us the Man Christ Jesus, in all His wondrous glory and perfections.

Hence, in the Epistles, we get so much of exhortations and warning in order that there might be correspondence to Christ “ Whom we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom ” Col. i. 28. Warning and teaching go together in divine things. How often we forget that “ we have this treasure in earthen vessels that the excellency of the power may be of God and not of us.”

But though we are called to a suffering path, we may secure the full support of heaven, and also God's own

Private Approval

before the public manifestation.

And as to testing here, one is reminded of that dear servant of Christ, Samuel Rutherford, who said: “ Believe Christ's love more than your own feelings; **your Rock does not ebb and flow though your sea does.** ” No wonder when he was dying he could place on record those sweet words:—

“ With mercy and with judgment,
 My web of time He wove.” . . .

CHAPTER TWO.

**REBEKAH: OR THE HEAVENLY SIDE
OF THE CHURCH.**

Gen. xxii. 23; Chap xxiv. 67; Col. iii. 1-4.

REBEKAH means "rope" or "noose," and corresponds to what Paul tells us in 2 Cor. xi. v. 2, that the saints of God are collectively looked upon as

A Chaste Virgin.

She thus presents the **second** type of the church, seen in the Old Testament. And here I would like to say that the New Testament is the key to the Old.

**In the Old Testament we have the New concealed.
In the New Testament we have the Old revealed.
In the Old Testament we have the New enfolded.
In the New Testament we have the Old unfolded.**

Keeping these thoughts in view, we shall get much help in the study of the Scriptures—the only book of which God is pleased to call Himself its Author.

Now the great gain of seeing the beauty of these types is to regard them from the standpoint of the man to whom they are united by marriage. Isaac then means "laughter," and typifies Christ as the Heavenly Man,* for after his death and resurrection in figure, we do not get presented his history like that of Abraham, his father, for a heavenly man has nothing further to say to this world, hence we are to take character from Christ. "Set your affections on things above—for ye are dead."

*Of course he also typifies the truth of Sonship.

“ The wood for the burnt offering ” laid on Isaac speaks of the body prepared for Christ. It was essential that in order to be offered up He should come in flesh. It was the first man who disobeyed God and dishonoured Him; and therefore it must be God's second man who should go in obedience and devotedness of love even to death, to there glorify God in the fullest way.

We know that for Isaac at the moment of his supreme testing there was a substitute, the ram caught in the thicket, precious type, of the Lord Jesus Himself detained here by the power of His affections for us, for a ram is a lamb matured. There was no possible way for Christ to avoid suffering, shame and death.

Paul says “ My little children of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you ” Gal. iv. 19. God's purpose is to bring in Christ for His saints; and no other man is to have any place. We are all glad to think of Christ's day coming in publicly, but what about the present?

Isaac is then weaned,

and this is a further thought that the Spirit of God would teach us, for immediately we find that the flesh (Ishmael) is present, and would mock (Gen. xxi.). This must be judged as unsuitable for God, and the right understanding of this will prepare for the truth of death and resurrection. Then in Chap. xxiii. Sarah (Israel in type) dies, and the necessity of the bride for the heart of Isaac is apparent. Well indeed for our hearts when we realise that the Holy Spirit of God has come down to take charge of Christ's interests and is searching this scene for individuals who will respond to the presentation of Christ and His glory. Faith comes by hearing, and as the ear listened to the story of her call, the response was from the heart, not indeed on the riches,

but on Isaac. And what confidence this gave her—Abraham himself, his mind and purpose, Isaac whose heart was empty owing to his mother's death, Eliezer as the devoted servant, all became intelligible and real and

All for Her.

She says: "I will go." What the servant did, was to unveil the mind of his master concerning Isaac. In the Gospel which reaches us, the veil is drawn aside and we can with open face behold the glory of the Lord; and as we look, we ourselves are changed. Glorious truth! We find that it is God in Christ Who has come forth to meet us; we find that the death of Christ has met the holy claims of God's throne, that righteousness is now imputed to us.

Gen. 24. 10: "And the servant took

Ten Camels,

of the camels of his master, and departed." I like that thought **ten**. We shall see in it a chief ingredient of these noble women, who are selected by God to typify the Church, for it means that full responsibility is assumed by the persons—types of Christ Himself—to whom they are united.

Eve, however, is omitted, as she was given to Adam before sin came into the world, and therefore is looked at as typifying the Church according to Divine counsel and purpose (see Gen. i. 26-27). One could hardly connect with responsibility "Bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh." "Rebekah, the **ten** camels;" "Zipporah, the **ten** commandments"; "Asenath,—Joseph sent **ten** asses and **ten** she asses laden with good things for his father." "Ruth—Boaz took **ten** men of the elders of the city to witness concerning redemption." "Abigail—David sent **ten** young men to Nabal."

“ The Shulamite—Solomon made **ten** candlesticks, and ten tables (i. e., candlesticks for light and tables for food).” Here one likes to connect the thought of the ten camels with the Lord’s Supper. He knows full well the necessity of our hearts and has made full provision for the outflow of our affections to Him hence:—“ My body given for you ”; “ My blood shed for you.” We feed upon that, and it forms the basis of our soul’s adoration of Him, Who gave not merely “ glory’s highest heights to Calvary’s depth of woe,” but **Himself**. He exhausts human language, for there is no vocabulary that can adequately express the graces of His Person—

The Altogether Lovely One.

Oh what a glad moment of rapture awaits us when for the first time we see Him and with hearts rapturous, say, “ Thank you.” And so the ten camels which were loaded with the “ silver,” “ gold ” and “ raiment ” and the “ precious things ” are now to be utilised for the desert. And were those gifts given that Rebekah might settle down in the wilderness? Oh no, but to quicken her in her way through it, an “ earnest,” telling her what lay beyond. We have “ the seal,” beloved saints, marking us off for God, and “ redemption ” even here and now. I often think of those sweet lines:—

“ A Holy Father’s tender care,
Keeps watch with an unwearied eye;
To see what fruits His children bear,
Fruits that may suit their calling high.
Takes ever knowledge of **our state**,
What dims communion with His love;
Might check our growth and separate
Our hearts from what’s revealed above.”

And so we turn to the closing words of our beloved Saviour and Lord in John xiv. 21: “ He that hath My commandments and keepeth them, he it is

that loveth Me." It may be argued what are those commandments since it can hardly be 'the ten commandments? No, beloved, not law's commandments, but love's commandments. I think that perhaps Paul's ministry gives us the thought, especially 1. Corinthians. We do well to listen to Paul in these days of lawlessness, both in the Church in its responsible aspect, and in the world, in regard to separation.

So Paul says: "I speak this of permission, and not of commandment" 1 Cor. vii., etc. They are love's commands and thus claim our profoundest respect and attention. They are meant to hedge our way in and protect us from the world. You will remember Shimei in David's day (2 Sam. xvi. 7) was certainly no lover of him, although enjoying the gain of his kingdom, and when, owing to David's weakness and folly, he was in rejection again through Absalom's pride and self seeking, Shimei took occasion to stone him and curse him. We are told that he was of the house of Saul, so evidently like so many of us, alas, did not change his man and yielded but feigned obedience. But although forgiven by David on his return, there came a day of reckoning, and David charged his son Solomon not to overlook it. This charge Solomon carried over and said that Shimei was to build a house in Jerusalem and abide there (corresponding to the Lord's commandments to us), for the day he passed over

The Brook Kidron

he would die.

At the end of three years, two of his servants ran away, and he forgot his covenanted promise and lost his life. So let us treasure the Lord's word through Paul. Now this is John xiv. 21, but in verse 23 we have a deeper thought, His communications, John's ministry in short, and this en-

sure the Father and the Son taking up their abode with us. So that I am to cultivate the company of the blessed Lord in secret that I may get His word; this will lift me into the presence chamber, and whilst still responsible, I can gladly carry out His desires from the standpoint of privilege. "His commandments are not grievous." The earthly people of God were on their way to the rest; typically they were heavenly and the desert lay before them. What is to sustain them? Certainly not the flesh pots of Egypt, but heavenly manna for a typically heavenly people. Alas, their associations were not of the right kind, and the "mixed multitude" fell alusting. The onions, leeks and garlic were remembered, and the provision of a gracious God forgotten. Onions leave a nasty taste in the mouth, garlic particularly so, not the sweetness and fresh oil of the manna. Food, suitable for pilgrims and strangers, must surely come from **above**, whilst onions, etc., have their roots here, and when fully developed, remain very close to the ground! May the Lord Himself deepen our exercises and increase our appetites for that which is of divine providing. Then in Numbers xxi. the desert gives place to the recognition of the Spirit, consequent on the lifting up of the Son of Man as enduring God's wrath against sin. Thus John 3. the lifting up of the Son of Man precedes John 4, the Gift of the Spirit—a fountain springing up. Let us ever remember that the brazen serpent could not

Bite Anyone;

thank God in the "**likeness** of sinful flesh and for sin, God has condemned sin in the flesh" Rom. 8. 3. This will lead me to One who is able to deliver me from the workings of that which has been condemned. Deliverance is in a **Person**. The recognition of the Spirit is found in their song, "Spring up O well, sing ye unto it." The fact that the

princes digged it with their **staves** indicates that it was only rubbish which was the obstruction. How slow we are to avail ourselves of the resources outside ourselves and resident in Christ. Romans viii. gives us a groaning creation and we ourselves groaning, waiting for the redemption of our body. "We know **not** what to pray for as we ought" but "we **know** that all things work together for good to them that love God." Then, blessed be God, if we cannot articulate our desires adequately, the Spirit Himself indwelling us interprets before God—then leads us on in true and loyal affection for Christ. Returning to Rebekah, we find that the house of Laban was to her what the flesh is to us with its hindrances. "Let her abide with us a few days."

In verse 24 Rebekah had established her genealogy. "I am

The Daughter of Bethuel."

This has to be done now, and to be traced back to Chap. xxii. 23, as standing in relationship to the Risen Man. This is not merely sinners deciding for the Saviour, but rather saints deciding for Christ in the sense that He is entitled to possess them wholly, and in free affection they give themselves to Him. I believe the moment has come for the Holy Spirit to say to us "What is your decision?" Our real love for Christ is determined, in the light of heaven, by our response. Blessing lies in our response "I will go." She had already received the gifts which speak to us so loudly of the interest and love Christ has given to us, that we might be adorned through ministry with all that is of God and of Himself. These gifts too are the evidence of His triumph and the proof that He is alive. Then there are the garments which are so descriptive of Christ. How He loves to view us as wearing that clothing and those jewels when we come to the Lord's Supper. This really brings us to the cover-

ing of the veil (v. 65) for the veiled or covered woman comes before us in 1 Cor. xi. preceding the supper, to suggest the comeliness of suitable conditions for the taking of the supper. How wonderful the supper is! Profound in its simplicity, simple in its profundity. How precious the language of the true Joseph,

“ Come Near Unto Me.”

In our early days we used to dwell on His dying to put away our sins; then as we advanced in spiritual appreciation, we found that He died to end all that was offensive to a Holy God; then we discovered that He entered death's domain and came out victoriously triumphant to let out all that was in the heart of the blessed God, and all that was in His own heart. It is good to think of the sin offering for it is most holy. Scripture lays great emphasis on the holiness of the sin offering; it is spoken of in the same words as the holiest of all. It is most holy, but it is connected with the solemn removal of sin. But the love which is brought in, is far greater than the sin which was put away—it is infinitely, deeply, precious, and it forms the bride, for as we drink into it we are formed in bridal affections.

The great challenge to-day is, which is to characterise us—

Philadelphia or Laodicea ?

If I move in my affections towards Christ and cleave to Him as the “ Holy and True,” the marks of the Philadelphian will be found, but if I am proudly boasting in my knowledge of the truth, regardless of its practical bearing on my walk and ways, I am simply a Laodicean.

Solemn consideration: Philadelphia stands for what will be **caught up**; Laodicea for what will be

left behind. I do not of course affirm that only the faithful will be caught up, for that would belittle the Work of the Cross which was perfect and complete, but to enjoy the Lord's presence to-day in the midst of His own, personal and practical holiness based on occupation with Himself, is an essential factor.

Shall we not say in spiritual energy "Hinder me not,"—"the time is short,"—"high time to awake out of sleep?" The Holy Ghost will never rest until His errand is complete: (1) response to Christ; (2) likeness to Christ; (3) brought to Christ actually. Then verse 53 gives us a beautiful thought in connection with endowment. "Jewels of silver, jewels of gold, and raiment."

Silver gives us the value of redemption—the shame, suffering, and heartbreak were His.

Gold: That most precious of metals, suggests the glory and love of God **known** and **enjoyed** as a present thing.

Raiment: We are to be clothed with Christ and thus be descriptive of Him. Note, too, that her brother and mother also had given to them precious things (verse 53). How this world itself has been enriched through redemption's glory being shed.

A word as to Isaac.

He Comes Alone,

suggesting that he would have undisturbed joy in meeting her, who had left all for him, at the eventide, when this world is careless and indifferent. One loves to connect this with the supper, His supper, when He Himself loves to draw near to us in the intensity of His love preceding that morning of joy without clouds. What a joy and reality it gives to our hope when we know that the One Who was, and

is, Saviour, for us will come again and at any moment. "The Lord **Himself** shall descend from heaven with a shout" (the commencement of the wedding bells). "She lifted up her eyes . . . and . . . saw Isaac."

Brethren, let us lift up our eyes and we shall see our Isaac. Let us also have our veil ready, for we are to be exclusively for Him—we are also to be a comfort to Him for Israel (seen in Sarah) is dead to Him to-day; and we are to be brought to Sarah's tent. The Spirit cannot dwell on anything but Jesus. He delights to present His Person and glory to the soul. He has gone back to His Father, having had given back to Him the glory He had before the world began, plus an added glory—an acquired glory—that of redemption. We shall never be more justified before God's holy throne than now, because the work presented by Christ to God on the cross

Was a Finished Work

and nothing could possibly add to it—it is perfect and entire, wanting nothing. And thank God nothing we could ever do can add to the lustre of it; we have but to stretch out the hand of faith. By the obedience of the One, many have been constituted righteous. Has He been received back by God? Then I also have been accepted in Him. And now affection for Him will constitute me a stranger in a scene where He was rejected, disowned, and put to shame. Now before leaving this precious subject, let me refer back to verses 1-4 of Chapter 24. It is very important to observe that the call and subsequent exaltation of Rebekah were founded on the oath made between Abraham and his servant. She knew nothing of this, although entirely the subject of it all. Thus Psalm cxxxix. 16 "In thy book all my members

were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." So we may say that the call, justification and glory of the Church are all founded on the eternal purpose of God—His word and oath ratified by the death, resurrection and glorification of His Son. This apprehended by us should give deep peace and security, since everything rests on the purpose of God and the work of His dear Son.



CHAPTER THREE.

ASENATH: OR "SATISFACTION AND FRUITFULNESS."

Gen. xli. verse 45 and 50-51; Phil. ii. verses 8-11.

WE now come to the third type of the Church in the Old Testament. You will have noticed that we have passed over Jacob's wives, Rachel and Leah, as they do not express the thought of the Church, since Jacob is a type of Christ in relation to Israel exclusively. When God met him at the beginning of his wanderings at Bethel, the promise was, "in thy seed shall all the families of the **earth** be blessed." So we have only the earthly seed spoken of. Of course, Jacob is also a type of a poor wandering believer seeking his own will and yet cleaving to the promises. As a disciplined saint, he could not of course suggest Christ. Rachel and Leah present certain features of the earthly bride in a coming day.

We turn then to Asenath. The name itself means "She who is of Neith," that is she has had a previous history in this world, but now she is to forget all that in being united to Joseph "He shall add." Her history, of which we are told nothing in Scripture, is now to be merged in his, and henceforth his character and ways and features are to be hers. And what a beautiful type of Christ is the One Who was rejected by his brethren, but exalted by God amongst the Gentiles. There are seven persons bearing this name of Joseph in the Word of God.

1. **Joseph, son of Jacob.**
Jacob means "Supplanter." Gen. xxv. 26.
2. **Joseph, Father of Igal.**
Igal means "He will redeem." Num. xiii. 7.
3. **Joseph, son of Asaph.**
Asaph means "One who assembles."
1 Chron. xxv. 2.
4. **Joseph, son of Bani.**
Bani means "He who builds." Ezra x. 42.
5. **Joseph, son of Shebeniah.**
Shebaniah means "Hidden of the Lord."
Neh. xii. 14.
6. **Joseph, husband of Mary.**
Mary means "Exalted." Matt. i. 16.
7. **Joseph of Arimathea.**
Arimathea means "High place."
Matt. xxvii. 57.

She is united to him, not indeed as Rebekah to the heavenly man, but to the

Administrator.

It is in what he is and became—the charm of his endured sufferings and personal—together with official—dignity, that we are to view Asenath. For she comes in after the sufferings have passed away.

Asenath was already daughter of a prince, but now she is united to one to whom both Jew and Gentile must bow the knee. Pharaoh took off his ring from his hand and put it on Joseph's hand, and arrayed him in a vesture of fine linen, and put a chain of gold about his neck. It is after this that Asenath is brought into view. The question arises "are we prepared to surrender to the One who is made both Lord and Christ?" Do we submit to His authority or is our spiritual outlook dimmed through carelessness of walk and the service of self? Books are a snare to many. I believe books do

more harm than anything else. People can read them in secret, and no one know anything about it. If you knew what many believers read, you would say they belonged to Egypt—that they were thoroughly in the world. There are many who would not think of going to a theatre or entertainment, and yet they read books that belong to that order of things. One is reminded of the christian traveller, who was packing his suitcase preparatory to a long journey, when he remarked to a friend, "There is still a little corner left open in which I desire to pack a guide book, a lamp, a mirror, a telescope, a book of poems, a number of biographies, a bundle of old letters, a sharp sword, a small library containing thirty volumes, and all these articles must occupy a space of about six by three inches." "How are you going to manage that?" queried his friend. "Very easily," was his reply, "for the Bible contains **all these things.**"

Let us now gather up the fragrance of Christ as seen in Joseph.

First:—

Seventeen Years of Age. Chap. xxxvii. 2.

All the youth and freshness of vigour presented at the outset of service. How suggestive of that precious One who having the word from His Father emerges from that secret place of retirement and communion to serve Him publicly. And glorious sight, the heavens open upon Him and the witness to the 30 years of secret communion is found in the Father's attestation "My beloved Son." The fine flour mingled with oil is now to be seen as the wafer anointed with oil.

Fine Flour (Leviticus ii.)

speaks of Christ in an aspect in which He can be the food of the saints, and particularly of saints viewed as spiritual persons in charge of the testimony and

service of God. Leviticus is the book for the priests. We lose a great deal by not paying more attention to the perfection of Christ in detail. We should make it the study of our hearts.

“Mingled With Oil”

speaks of what He was from His Birth onwards, “That holy thing which shall be born shall be called Son of God” (Luke i. 35). The true and holy humanity of the Lord Jesus is to be cherished and sacredly guarded by the faithful affections of His saints in face of the infidelity which abounds today. It is as essential to Christianity as is His Deity. Both, alas, are called into question in religious high places.

Summing up, therefore, we may say that Leviticus ii. teaches us “mingled with oil” would speak of the incarnation of our blessed Lord and the “anointed with oil” (v. 4). His public service. Then in v. ii. we are told that “no meat offering which ye shall bring unto the Lord shall be made with leaven; for ye shall burn no leaven, nor any honey, in any offering of the Lord made by fire.”

1. “Leaven” is the corrupting and inflating principle of self-importance which is never absent from man in the flesh. It was entirely absent from Christ, and it must be entirely absent from those movements of heart which have Christ only as their theme and substance. We present that precious and wonderful Person to God in praise and worship.

2. “Honey” represents the sweetness of nature as found in amiability and natural affections. Honey sometimes, it is feared, creeps into our hymns and prayers. Then Peter says, “Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not be unto Thee” (Matt. xvi. 22). This was a sweet sentiment, but it was nature, and the Lord discerns it immediately. There was no

savour of the salt of the covenant about it, and it was an offence unto the Lord.

Then the **second** thought of Christ is seen in verse 3, a

“Goat of Many Colours.”

Strikingly portraying the One marked off from His identification with Israel by His Father at that memorable baptism day. The Spirit alights on Him in the form of a dove, God thus immediately bearing public testimony to His person.

Thirdly, as Joseph was sent to

Feed His Father's Sheep,

so the Lord Jesus tells us “I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.” Thank God later we have His own recorded words “Other sheep I have which are not of this fold, them also I must bring.” Beloved saints, can you certify that you are amongst the “other sheep?” For the call is now, and immediate. His eye, the eye of the Good Shepherd, takes account of His sheep given to Him by His Father. Precious Shepherd, shall we not render now our tribute of praise and thanks for those thrice precious words of Thine? “I lay down My life for the sheep.”!

A census-taker asked a woman at one house where he called, how many children she had. “Well,” she said, “there’s Willie and Harry and Martha and—” then the census-taker broke in with “Oh, never mind the names, give me numbers.” The interruption and tone of it roused the mother’s indignation. “They haven’t numbers,” she said,

“They All Have Names.”

That poor census-man had got so obsessed by numbers, that he seemed to have forgotten that mothers do not number, they name. It is the glory of love

that it deals with individuals, and calls them by name, the picture Jesus gives of Himself in the tenth of John is precious to us, as we remember "He calleth His own sheep by **name** . . . and the sheep follow Him, for they know His voice." "I am the Good Shepherd, and I know My sheep, and am known of mine." The individual is not a number, but in the flock, and knows, and is known by, the Good Shepherd.

Then we read that Joseph brought to his father the evil report of the sons of the bondwomen—Dan, Naphtali, Gad and Asher. So we find Israel in the days of the Lord Jesus on earth under bondage, **morally** to God, and **politically** to Cæsar. Joseph is found "wandering in a field" reminding us of the lonely pathway of the Man of Sorrows.

Now I want to engage your thoughts with an important aspect of "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." They cast Joseph into a pit and sat down to eat bread.

Matt. xxvii. v. 36 gives us the antitypical moment. "and (the executioners) sitting down they watched Him there" (or kept guard over Him).

Then they lifted up their eyes and saw "a company of Ishmaelites bearing spicery, and balm and myrrh." And at the precise moment that our adorable Substitute was offered up, those three things came before God. All the fragrance of a life lived here exclusively for the pleasure and delight of His God and Father, is wafted up to Him as a sweet smelling odour. Secondly—The balm of healing, mentioned six times only in Scripture, Gen. xxxvii. 25, Gen. xliii. 11, Jer. viii. 22, Jer. xlvi. 11, Jer. li. 8, Ezek. xxvii. 17, it is so rare. At that exact moment we read, "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself" 2 Cor. v. 19. God Himself was present to receive the full fruit of the minis-

try of His beloved Son, through suffering, death and shame. Thirdly we have the myrrh, signifying the fragrance of suffering love for us. O mighty and precious Saviour, take our hearts and let the sunshine of Thy glory in suffering love reside there. Take our poor stammering tongues and secure praise to Thyself through them.

Now continuing Joseph's story, we find Judah leaving his brethren (or in New Testament language going out of fellowship) and becoming friendly with an Adullamite—chap. xxxviii.—and disaster pursues him. 650 years later it would have been in order, for David was in the Cave of Adullam, but if we go before the Lord, we have to experience discipline and sorrow. The history now is exceedingly sad, and two children are born. The wrong child has the scarlet thread. Pharez is the one through whom Christ came (Luke iii. 33). So we find that only God can bring good out of evil and balance things when they go wrong through unbelief and disobedience.

But God was with Joseph, and the period of his testing is over, yet how necessary it was, for he was to teach his senators wisdom—and one would here remark that all God's ways with us terminate in a Psalm if we learn the truth of things rightly.

The Lord had been with Joseph all through, and the man who has found the Lord with him in the worst conditions can act for the Lord in the best conditions. **What we have learned in weakness and suffering will be useful to us in the reigning time.**

The many and varied problems which affect us much spiritually, and which we have to face, involve the acquisition of wisdom which will qualify the saints of God to have the administration of the kingdom entrusted to them. "Be thou ruler over ten cities" is the principle, and is based upon the

fidelity to Christ of all that has been entrusted to us here and now, both as to light and as to personal devotedness. We are not so much tested in public, as in secret, as to what motives really rule us.

We find Asenath given to Joseph after exaltation and the power of the throne is secured to him. The mantle of his greatness is thrown over her. Then two children are born as the result of that union—Manasseh and Ephraim.

Manasseh,

“Made to forget his toil and his father’s house,” it is thus we are privileged to be a solace and comfort to the tender heart of Christ and cause Him to forget the despisal and the shame of His treatment by Israel, redemption’s toil is over and He can rest in our affections. Then the thought of

Ephraim

“Double fruitfulness,” suggests to us John xv. and Gal. v. In John xv. we have the higher side of fruitfulness, “Herein is My Father glorified that ye bear much fruit, so shall ye be My disciples.” To present the graces and excellencies of the Son (Christ Himself), to the Father in worship, is bearing much fruit. This is inward, and the result of a priestly state in the soul.

Gal. v. presents rather that aspect of fruit-bearing seen and expressed amongst men. Hence the fruit (not fruits) of the Spirit finds its true expression in life and peace and joy. What a privilege in a scene of lawlessness just to express Christ to men. “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” And if to the Egyptian He is “the Saviour of the world,” to our hearts it is “Revealer of secrets.” Thus the Lord Jesus is now engaged in that wonder-

ful work, revealing to our hearts His Father and God. It is all glory now with Asenath, who in her person foreshadows what will be the glory of Christ and His own in the day of their espousals.

The True Bride of Christ

will never undergo the sufferings of her beloved Lord, she will only remember from the glory as Asenath, the sufferings which He bore—that once suffering, but now glorified Lamb. She will be received not immediately after the sufferings, but after the glory has come. She will not be of the nation, even as Asenath was not of the nation, but will reign with Him over the nation—nay, more, over the Universe. Hers is the glory of the celestial. The glory of the terrestrial will be that of Israel.

A word as to Jacob—received from among the dead. It is amazing to me to think that he is able to bring out from his storehouse a little balm (chap. xliii. v. 11) (who but the Lord Jesus could thus preserve life amongst them to-day) so that although the veil on their hearts, and the wrath of God came upon them to the uttermost, nationally; yet they still are before God in remembrance; “a little honey” (the **sweetness** of the fact that they are the people of God, for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance); “spices and myrrh” (for what they are before God is based on the **work and service of Christ** and He thinks of the fragrance and suffering love of the One who made atonement for them when they are before Him in remembrance); “nuts and almonds” (how one praises God that the concluding thought is **resurrection**—as seen in the almond—and so all Israel shall be saved.

Jacob, whilst a type of Christ in relation to Israel, (in thy seed shall all families of the earth be

blessed, and so through Israel all the nations millennially will be blessed through them) is also suggestive of a

Disciplined Saint,

who has to learn that waiting on God is a far greater thing than acting for oneself. And so before he knows Joseph in his new and exalted position, his thoughts have to be adjusted. The testimony which his sons brought him was "the man spake roughly to us." There was divine wisdom in that, because they had covered up their great sin in their betrayal of the One who should have been the object of their tender regard. Thank God the Lord is always bent on dealing with the true state of our souls. He would uncover the root of things and bring us in uprightness to know His tender and loving heart. And how often do we like Him to speak **gently** to us, even when there has been much distance? But the work of God does not allow **patches**—it is perfect like Himself. He works in our souls to bring about suitable conditions. They had to be deeply exercised as to their sin and guilt, and so the first movement to bring this about was "He spake **roughly** to us" (Gen. xlii. 30). Like them, we are all glad to be in the line of blessing, to get corn from Joseph, but true enjoyment of Christ and His precious things is based on loyalty to Him, and His desires. And so Jacob says take "double money in your **hand**" (chap. xliii. 12), but this is not the true currency of heaven for service (the hand). The true currency is **love**. He wants our hearts. At his first movement towards them (chap. xlii. 21), they saw their guilt brought home to them in the person of Benjamin. Now a deeper lesson is to be taught them. The Cup was found in Benjamin's sack. And as Benjamin had no part in their guilt, so the One who knew no sin, who did no sin, and in whom was no sin, was made sin for us. The silver cup was found in His sack. The cup of

Gethsemane, the sorrows of Calvary, all were borne by Jesus, Adorable Saviour and Lord!

Our hearts may well say:—

“ See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flowed mingled down:
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown ”!

God was the God of **Judgment** at the Cross, but the God of **Peace** at the Opened Grave.

And now the work of grace manifests itself. Judah takes full responsibility on himself and identifies himself with Benjamin as the guilt bearer. In a coming day he will use the language of Isaiah liii. 4-6. Judah will go through the tribulation and will go through deep soul exercise also, whilst the two tribes who are recovered will take up the exercise on behalf of the nation of Israel. So Paul in Rom. xi. 15 “What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?” Then it will be that Joseph (the true Joseph) will make himself known to them, and will comfort their hearts by showing them that God was behind it all.

What a pity that Jacob commences again with his own natural thought “take double money.” How very slow we are to learn that the currency of heaven is the only currency in the Assembly, **Love**. The Corinthians were in a very low moral and spiritual state. Paul brings in the only restorative element. He puts down in their midst (for he was a true Kohathite carrying the ark) the Ark of the Covenant, “the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, etc.” I Cor. xi.

The

Ark of the Covenant

(or testimony) is an expression peculiar to the wilderness. It is never spoken of after the crossing of Jordan, as such, but “the Ark of the Covenant

of the Lord of all the earth" (Joshua iii. 11). Up to then it is shown as "the Ark of the Covenant." Testimony is what comes into witness for God in a scene of darkness and contrariety, and every element of that witness is embodied in Christ, so there could be no true or real testimony rendered except as He is held in our affections. Now in normal conditions the place of the Ark was in the holiest, and could only be contemplated there. In Heb. x. 14-22, if you have remission of sins, you have the freedom of the holiest, and this is open to every child of God quite apart from advancement in divine things. The "Ark of the Covenant" is Christ as the One in whom the love of God is made known, and also the perfect answer to that love in a Man. God would have that Person to be known and enshrined in our affections. The prominent feature in Joseph in this meditation is:—

" Bow the Knee."

1. The majesty of God in creation (Rom. i.) causes us to **bow the head.**
2. The love of God in redemption (John iii. 16) causes us to **bow the heart.**
3. The exaltation of Christ in glory (Phil. ii.) causes us to **bow the knee.**

Then in 1 Cor. xii. he presents the members of the body set in relation to each other. In Chapter xiv. we have the mind, so to speak, the nerve centre; but in Chapter xiii. we have

The Vital Fluid,

the blood (or love which is the real vital fluid). What a test this is for each one of us. Transferring the thought to ourselves personally can we say "I suffer long; I am kind; I envy not; I vaunt not myself; I am not puffed up; I do not behave unseemly; I seek not my

own; I am not easily provoked; I think no evil; I rejoice not in iniquity but in the truth; I bear all things; believe all things, hope all things, endure all things, I never fail." ? If these things marked us we should "neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins" (2 Peter i. 8-9). We are to "redeem the time for the days are evil." These precious heavenly fruits ever marked Christ down here, and we have been given His Spirit that they also might mark us. Lord Jesus, quicken that moment of Thy return—Thy coming for us; Thy judgment seat, when our education shall be finished, and when we shall be associated with Thee in a glory scene.

" We love Thee for the glorious worth
Which in Thyself we see;
We love Thee for the shameful cross
Endured so patiently."

Heaven registers our desires as surely as we utter them. I believe that as surely as there is a long list of names and history of God's earthly people, detailed in 1st and 2nd Chronicles, so certainly a loving God and Father delights to record the activities of His beloved children in this present scene, and is

Writing Up Our Histories.

in heaven, as assuredly as He once registered our names in the Lamb's book of Life. Hence the "cup of cold water in His name"; and the widow who put in two mites, when she could have retained one for the next day.

What a thought (Phil. ii. v. 10) that "At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things

under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Have we bowed the knee to Him now, recognising His authority? The thought involves heart obedience and not nominal acceptance of divinely constituted authority. The recognition of the supremacy of His authority over us as Lord means that we have to surrender our lawless Gentile selfwill. Unlike the Jew, whose mind is a legal one, having lived under the shadow of the Law for 1500 years, we, as having had a Gentile history, have never come under law, and therefore there is the greater demand that we should escape the lawless principle of evil in the world, and having an answering echo in our minds, by bowing to the supreme authority of the One who died for us to bring us to God, Whom we are called upon to serve acceptably with reverence and godly fear.

In conclusion, one notes with very great pleasure, that in all Joseph's sufferings,

No Murmuring Word

is recorded as having passed his lips. What an example to us in this day—how ready to murmur when things go awry, what pride which hinders us from confessing our sins to God, and our faults to one another, when we have taken our eye off Christ and consequently turned aside from Him, Who said: "Without Me ye can do nothing"! And how unlike Him of whom Joseph was so happily a type, and so strikingly a foreshadowing, in His exaltation and glory. We are to go in privately, but we are

To Come Out Publicly.

Christ's coming may be looked at in two ways.

- (1) **For** His own (1 Thess.).
- (2) **With** His own (2 Thess.).

1. **For His own.** This is so important an event that a special revelation was necessary, as Paul tells us in 1 Thess. iv. And His coming is the key-note to every chapter:—

Chap. I. Serving God and waiting for Christ.

„ II. Paul's Joy, for they were 'the fruits of his labours.

„ III. An incentive to holiness.

„ IV. It is the 'trusting place, and at **any moment.**

„ V. Body, soul and spirit to be preserved blameless.

2. **Christ's Coming with His own** in 2 Thess. is with a view to putting down all rule and authority, and for righteous retribution to the non-lovers of Christ. All believers **apart from the question of faithfulness or unfaithfulness** will have been translated before then.

Chap. I. We shall be His guard of honour then.

„ II. The brightness of His coming will destroy lawlessness.

„ III. We are to wait His patience.

“ Blessed are those servants, whom the
 “ Lord when He cometh shall find
 “ Watching: verily I say unto you,
 “ That He shall gird Himself, and
 “ Make them to sit down to meat,
 “ And will come forth and serve them.”

Luke xii. 37.

CHAPTER FOUR.

ZIPPORAH: OR "OWNING CHRIST AS LORD."

Exodus ii. verses 15-25; Exodus iv. verses 24-28;
 Exodus xviii. verses 2 and 12; also Revelation iii.
 verse 10.

ZIPPORAH " means a " little bird " and is a term of endearment. The word itself is a feminine one, the masculine being "Zippor" or "bird of prey." We all know how Balak, the son of Zippor, endeavoured to hinder the people of God from entering the land of His purpose, employing a false prophet to that end, but God had blessed them and Balaam had to add his Amen to God's blessing on a people redeemed. It is from this standpoint that I would like to present the thought of Zipporah. How important that we should seize the thought that we "dwell alone" and the "shout of a king is amongst us." It is the lack of this apprehension that creates such weakness and confusion. As we approach the truth of our calling from the divine standpoint, things will become enlarged in our souls. Take for a moment the thought of the "Lamb of God." In Genesis, we have it associated with an **individual**:—"My son, God will provide a lamb for a burnt offering." Gen. xxii. This is connected with Isaac. Moving on to Exodus, we see it connected with a **household**; Exodus xii. This I believe to be the house of Israel, and the four days the lamb moved about in the household is no doubt typifying the three and a half years wonderful ministry of the true Lamb before His death. Numbers finds a **people** journeying, so we have a morning and evening lamb established, Num. 28. 4, the life of the saints sandwiched be-

tween, so to speak. Then when the True Lamb is manifested, John triumphantly says "the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world," John 1. 29 (i.e. a world of lost sinners is in view for pardon and guilt removal). Revelation v. gives us the grand climax of all God's thoughts. Who could unravel those wondrous counsels and purposes of love, behind all the activities of the dealings of the blessed God to a Universe out of gear through sin having crept into His fair creation? The answer is, the "Lamb as it had been slain." He had the fulness of power over the earth—seven horns—as of God, and the seven spirits of God for government, according to God's perfection, of the whole earth. So that the "Lamb" of Rev. v. gives us the thought of a **Universe** of bliss. Then in Rev. xxi. 9 we see that as "the bride the Lamb's wife" we shall share His glory as over the Universe of bliss, just as Queen Mary shares in the dignity of the throne, through marriage to King George.

Returning to Zipporah, we find she is brought into view first, as having been delivered by Moses personally. We have to be

Personally Delivered.

before we appreciate the true Moses, and recognise in Him the divinely constituted authority. God had in His mind to free His people from the associations of Egypt and from everything servile, that He might be served according to the pleasure which His love found in them. And so Moses is viewed here as typical of Christ, the Deliverer of His people. His affections and interests were bound up with his brethren, and this feebly illustrates that of the true Moses, the One whose soul said to "the saints of the earth" (the remnant) and "to the excellent" (those who form His church to-day from Pentecost to the rapture):—"In **them** is my delight" (Psalm xvi.). How He loved to own as

His brethren those who heard the Word of God, and loved to do His will " (Matt. xii.). And note that the hand of the deliverer who smote the Egyptian, who was "smiting a Hebrew, one of his brethren," has the heart of the shepherd in the care and tender interest shown when he would have set two Hebrews at one who were quarrelling. It has been said by another that if it were not for

God's Preserving Care

and mercy, there would not be a saint on earth, such is the hostility of Satan and the world.

Rebekah may be associated with the heavenly man, and Asenath with the Administrator, but now we are called to recognise the

Authority

of the Lord Jesus Christ, as set forth in Moses. We are committed to that Man. Like the children of Israel who were "baptised unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea," so we now stand in relation to Christ as Lord. And how blessed to move spiritually as God would have us. The supper, for instance, is for all God's beloved children, for it is the **Lord's** supper, but there should be a state of soul along with that, corresponding to those supreme affections, and the long dark bitter night of suffering, growing in our souls. Thus I think the first start in our souls commences with 1 Cor. v. "Christ our Passover"—His death for me personally; sacrificially removing my sins from before a holy God. Then purging out the old leaven I am to be clear of unholy associations, for I am "bought with a price." Then in Chap. x. I am to learn good **assembly** manners, and not retain the bad manners which marked Israel as a people and brought down divine chastisement. This will prepare my heart for the wonderful privilege of the Lord's supper and its precious associations. For it should be a

moment not of refreshing merely, but of entering into His own thoughts. I believe it is a deep moment of joy to His heart, a moment when He loves to draw near to His own and impress upon our spirits afresh, and in a deeper way, fresh tokens of His love, writing the love of His Father upon our adoring hearts. "The Lord Jesus the **same** night in which He was betrayed." It is like the Ark of the Covenant, two thousand cubits ahead, in the dignity of His person, moving down to Jordan! Josh. 3. 4. What rest of soul this is, what joy of heart in the contemplation of Christ thus.

And now union has taken place—Zipporah henceforth calls Moses Lord in regard to her will, interests, and future associations. A son is born, "Gershom" meaning a "stranger here," and thus the result of Christ being enshrined in my affections, is that I shall bring forth that which suggests sympathetic affections. Am I a stranger here where my Lord has been refused His rights? That day will certainly declare it to be

The Day of Recompense and Glory.

Be it remembered the only thing man gave Him was an "accusation." And set up over His head His accusation written "This is Jesus the King of the Jews" Matt. xxvii. 37. And this was not only written in Latin, the language of the Romans, but also in Greek and Hebrew, so that the whole world has become involved in this murder of God's beloved Son.

God was silent, amazing thought, but He will shortly answer this accusation in public display. The man whom the king delights to honour will come into His rights and "every eye shall see Him"—and "they shall look on Him whom they pierced." In Ex. iii. we find God prepared to dwell among His people, and for this there must be a

state corresponding to it—hence the truth of circumcision; the leader (Moses) must first learn it in his own soul, however, and also in his family circle.

If we are to be in the truth of circumcision, we shall have to accept all that its spiritual significance means. Circumcision signifies the setting aside of the flesh as unprofitable for God, (they that are in flesh cannot please God, Rom. viii. teaches), and giving place to the Spirit. There must be this for effective service and testimony.

One is struck with the intelligence that characterised Zipporah on this occasion. She casts that, which is a token that circumcision has taken place, at **his feet**. In other words, **my walk** must be according to the fact that God is dwelling among us as His beloved people. Col. ii. verses 10-14. "Circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ," that is of course:—His death.

Then as leader, Moses has to learn that there is a spirit of opposition against him, both as to the serpent, and as to leprosy—the two incidents preceding that of circumcision in Exod. iv.

The Rod of Power.

was in Moses' hand, and we need that rod right to the end of the wilderness. It speaks of the **authority of Christ as Lord**, and the power of the kingdom in His hand for our defence from every evil power. This power invested in the hand of man becomes Satanic, and it was right that Moses should flee from it, for who could face evil and its power but Christ. We find Him in the four Gospels meeting and overcoming all the power of Satan, and the result of His subsequent service is that those who believe are able to "take up serpents."

In Moses taking up the serpent by the tail, we see a figure of Christ taking up all the consequences of man's sin, and Satan's power. Being made sin He goes into death, that He might annul him who had the power of death, and deliver those who were in bondage.

But there is a further thought. Our affections have to be purified, before we can "serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." Peter tells us in Acts 15 verses 8-9, "And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness giving them (that is, the Gentiles) the Holy Ghost, even as unto us; and put no difference between us and them, purifying **their hearts** by faith." A purged conscience and a purified heart go together. It is the pure in heart that see God, and we are exhorted to "follow righteousness, faith, love and peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." 2 Tim. ii. 22. This epistle was written by Paul to his son in the faith, Timothy, having in view the last days, and represents four foundational truths on which our being here acceptably, as the servants of the Lord, is based.

As to the power of evil (personal Satanic energy) we have the authority of God—that this has been dealt with by the Lord Jesus. The Son of God was manifested to undo the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8); He suffered and triumphed; the battle ground is strewn with the tokens of victory, and there is much spoil, and we are now taught by God Himself to take it by the tail.

Then I have to learn that in me, that is in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing—naturally

I Am Leprous,

but here again the victory has been won for me—my affections have been corrupted—my bosom—the seat of leprosy, so that my moral state has to

be met. Mark vii. verses 21-23, says: From within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, a wicked eye, injurious language, haughtiness, folly; all these wicked things go forth from within and defile the man. The leprosy that attached to Moses' hand, when taken out of his bosom, would tell us that man is corrupted in his affections, and must be cleansed and purified before he can be serviceable or pleasing to God. Self pleasing, self will, gratification of oneself, is moral leprosy.

“ No longer bondmen,

“ Through Thy death we're free.”

So God has come down to deliver us from bondage with a view to the free and happy service of sons.

Thus we may say that God is active in telling man of a power that will free him from all the power of evil, and also that He has made full provision for the purification of man's affections.

All this comes to light in the Gospel testimony, and if this leaves man still untouched and unmoved, nothing will cleanse him, and judgment is inevitable. Hence the second sign. And one would not shut up the thought to the sinner's side, but if as God's people we are unresponsive, we shall find that God has **the right to judge in His own house.**

The Third Sign

—water turned to blood—would indicate that if the two previous signs were not believed, judgment would follow. The first sign speaks of Christ in power—victoriously so—at the right hand of God; the second sign is the Holy Spirit given as God's witness to purified hearts down here. The third is a solemn warning to us. “For

this cause **many** are weak and sickly among you and some sleep." (1 Cor. xi. verse 30) is a very solemn note of warning and comes **after** the teaching of the supper. "Take heed to **thyself**; and to the teaching" was Paul's loving message to his son Timothy.

1 Peter i. 17 says: "If ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons, judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," and the reason is given, "redeemed" at such a cost "the precious blood of Christ." Surely we take the name of Father too glibly on our lips. He is holy, and as His children, we too are to be holy. The beloved Apostle Paul reached a divine judgment in his soul through considering the divine necessity of Christ's death (2 Cor. v. 14-15). "We thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that He died for all, that they which live, should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again." The veil is now rent, and the way into God's presence has been thrown open by the death of Christ. We think of His death as maintaining God's glory in the highest, as to sin. We can never think too much of this; it will become the theme of eternal wonder and praise for our hearts in our glorified state. We think, too, of the precious blood, and with rapture speak of its efficacy and atoning power. We can never think or say too much about it. But let us not forget that the mercy seat, the place of God's communing (see Ex. xxv.), has been covered by the cloud of incense. In other words, One has been found in the place of supreme testing, who has expressed in that place what was most fragrant to God.

His blessed Person has given character to His perfect and eternal work. How very little can we enter into, or speak of, the sorrows and sufferings of our Saviour and Lord. His was the loneliness

and sorrow which none could share, and with which none could sympathise, for none could understand. Yet in the midst of it all He ever presented to God sweet odours. As the true Aaron "both His hands were full of fragrant incense beaten small."

One great cause of weakness amongst us is the thought that our loving (and holy) God and Father holds **weekly** receptions only, but it is a **daily** truth. Jacob before Pharaoh tells of the "**days** of the years of my life." Permit me to illustrate another aspect of weakness. A believer may smoke, since Christendom is composed of believers, nominal and real; but a disciple **never**. Again I may be so foolish as to enter a Cinema, but by so doing I not only recognise Satan's world of pleasure, but help to maintain, by the payment of an entrance fee, his counterfeit system—a solemn thought and results in immeasurable loss to my soul. Not only so, but I am guilty of taking the Holy Spirit there, since He dwells in me,

A Divine Person,

not an influence, as some think. Precious Saviour, Thy brow was scarred with the thorns, speaking of the curse. Thy nail-pierced hands were outstretched in devoted service. Thy side was pierced that therefrom might flow the blood and water (blood to **judicially** cleanse, water to **morally** cleanse before a Holy God, Thy people ransomed and redeemed). All these things teach us to say: "Take Thou our hearts and let them be, for ever closed to all but Thee."

Gethsemane, Gabbatha, Golgotha, how they tell us the way love takes.

There are the

Two Gardens

for our contemplation. The garden where everything was lost (Gen. 3), and the other garden,

Gethsemane (John xviii. verse 1) where everything was gained. Both are of vital importance as showing family history—in Adam the natural, in Christ the spiritual side of things. In Adam we have: death, sorrow, sin and the curse through disobedience; in Christ, life, joy, righteousness and blessing through obedience. How it must have affected the Lord Jesus passing over

The Brook Cedron

to enter the Garden of Gethsemane, rendered a place of memorial as it was, through the spiritual emotions and exercises of His own people. We see David through his own folly and sin (2 Sam. xv. 30) weeping there. Then nine years afterwards (1 Kings ii. 37) Shimei ignored the specific commandment of King Solomon, passes over and meets the reward of his disobedience. Fifty years afterwards (1 Kings xv. 13) Asa burns his mother's idols there, saving the situation for the people of God.

How gratifying to God to see these features of Christ, displaying themselves before His coming, into this scene by incarnation, and when He comes, the word goes forth in heaven "Let all God's angels worship Him."

Then we find Hezekiah, two hundred years after this, destroys there, the brazen serpent (2 Kings xviii. 4) (type of Christ being **made** sin, and note the brazen serpent did not bite anyone) because the people of God were worshipping it. One hundred years pass by and King Josiah deals with the enfeebled and sinful state of the people by destroying all the idols including the chariots of the sun. (2 Kings xxiii. 4). How all these thoughts must have been taken fully into account by Christ Himself, about to accomplish a more stupendous and costly service—that of liberating all the saints from the birth of time to the end of the millennial

rest. For surely we shall have to wait for God's eternal day for the full purpose of God to be fulfilled—the new heavens and new earth wherein **dwells** righteousness.

But we must return to Zipporah. We find from Exod. xviii. 2, that Moses had sent her back, whilst deliverance was being effected, and truly we could not share a moment such as that.

“ The mighty work was all Thine own,
Though we shall share Thy glorious throne.”

Two sons now come into view (1) Gershom, (2) Eliezer, as the result of the deep intimacy between Zipporah and Moses.

It is well to take note of these two names, because they have to be characteristic of the Church during the period of Christ's rejection. On the one hand, we have to keep in the **“strangers place”** (Gershom), and on the other we have to **“trust God's power for everything.”** (Eliezer).

Eliezer “ My help is from God.” This surely is important to realise, if we are to go through the wilderness with all its experiences:—

“ In the desert God shall teach thee,
What a God that thou hast found;
Patient, gracious, powerful, holy,
All His grace shall there abound.”

Joseph also had a Gentile bride and two sons, but that sets forth things in a rather different aspect. Manasseh means “ forgetting.” “ For God has made me forget all my toil and my father's house.” It is the Lord forgetting His rejection by Israel in the joy of His exaltation among the Gentiles; and He becomes fruitful there. Ephraim means “ Fruitfulness.” Thus in Joseph's sons we get the thought of the compensation Christ finds among the Gentiles in the day of His rejection by Israel. But in Moses' sons we have the sense

He has of his rejection. Eliezer speaks of God caring for the glory and honour of Christ, and for the help and preservation of everything that belongs to Him. In our pathway here, we need the two thoughts developed in our souls "Piety" and "Faith." Both are necessary, for whilst piety means that God comes into my things, faith means that I enter into His things, before the actual moment of display.

We are told to "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Col. 3. 16. (1) **Psalms** represent the value of God's own truths to me personally in the **wilderness**, with all its exercises and trials, and I am taught therefrom; my spiritual history is enriched and this I shall take with me into heaven. This may be seen in the Psalms themselves. The first one or two verses give the key to what follows, whilst the remaining verses show how that result is reached experimentally. (2) **Hymns**: This is the productive result of what God teaches me in **assembly activities**, for He loves to place His own blessed impress then upon our spirits, and this produces a worshipping attitude, and finds its satisfaction in occupation with, and addressing, Divine Persons—the Father and the Son—hence the hymn as being the vehicle of thought. (3) **Spiritual Songs**: These are the outcome of one's own personal communion, finding expression in a song of joy and praise, interpreting for us in poetry, what we feel in prose; having as its **base**, scripture, but one's **own spiritual judgment**, being enlarged through communion. Hence we have, "teaching and admonishing one another." The result of this teaching by the Holy Spirit is, that the wonderful Person of the Lord Jesus eclipses everything else.

Moses becomes "the meekest man in all the earth" and Zipporah is united to that kind of man.

It is very remarkable to see this mentioned just as Aaron and Miriam call into question the Ethiopian woman whom Moses had married (Numb. xii. 1-3). The thought presented would seem to suggest the sovereignty of grace which has introduced into the blessing of Christ those who had no right or title to it. The people of God, whatever their privileges, ought to have recognised this sovereignty. Refusal to do this meant the postponement of their journey to the rest prepared for them by God. Where leprosy (sin in fleshly activity) is apparent, holiness demands cleansing and healing, before spiritual progress can continue.

It is beautiful to see the spirit of Christ manifested here, for Moses never sought to vindicate himself. We are united to One Who is "meek and **LOWLY** in heart," and Moses came short of that. He spoke unadvisedly with his lips, which disqualified him for the land of promise or purpose. How wonderful to notice in tracing the pathway of the Saviour, that there is not one word of regret as having made a false move—nothing to recall—but perfect in every detail. Well might a saint of God burst forth in delight in his contemplation of such a wonderful life: "Self likes to be served and thinks itself great; whilst love serves and **IS** great." His holiness made Him an utter stranger in such a polluted world; His grace kept Him ever active in such a needy and afflicted world; in dealing with sorrow which **lay outside**, we see tenderness and the power that relieved, but in dealing with the trouble of **disciples** we see faithfulness as well as tenderness. Thus the leper in Matt. viii. needs healing. He brings his sorrow to Christ and gets healing at once. The disciples in that same chapter bring their sorrow also, their fear in the storm, but they get

Rebuke As Well As Relief.

But though He may Himself rebuke His own, He will not allow others lightly to do so. So with Moses. Moses may be humbled by the Lord, but the Lord will not allow Miriam and Aaron to reproach him. (Numb. xi. and xii.).

Again Israel may be chastened again and again in the wilderness, but in the face of Balaam (or indeed any other adversary), He causes the testimony to go forth:—"No perverseness in Israel or iniquity in Jacob," neither will He permit any enchantment to prevail against them.

Balaam's prophecy, referred to above, is divided into four parts. It has Israel for its object; but, as to the principle of it, it applies also to the assembly. (See Numb. xxiii.—xxiv.). **The first prophecy** announces the prime importance of separation, "The people shall dwell alone" (Chap. xxiii. 9-10). **The second prophecy** declares that God does not repent. He has blessed them and they are justified. (Chap. xxiii. 19-24). **Thirdly**, we find (Chap. xxiv. 3-9) Balaam is turning his face towards the wilderness and sees Israel abiding in their tents. There he is made to declare the beauty and order of the people in the sight of God. **the fourth prophecy** (Chapter xxiv. 16-24) Christ Himself, the Star of Jacob comes for the glory of the people. For Israel it will first be marked by judgment, but for us, it will be to take us hence, in order that we might participate in the joy of His presence, and the marriage of the Lamb.

The Gospels portray the moral perfections, of the One worthy to ascend the throne, and come forth as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. We may well covet to enshrine Him in our affections. He was ten times more in private than in public. (30 years

old before he emerges into public service and serves 3½ years) and then always seeking His Father's face, spending

Whole Nights in Prayer.

What an example for us "leaving us an example" says Peter, "that we should follow His steps." "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" Phil. ii. 5. "Walk in love as Christ also hath loved us and hath given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour." (Eph. v. 2). "He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked" (1 John ii. 6). "Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God" (Rom. xv. 7). His love for, and to, us is individual, as well as collective. "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou Me?" is applicable to the individual soul under trial, equally as well as to the corporate body—His witness on earth.

There is a sevenfold glory in John iii. 28-36; the first is Himself personally. "I am not the Christ" says John; the second is "He that hath the bride is the bridegroom." How very appropriate that we should come next His person? Next to Himself in that display of moral and official glories of which He is the centre and head. May we hear His voice calling to us in His own tender inimitable way: Zipporah "a little bird."

CHAPTER FIVE.

RUTH : OR DEVOTEDNESS.

(Ruth iii. verse 7; Matt. 1 verse 5).

WE now come to Ruth, and this is particularly appropriate for us Gentiles, as she was never connected with Israel as such, but a Gentile woman brought into blessing, and eventually as the result of divine work in the soul, she becomes an ancestress of Christ (Matt. i. 5). She was a Moabitess and of an indifferent stock, for Moab's father was Lot—a type of the worldly believer. The very name itself “Lot” means “concealed,” and we have to go to the New Testament to even know that he was converted! “And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked” (2 Peter ii. 7). We are not told that he ever confessed Christ (one uses New Testament language) to sinners, and the only time he announced the truth of coming judgment, it was in the family circle, and then he was as “one that mocked to his sons-in-law.” So much for her antecedents, but now everything is to be changed for her, consequent upon

Deciding for Christ.

Ruth means “beauty,” and it is as such that Christ regards us. Poor Naomi, type of an evangelist who has got off the true line of affection for Christ, she moves from the place of favour and privilege with her husband because there is a famine in the land.

We are part of the returned captivity (see Ezra) in that God has graciously given us light from Himself: removed, so to speak the grave clothes (John xi.) that we might be for Christ, and the important

thing is, to "set the altar upon his bases." (Ezra iii. 3), that is to have things in right relation to God, to one another, and to the world; otherwise a right foundation in our souls cannot be laid. Ananias and Sapphira in Acts v. thought what a fine thing it would be to appear spiritual before the disciples, and to have a reputation for piety. But, solemn thought, they lied not to men, but to God, and disaster overtook them.

How slow we are to wait on God when the testing moment comes. Of what use is a fine name (Elmelech means "Whose God is King") and religious reputation, etc., apart from the moral state which alone is pleasing to God. And so they leave Bethlehem—Judah—"House of bread and praise" for Moab, a mere religious connection with the true people of God. Death intervenes, for a loving God and Father still pursues us with undiminished love and care. Naomi is to experience much more until she is brought back to the beginning of things, owning her true state (and surely for each of us that must mean blessing). Verse 6: "And she arose, she and her daughters-in-law—to return to the land of Judah." Beloved reader, can we, dare we, say that we have **never** wandered from the true path? Let us arise and return, for blessing is there. Then the gospel call is announced, both to Orpah and Ruth. The decision made is fatal indeed for Orpah, for she fades out of the picture. Truly she was well named Orpah, it means "Neck of an animal." Have we truly responded to God's call, and are we prepared to follow up divine light, communicated by the blessed God, and be led to untold wealth? Call me "Marah"—bitterness. O let us get down to the bed rock of confession. Bitterness, indeed: the fruits of the flesh, going down to the world, losing our Communion, grieving the Holy Spirit of God, what is all this but bitterness? Beloved saints of God, if not in com-

munion ourselves, we are disqualified from helping any who are low in spiritual life, or who are backsliders. I believe we should have more results for God if we had the companions with us that Paul had.

In Acts xix. 29, we are told that "having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia,

Paul's Companions in Travel;

they rushed with one accord into the theatre." Now Gaius means "joy," and Aristarchus "a good prince" (hence the word Aristocrat.) "The joy of the Lord is your strength" and unless we know that, we shall not be very effective in service, however small as men call it—for there is nothing small or mean in the service of Christ. But we also need "Aristarchus" because it is a question of dignity! And this dignity is not of the world, but of God's world. To be the servants of men is one thing, but quite another to move and serve under the eye of the Lord. "Ye serve the Lord Christ."

Think of Naomi enjoining Ruth to go back to her idols! The one great qualification for an evangelist is to know and enjoy the love of God, for is it not, that out of the abundance of the heart that blessing is given? John Baptist is contemplating the walk of the Lord Jesus, when he said: "Behold the Lamb of God," and two of his disciples detach themselves from him to find a centre for their hearts. God saves souls in spite of ourselves, and so Ruth comes into fellowship: "Where thou goest I will go . . . thy people my people . . . thy God my God, where thou diest will I die . . . and there . . . buried." So she enters into the truth of Romans and the real meaning of baptism, and all that is involved by it. Baptism shuts me off entirely from this world which is under judgment. We sing sometimes:

“ Unto Thy death baptised,
 We own with Thee we died;
 With Thou our life we're risen,
 And shall be glorified.”

This is to govern our walk and conduct here, because God has committed us to Christ, and baptism is my acknowledged acceptance of that. This world is not only a system where everything is carried on according to the will of man, but it is definitely antagonistic to God and His Christ. Satan's power and influence are behind it, for he is the God and Prince of this world. It is a great lawless system under judgment. SIN marks every feature of it—in the sphere of religion, politics and pleasure. Baptism plays a very important part in our life as believers, for whilst it cannot avail one jot to give us a title to heaven, or to take us “into favour in the Beloved”—the sacrificial work of Christ alone avails for that—yet if Christ is our righteousness and the grace of God and the free gift in grace by the One Man Jesus Christ has freed us, it is in view of our being identified with Him, and taking up the same relation to things that He has taken up.

And are we true to our baptism? Romans vi. means that we are dead to the sin system by which we are surrounded, that we might “**walk** in newness of life.” Then in Chapter vii. we are to “**serve** in newness of spirit,” and the power for all lies in Chapter viii. The Holy Spirit Himself “Where thou lodgest I will lodge.” Where is Christ now? In heavenly places only? He has ascended up far above all principality and power and might and dominion,” and is, for us, in the very presence of God, and we, made nigh in Him. Ruth said, “Thy God shall be my God.” The Lord Jesus says to our entranced hearts, “My Father, your Father, My God your God.” What an amazing privilege is ours? We can look up and

say: "Father" to God Himself. "Abba" means not only Father, but all the value of that relationship. And the basis of all, His precious blood; that blood tells of sin expiated, of evil dealt with truly—this we see in the cross and we feel it in our folly—but it also tells us of sin put away. Sin there was condemned not forgiven, sins **are** forgiven, hence the precious free grace of our God. Let us not deal lightly with that which is so offensive to a holy God; nevertheless there may be and is sore affliction and heavy chastening for backsliding, but not **wrath**. "The way of transgressors is hard" applies more to believers than unbelievers, because it is a question of governmental dealings with a God of holiness.

In the 1st Epistle of John, Chapter 5. 13, we have "These things have I written unto you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God." It does not say, "These **happy feelings** have I given unto you," but "these things have I **written** unto you." How good of our God to leave us in no shadow of doubt, and how often we confuse experience with what God says.

Thus my child's **relationship** to me depends on **his** birth; his **communion** upon his **behaviour**. There is nothing so strong as relationship. Nothing so tender and delicate as the link of communion. Let us put it another way;—

Christ's work and your = Stand or fall
salvation together.

Your walk and your = Stand or fall
enjoyment together.

The **Way** of Salvation The work of God
(Acts xvi. 17) the Son **FOR** us.

The **Knowledge** of The teaching of God
Salvation (Luke i. 77) the Father **TO** us.

The **Joy** of Salvation The service of God
(Psalm li. 12) the Spirit **IN** us.

"The Beginning of the Barley Harvest."

There are two harvests in Palestine: the first is the barley harvest, and the second, the wheat harvest. The barley harvest is the resurrection of Christ personally, whilst the wheat harvest is the resurrection of the saints.

And now she is prepared to be introduced to Boaz (Chapter ii.). What charm of manner marks him, "The Lord be with you," and their response, "the Lord bless thee." How happy are His servants in serving such a gracious Master. Tired we may be in His blessed service, but never tired of it. The strength and grace all come from Him, and of His kindness and goodness to us all, so unworthy of such tender concern on His part. "Come ye apart and rest awhile." How to-day we seem to hear those words from His blessed lips! And so Ruth gleaned, she sits down so to speak in the meeting and they are reading Colossians. She is finding Christ there. "The fulness of the Godhead dwells in Him bodily." "And ye are complete in Him." "To whom God would make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you (Gentiles) the hope of glory." Now she is learning that Christ is everything and in all. Would that we could travel so quickly in divine appreciation of our glorious Redeemer and Lord. Boaz "in him is strength" what a thought for our souls, and His eye is on us with thoughts and purposes of deep blessing (He loves us so), just as Boaz regarded the movements of Ruth.

Ruth knew Boaz by name, but she does not know her own relationship to him. She does nothing as yet like many a newly saved person who thinks only of what he has received from Christ, and does not yet know that Christ is his with all that that involves through a never-ending eternity. Naomi had never

mentioned him all the while they dwelt in Moab, yet he was all the time a "next of kin" and "a mighty man of wealth."

But there is much more to be learned. She is, so to speak, moved yet a form higher in God's school. She is to be ready for bridal affections, the marital relation is to be known and enjoyed, and so in the same chapter (verse 16) she gleans handfuls of purpose—Ephesians truth. And she gleaned

And Beat Out

what she had gleaned." And that is the thought; we have to **beat** out for ourselves what has reached us as light in the soul, lest we lose it. "The slothful man roasteth not that which he taketh in hunting." "Buy the truth and sell it not." The cost of purchasing the truth after conversion is ourselves—the displacement of self—and thus we shall not only value that which cost the Lord Jesus His life in order that we might have it, but we shall hold it all in relation to Himself. This is a most important principle because of our hearts.

The

Displacement of Self

is not produced through diligent reading or study or attainment, but simply by having that wonderful Person, the Lord Jesus, before my soul, the One who is "the chiefest of ten thousand" and "altogether lovely.

We are told, in Church History, that twelve months after the beloved Apostle Paul had left the Ephesian saints, they had left their "first love." They "wept much," sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more. The secret is out—the servant was more to them than the Master, Whom he served. And so in his letter to them, he suggests that which should

have protected them from the snare of the devil. "That the eyes of your **heart** might be enlightened." It is not sufficient that my renewed mind should dwell upon divine things, but it should be the intelligence of affection. The mind, yes, but also 18 inches lower down—the heart. Thus she reaches the final thought (verse 23) "the end of the barley harvest and of the wheat harvest." Wonderful thought, we are going to be raised "Christ the first-fruits (the barley) afterward they that are Christ's at His coming (the wheat harvest)" 1 Cor. xv. 23. We are just waiting that glorious moment. In 1 Cor. xv. we have six manifestations or appearances.

1. (Verse 5). Seen of Cephas (to restore him to the joy of communion again, then publicly restored. John xxi.).
2. (Verse 5). Then of the twelve.
3. (Verse 6). After that above five hundred brethren at once.
4. (Verse 7). Then He was seen of James.
5. (Verse 7). Then of all the Apostles.
6. (Verse 8). Last of all me also (Paul).

It may be asked is there a seventh? Yes, the next will be for us, His church. Oh, that our hearts might burn within us, as we meditate on this all profound truth. Like the supper, it is simple in its profundity and profound in its simplicity. Now we turn to what I call the divine way of union. She uncovers his feet (Chapter iii. 7). In other words, she must do violence to every natural instinct if she is to reach him in the seclusion of his own presence, and we, too, must put Him **first**—He must be **supreme** if we are to understand, value, and rejoice in the most wonderful truth of union with Christ.

The uncovering of His feet lies in the appreciation of His Person. We then love to contemplate

where those blessed feet carried Him in devoted love for us. And now it is "How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of those that proclaim glad tidings." Like the woman of Luke vii. we want to wash His feet with the tears of confessed sin, and to wipe them with that which distinguishes one here—all must be expended on Him.

Six Measures.

The heart has reached a place of rest now, we can speak to Him of redemption, for He has the rights of redemption, a very necessary teaching for the soul leading on to the marriage rights. Then He says: "Bring the vail that thou hast and hold it. And he measured six measures of barley." Before in the field with the others she had gleaned **one** measure, but now alone in His presence she is given **six**.

Do our hearts thus value Christ? Cultivating the precious intimacy of His presence and company, we gain infinitely more. Boaz sets forth the earthly riches of Him, who in His own time will be Lord and Owner of the earth. And the gleaning was but a sample of what she afterwards possessed when union with Boaz became an actuality. Beloved child of God, union with Christ is shortly to become a reality with us as to body, soul, and spirit.

There is infinitely more to be learned in the privacy of His company. And not seven measures as one would think—perfect in number. I believe the thought of six measures to mean that we are to go to Him for **more**. And is it so with us? "The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but they that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing." (Psalm xxxiv. 10). I believe that to be perfectly true, blessedly true, divinely true, to-day. "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Think of words like that falling from the lips of the Son of God Himself!

In Chapter iv. Boaz exercises

The Right of Relationship,

for he is her true kinsman. Only One could redeem us. The law could not. The ten witnesses in the gate summoned by Boaz were evidence that none but Boaz exercised the right. But for the Son of God, who loved us and gave Himself for us, no sinner could possibly have been saved. Blessed be God, He is our near kinsman. Did the children partake of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise took part of the same that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, and deliver them who through its fear were the whole of their lifetime subject to bondage. Not the nature of Angels, but the seed of Abraham. To Thee be all the praise! He places a value, a wondrous value, upon our affections to-day in a scene of lawlessness. Shall we deny Him His rights?

We have redemption at the end of the book, because I think everything pointed forward in the Old Testament to Calvary. Then we find in his redemptive act that Boaz purchases

All that was (1) Elimelech's.

All that was (2) Chilion's.

All that was (3) Mahlon's.

The meaning of Elimelech's name "Whose God is King"—a grand sounding title, is now to be held in power and not a formal cold recognition. Chilion means "wasting," and henceforth we are now to "Redeem the time for the days are evil." Mahlon—the former husband of Ruth, means "Infirmity," and we are brought to a throne of grace, where we may receive mercy (for we are still in the body) and grace to help in time of need. And in this connection shall we not remember that Christ is a sympathising High Priest. A merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God. He is

“merciful”—that is my side: He is “faithful”—that is from God’s side. His priestly activity towards us is ever to the end that we might be established and set for the will of God, His Father. And in the ten men (verse 2) we have the certificate that our blessed Saviour, in the right of redemption, assumes full responsibility.

“Thou blessed Son of God
 Jesus, our Lord!
 Hast bought us with Thy blood,
 Jesus, our Lord!
 Great was indeed Thy love,
 All other loves above,
 Love Thou did’st clearly prove,
 Jesus, our Lord ”!

How worthy He is of the outpouring of our heart’s devotion. He could easily dispense with our service, but our company, never! And yet He loves our service, and has indeed impressed us in His service. One often thinks of the incident of the milch kine employed to convey the Ark of the Lord from the country of the Philistines (1 Sam. vi.) to the land of Judah. “And they went straight on, lowing as they went.” Their calves were kept at home and they longed to feed them, but they were under divine service. So we, beloved, are privileged to render Him our best. I will not enlarge on it, as it is rather a subject for deep consideration in the presence of God, but I do add that the privilege of serving Him will soon be over. Satan is always trying to catch the people of God and draw them into worldly associations. If saints mix with the world, they do not sanctify the world, but they certainly defile their own garments. The result of worldly associations is that the confession of Christ has to be given up, for it will not be tolerated in the world.

A confessor of Christ must be a separated person. He believes on the One whom the world has re-

jected; he watches for His coming again, and in the meantime confesses Him. His works, his watchfulness, and his confession all flow from affection to Christ. Such an one will be confessed by Him before His Father, and before His Father's angels.

And now the grand climax is reached as the result of union. Obed is born, which means **"serving God."** And so she could come back again to Romans **practically** and experimentally having learned it doctrinally. By that I mean we are to "walk in newness of life" and "serve in newness of Spirit." The "imitation of Christ." will never make any one like Him; but feeding on Him will, because it nourishes the affections and gives power. And this raises the question: What are we feeding on, Christ or the world? **Loyalty to Christ** is the great test to-day. "Newness of life" and "newness of spirit" mean the forcing out of the old dead leaves of profession and hypocrisy.



CHAPTER SIX.

ABIGAIL : OR "SAVED TO SERVE."

1 Sam. xxv. verse 35; Jno. xiv. verse 14.

Phil. iv. verse 6.

THIS world is a wilderness wide," and this can only be true as our hearts are set on Christ and His things. We are now to consider the thought of Abigail in relation to David, which in figure very remarkably corresponds to the present moment and our own relationship to the Lord Jesus.

Abigail means "Gift or joy of the Father," and thus singularly represents the Church, given by the Father to His Son, whilst still publicly disowned and rejected. David personally presents two thoughts. First, a type of Christ as Head to His own, and secondly he presents the saint of God, who is chastened and disciplined, but subsequently overcoming, as the result of being under divine protection. But we will consider him as being a type of Christ, for it is thus that Abigail stands in relationship to him. We may view David as being anointed three times.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1st. In the midst of his brethren. | 1 Sam. xvi. verse 13. |
| 2nd. By the men of Judah in Hebron. | 2 Sam. ii. verse 4. |
| 3rd. By all Israel. | 2 Sam. v. verse 3. |

First let us note that Samuel anoints David with a **horn** of oil, in sharp contrast to Saul, who was

anointed with a **vial** of oil. A vial in Scripture is always connected with judgment, and is so shown in Rev. 16, but alas, Saul was unchanged, refusing to recognise the significance of it, and the fact that it became a proverb in Israel, "Is Saul **also** among the prophets," suggests to us that his spiritual outlook was very small indeed. In David, however, we find very precious features of Christ. First he was anointed with

A Horn of Oil,

indicating that Christ as the Ram of Consecration had passed through the suffering of death, and David at the very commencement of his service appropriates this in all its value. Hence, before he stands forth as deliverer, he has a secret history with God. "And David said unto Saul: Thy servant kept his father's sheep, and there came a lion (Satan) and a bear (the world) and took a lamb out of the flock; and I went out after him and smote him, and delivered it out of his mouth; and when he arose against me, I caught him by his beard, and smote him and slew him. Thy servant slew both the lion and the bear, and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the armies of the living God." David had felt the power of God's presence with him in **secret** before he came forth to present himself in **public** as the servant of God and of Israel. And as the result of this precious secret with God, David waits not for a sign, but simply says:

"Thy Servant Will Go."

No armour, forged and fashioned by man, could possibly be utilised in fighting the Lord's battles. With what contempt does David treat the ponderous armour of his enemy. How his sling must have

contrasted with Goliath's spear, which was like a weaver's beam. He could not have inflicted a deeper wound upon the Philistine's pride than by coming to him with such weapons. And what a mighty deliverance, gained by a single blow—no manœuvring of armies—no skill of generals—no prowess of soldiers. A stone from a brook, slung by a shepherd's hand, settled the whole matter. And so, by His death on Calvary, in that solemn terrible hour, when all creation was made to feel the reality of what was being transacted. The Cross was the field where the battle was fought and the victory won. Oh, shall we not, thus delivered, love the **Person** of the deliverer? Not merely the work but the Person. The work has been accomplished and the Person of the Christ stands out in all His glorious grace and beauty. It would tremendously help us if we were established once and for all in this:

The work of the Saviour is for the sinner.

The Person of the Saviour is for the saint.

The first anointing then is for service.

And so in the Person of the Saviour the Holy Spirit came upon One who felt, according to God, everything that was in a world of sin. And yet, marvellous to relate, He was precisely the same at the end as at the beginning. He could touch the leper and yet be undefiled and undefileable. He could come into contact with sinners, and yet remain unspotted and unsoiled; pure and holy. And indeed this was an absolute necessity, for no spot was to be on the offering, if it was to represent others before a Holy God. Then, too, He bore in His own spirit the load of every infirmity and disease which He removed by His own power (anticipating the judicial removal of such at Calvary). He groaned in spirit on the way to Lazarus' tomb in the presence of the desolation and death, wrought by Satan (John xi. 33: 35).

Jesus Wept !

The shortest verse in the Bible, yet full of heaven's emotions. The incoming of sin in this world finds its expression in His groan over the dead man, and His groan over the unbelief of that generation. (Mark viii. 12). But a deeper testing remained for Him. Gethsemane's dreadful hour, where all the terribleness of death, and of what was involved in drinking the cup, was known to, and experienced by, Him in anticipation with unutterable agony. In Luke, where we see Him as the praying man, the Holy Spirit could find perfect identification "The Holy Spirit descended in a bodily shape like a dove" (Luke iii. 22).

Secondly, David is anointed by the men of Judah (David's tribe) over the house of Judah (2 Sam. ii. 4), and this answers to the present moment. (You will notice Abigail is mentioned in verse 2). It is our privilege to crown the Lord Jesus in our affections to-day, and this corresponds to

David's Second Anointing.

Shortly there will be the third anointing, when He will come forth in that glad day of public coronation "King of kings, and Lord of Lords." Abigail, we are told, was a woman of "good understanding," she had **divine** knowledge. She knew David was the Lord's anointed. And so "we have the mind of Christ." We know Him as the one who is despised by the world, but loved of the Father. We know His purposes, His plans. The thought of Sonship means, that we may now enter into the Father's counsels and purposes. For the most part, all the brides of Scripture were represented as beautiful. "Fair and lovely" is the

Shulamite. Rebekah was "fair and comely to look upon." Of course, it must be, for we have derived **everything** from Christ. But let us pursue this history. "David was in the wilderness"—cut off for the present from receiving anything as to his kingdom—"when he heard that Nabal did shear his sheep." Nabal signifies "folly," and this answers to his character. He belonged to the house of Caleb; in other words he had a religious connection with the people of God, but his character was unaltered—only Christ and His personal touch upon our spirits can alter us.

I apprehend that a shearer is unsympathetic with the mind of Christ, whose service is unremitting in the presence of God towards His own. "I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves **enter in among you**; not sparing the flock. Also **of your own selves** shall men arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." (Acts xx. 29-30). This is the voice of the Great Shepherd speaking a prophetic word through Paul to the "under-shepherds," and it was

A Ministry of Tears.

Even the foundational things are being attacked in high places to-day. Then there is much "working of error" to-day. Spiritualism (or as it should read Spiritism), Theosophy, Christian Science, Christadelphianism, and many other plausible perversions of Scripture by which millions are being turned from the truth. It is a time of "many antichrists," and we know thereby that it is "the last hour." "The mystery of iniquity doth already work" (2 Thess. ii. 7), and so we know that we are in the perilous times, yet there could not be a more privileged moment than the present, because the devoted

and loyal heart, that considers only the interests of Christ, has not only the sympathy, but the full support of Heaven.

Let us beware of the "Shearers," there are many in the religious world. They would rob the sheep of the wool they possess. Instead of shepherding beside the still waters, bringing in a ministry of Christ which restores the soul, they would—under the master mind of Satan—take away every precious thought of Christ. Those I find whom the Lord used in the Old Testament were shepherds—and thus had shepherd-hearts. It might be observed that shearing is necessary, but our part here is to

Care for the Sheep

—"feed the flock of God" is the divine injunction. I was about to remark that a real believer could not possibly use the shears, but one is reminded of Judah in Gen. xxxviii. He joined with the others in selling his brother Joseph and left his brethren—in New Testament language he went out of fellowship—became friendly with the world—and visited his **sheep shearers**. His history is so sad that one cannot publicly read the chapter. Then in David's day, we find his son Absalom has sheep shearers (2 Sam. xvi. 23) and uses the occasion to murder his brother. Let us move away from those who would take away our warmth. Those who would bring in any other object than Christ. "By their fruits shall ye know them," says the Lord. "Many walk," says Paul in Phil. iii, of whom I have "told you often" "that they are the enemies of the Cross of Christ . . .

Who Mind Earthly Things "

just that, no gross worldliness. They do not throw off all semblance of Christianity—better far if they

did, and thus came out into the open. "Many walk." This would show a measure of profession. The persons here pictured would be most offended if you told them that they were not christians, but they do not want to take up the Cross, and to be practically identified with a Crucified Christ. Thus, like Nabal, the heart gets further away. "Who is David?" Ah, here was the secret of this worldly man's estrangement of heart.

He Did Not Know Him.

Lord, keep us cleaving to Thee in this, the moment of Thy rejection!

Let us link up the thoughts of Abigail's intercession for Nabal with John xiv. "In my Name" implies intercession for others—a higher thought than Phil. iv. 6, which is prayer in connection with our own needs. We have needs surely, but happy the saint who can be free from self-need (casting **all your** care on Him for He careth for you), to be concerned with the needs of others. This is true greatness. Thus Abraham interceded for Sodom, because of the righteous there. Doubtless he counted on the devotedness of Lot, to confess the true God and turn many to righteousness.

Thus the secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and this is a divine principle which is unalterable. "Without Me ye can do **nothing.**" Poor Samson (Judges xvi. 17), he serves Jehovah, but betrays his secret to a woman. Thank God the Philistines did not take

The Roots of His Hair,

and so there was recovery, but the cost was his life. We cannot trifle with divine things.

Samson, as a type, sets before us the principle of Nazariteship—entire separation to God—the source of strength in conflict with our enemies. The Nazarite represents the Assembly, or an individual christian, so far as they are separated from the world, and **keep** the secret of their separation. Samson's history represents to us the tendency of the assembly, and of the christian, to fall away from this position, and its resultant evil fruit. If we give up the cherished place of communion, we at once betray our secret. It will be useless then for us to say like Samson (Judges 16. 20): "I will shake myself. And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." Nazariteship, is seen perfectly in Christ, both as to His walk here below, and also as He now is, seated at God's right hand. "For their sakes I sanctify (or set apart) myself that they also might be sanctified (or set apart—the thought in the separationship of Nazariteship) through the truth." (John xvii. 19). In other words, we have been definitely committed by the Son to serve His God and Father, and His **affection holds us to that, during this present moment**, and shortly in eternal bliss. Gideon "threshed wheat" in secret (Judges vi. 11) just that, and he became the appointed deliverer for the people of God. "Go in this thy might"; "thou mighty man of valour."

GIDEON.

Gideon, earlier in this book, gives us more the soul history, which moves along the lines of God's leading, and this means strength where formerly there had been weakness. "Out of weakness were made strong" (Heb. xi. 34) is the Spirit of God's commentary when recording the exploits of the men (and women) of faith. But Gideon has to learn the truth of the fleece wet with dew and the ground dry

(Christ in life here manifesting God where everything else was dry and barren) the fleece dry and dew on the ground (Christ in death, vicarious and substitutionary, in order that life might flow freely for others). Thus the servant has to have the basic truth of this in his soul firstly and necessarily. Then for service in delivering the people of God from the power of the enemy,

The Cake of Barley Bread

teaches that it must be, **all Christ** personally. Finally, so that the light may shine, the pitchers are broken.—“We are to shine as lights in the world.” Phil. ii. 15, and here one would remark that only those are available for this precious service who do not bow down to refresh themselves at this world’s streams of supply.

What does all this mean, but just features of Christ, quietly serving the saints,—meeting divine approval. For there is such a thing as **secret** approval before the public approval is manifested. “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world.” Poor Nabal, he had his chance, but the record in verse 11 is “**my** bread, **my** water, **my** flesh.” Do we say this in effect to Christ? Have we reserves from the One Who loved us unto death, and loves us now on high “ever living to make intercession for us?” And now mark what follows: Nabal’s selfishness was used by Satan to ensnare David, and Abigail was the Lord’s instrument to deliver him. Instead of viewing things from the standpoint of the presence of God, David is distracted by looking at Nabal!

This is just what the enemy desires. When out of communion, the soul becomes distracted by looking at secondary causes. Confidence in God, however, imparts real dignity to the character, and superiority over all the petty circumstances of this transient scene. "The things which are unseen are eternal" is the alone worthy retirement for the soul, as this present scene presses upon one.

Thus Martha was entertaining the Lord Jesus, but was cumbered by **much serving**. Then she begins to complain, saying that Mary was attending too many meetings! Alas, what is man! In all the vicissitudes of David's history, he had never said what he says here (verse 22)

"The Enemies of David."

imitating Saul, who never recognised the battle as being the Lord's. Saul says "Cursed be the man that eateth any food until evening, that I may be avenged on **mine** enemies." (1 Sam. xiv. 24). And so Abigail says, "my lord fighteth the battles of the Lord, and evil hath not been found in thee all thy days, etc." And the effect is that David is recovered. Then the grand climax is reached in verse 35. David is restored in his soul, and says, "I have accepted thy person." Let us for a moment consider Christ as He stood at the bar of a poor sinful worm—the creation of his own hand—How did He conduct Himself? Did He call upon His little band of followers "to gird on every man his sword." Did he say of the man who dared to sit as His judge: "In vain have I imparted to this fellow all he has and all he is"? No, He looked above and beyond Pilate, Herod, Chief Priests and Scribes. In that moment He could say, "the cup that **My Father** hath given Me shall I not drink it?" This kept His spirit tranquil, while at

the same time He could look forward into the future and say, "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right-hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." The Millennial Kingdom with all its untold joys, with all its heights and depths of glory, glistened in the distance, with everlasting light and brilliancy, and the eye of the Man of Sorrows rested upon it in that dreadful and dark hour, when the scoffs and sneers, the taunts and reproaches, and the scourging by guilty sinners were falling upon His blessed Person.

Thus ought we to meet the trials and difficulties, the reproaches and desertion, of the present time. We should view all in the light of the "**hereafter.**"

And so the Lord, not David, smites Nabal, and he dies after ten days of reflection on coming judgment!

How this teaches us not to avenge ourselves, "but rather give place to wrath: for it is written,

Vengeance Is Mine,

I will repay, saith the Lord." (Rom. xii. 19). To seek to avenge ourselves is an indication that we have not been enjoying good food. Lack of good food means a poor constitution, and one is thus subject to every disease that is abroad! How like the multitudes, when the enemy has succeeded in every age, in alluring and intoxicating with the, so-called, joys of a world which lies under the curse of God, and awaits the fire of His judgment. "They that sleep, sleep in the night, and they that are drunken are drunken in the night." But the morning eventually dawns, when the wine (symbol of this world's joy and excitement) shall have calmed down, and then shall have come the reality of an eternity of misery, in company with Satan and his

angels. May we watch and be sober, serving Him whilst it is still to-day.

Such is the sad and solemn end of the man of the world, who is unsympathetic with God's Anointed Man. But what about ourselves as God's beloved children? We know the intoxicating power of this world's schemes and operations; we know how the human heart is borne away, as upon the surface of a rapid current, by political movements, religious movements, and commercial operations. All these things produce upon the human heart and mind an effect similar to that produced by Nabal's wine. And if our **responsibility** lies in urging men to "consider their **latter end**," the **power** for so doing lies in separating ourselves diligently from it.

Now Nabal is dead, and David is free to raise Abigail to the joy of his company; free to claim one whose name means "Gift of the Father." He sends his servants to Carmel, where she is. Do we remain at Carmel, which means a "fruitful field"? We are to be fruitful in "**every** good work and word."

Thus she is united to the man after God's own heart.

Thus we shall gaze for ever on the Saviour's wounds which He bore for us.

Illustrious Sufferer—precious Saviour!

CHAPTER SEVEN.

OR "CHRIST AS HEAD KNOWN AT LAST
AND ITS RESULTANT FRUITS."

Song of Solomon, Chapter iv. verse 12 to end.

vi. verse 13.

vii. verse 8.

Gal. iv. verse 6.

IN this our final chapter, the Shulamite comes before us in a glory and beauty quite alone. The word itself means "complete." We do well to ponder this thought, as very soon we are to be privileged to hear the voice of our Beloved calling us away.

"Return, return, O Shulamite."

Solomon's songs, we are told, were 1,005, but only one was permitted by God to be incorporated in His holy Word. We may gather from this that the experiences of the persons therein described refer to the love of Messiah to His earthly bride, and her response to that love. To-day we are privileged to take it up in a spiritual sense. As to how far Solomon, or his Shulamite, knew their import, we cannot say. But we may say that now the Spirit of truth has come, we are admitted into the secret of these things—we may know the things which are "freely given to us by God." Again, we note that the figure "ten" plays a very large part, for we are told in 2 Chron. iv. 7-8, that Solomon made **ten** candlesticks of gold, and **ten** tables, indicating, I think, that adequate provision has been made for light to shine,

and for priestly food. The Lord Jesus is presented as the One Who has met every possible requirement until the moment of rapture. And here one would consider David as having prepared much wood and stone, brass and iron, gold and silver, before his death (1 Chron. xxii.) reminding our hearts that the Lord Jesus before His death—and as the result of it—prepared a vessel for the reception of the Spirit. This was seen in His disciples when on that memorable morning of John xx., He breathed on them as the last Adam, and said, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit.”

His own Spirit is given to us that we may enjoy all that we are, as His brethren. He speaks peace twice. The first is the heavenly thing, the peace His presence brings. He would assure our hearts of a peace established in heaven for us, based on the service of His suffering love and travail. John gives the burnt offering aspect of the death of Christ, and everything went up to God as a sweet odour and ourselves accepted in Him. Only once is it mentioned in Scripture that the skin of the burnt offering was for the priest **himself** (Lev. vii. 8). So as we draw near to God in priestly nearness, we learn that we are “accepted in the Beloved.” The second peace, is what we enjoy as we go out again to the world. As the last Adam, He is a quickening Spirit (this is not what He becomes, but **what He is, in His own Person**) and as such He communicates life to us. This gives us the consciousness of the relationship we enjoy, as we have part with Himself. “And because ye are sons God hath sent forth the spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.” (Gal. iv. 6).

One feels so grieved as one thinks of Solomon, for in addition to “the gold, silver and ivory from

Ophir," there were also the "apes and peacocks." This, through lack of discernment, led, no doubt, to his downfall. May one venture to utter a word of warning. Let us beware of the

"Apes" and "Peacocks."

In 2 Kings vi. 1-7, the sons of the prophets wanted to enlarge their meeting room—right enough in itself, but for this, one not only requires special guidance, but must use the right tools. One must, in going forth to service, take care that one has made **one's own** the ministry received through others, and this can only be secured by getting alone with God. "Meditate upon these things, give thyself **wholly** to to them, that thy profiting may appear to all," says Paul. 1 Tim. iv. 15. And again, "Consider what I say: and the Lord give thee understanding in all things" (2 Tim. ii. 7). That is, even an Apostle can only enlighten—it is the Lord alone (the **Lord** involving submission to His supreme authority) who can make these things ours. And so the experience and public confession in 2 Kings vi. 5:

"Alas, Master, It Was Borrowed."

Borrowed truth never establishes the soul, neither is it intended to, but truth learned in God's own presence is material suitable for divine building. We may even have right desires and move to Jordan—the figure of death—but every bit of divine truth that shall be imperishable, and that we shall carry into heaven, is learned alone with God. There is much that we shall all leave behind when the Lord comes, such as mental intelligence and knowledge of the Word. May we all seek more earnestly, to make these things our own. But if we have failed, recovery

is still available for us, through the precious service of the true Elisha—Christ Himself—who serves us in glory untiringly and unceasingly. We are so prone to admire the spiritual energy and discernment of a brother beloved, that we immediately hasten to imitate him, his big words and the phraseology become ours. We “ape” him instead of waiting upon God.

Then, too, there is the “**peacock**” aspect. God has, in no uncertain measure, graciously vouchsafed us great light in these closing days of the Church’s history on earth, and the great danger is for us to be unmindful of spiritual pride—the “peacock.” It is the very thing Christ finds in Laodicea—the last phase of the Church’s responsible history—“Rich and increased with goods having need of nothing and knowest not that **Thou** (the word is emphatic in Greek) art wretched, miserable, poor, blind and naked.” How profoundly thankful we should be for His gracious words uttered at the same moment, “I counsel thee to buy of **Me** gold, etc.” How wise for us to take advantage of His closing word!

Now the relationship of the Shulamite is very ardently desired, and is very intimately close—“my sister”—“my spouse.”

My sister suggests **One** Father.

My spouse suggests **my** wife.

“ My Sister.”

It means that we are Christ’s brethren, given to Him by His Father. In John xx. 17 He speaks of them for the first time as “**My brethren.**” We can in some small measure understand the joy in His heart

as He thought and spake of them as His own, whom at infinite suffering He had brought into such an intimate relationship to Himself for the satisfaction of His love. They were His **brethren**: those whom He had brought into the divine circle in which He Himself was with the Father. It is not the thought that in partaking of flesh and blood, Christ brought us into relationship to Himself as His brethren, through coming down into our condition. He did not become **our** "brother" or even "elder brother" as some have said; but He has taken us up into His condition, and relationship, **as risen from the dead**, and as such He associates us with Himself as **His** brethren. In Hebrews ii. 11-12, we learn that being "of one" with Himself, through having been sanctified by Him, the Sanctifier, Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren. Infinite wisdom, and infinite grace, have thus devised a way to have us in this relationship in perfect suitability to Himself. We are shortly to be conformed to His image, but the present thought is that He might have many brethren to represent Him during His absence—Himself, as always, **the Firstborn of many brethren**.

Let us consider briefly the steps leading up to this: First the bride says,

" I Am Black But Comely "

in Chapter i. If she thinks of herself it is " I am black "—when she looks at her Beloved it is " I am comely." This is truly blessed. He tells me that I am " made " the righteousness of God in Him; that in Christ I am "washed, sanctified, justified." How can I deny this? Not only does Scripture say this of me, but the Spirit indwelling me gives me this blessed assurance. Yet she adds " I am black." The

Adam nature is precisely the same, and self judgment is a "sine qua non" for entering into, and enjoying, my portion in Christ.

In the light of the death of Christ, one learns to judge oneself. We see that what we are by nature is morally corrupt as to the flesh, and it has to be judged, refused and hated, not gratified. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts." Gal. v. 24. Note it does not say,

Nature, But Flesh.

One of the signs of the last days is "forbidding to marry" and "commanding to abstain from meats." We should ponder well the heavenly calling; it is the only thing that will give full deliverance from the power and influence of worldliness. Men may seek **abstraction** from the world in various ways, but there is only one in which to attain **separation** from it. Again, men may seek to render themselves **unearthly** in various ways, but only one way to become **heavenly**. A monk is unearthly, in a certain sense, but by no means heavenly; he is natural, but by no means spiritual, he is abstracted from the world, but by no means separated from it. God has called us not to monasticism, but to follow Christ.

It was because of our vileness that God poured out His holy wrath on Christ. The deeper my sense of what God did with sin on the cross, the more shall I see its vileness and seek to move away from self to Christ. This is what one might call the first form in God's school (for it is He who reveals the glories of Christ to us).

In Chapter ii. the bride finds that she is a

“ Lily Among Thorns.”

This is blessed, she is learning that she is an object of interest to Him, her Beloved. She is learning the value of His affections, moving, so to speak, to a higher form.

How precious this is, for it is like God's thought of Christ in the days of His flesh. He was as “ a root out of a dry ground,” and we are looked at as a “ lily among thorns.” When He was here, He could say, “As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world” and we are now to shine as “ lights in the world.” He is coming, skipping upon the hills. He speaks, Oh, charming sound! “ Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away.” Do we thus behold our Beloved in His supper? He says: “ Give Me your memories of My love, My sorrows, My death. Remember how I have suffered; remember Me as still absent; remember that I am coming again!”

The Jewish remnant will say in that day: “ Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness like pillars of smoke perfumed with myrrh and frankincense, with all powders of the merchant?” Chapter iii. 6.

They are to learn what the wilderness is, but they will have a “ place prepared of God ” Rev. xii. 6.

This will be very blessed for them whilst there experiencing suffering, for in making a covenant with the prince that shall come, they will find it to be a “ covenant of death,” yet they will prove the graces of Christ (all that the myrrh, frankincense

and powders will mean to them) until finally experiencing the wonderful thought contained in Chapter viii. 5. "Cometh up from the wilderness leaning upon her Beloved"—the grand climax to His love in service. We indeed as individual believers to-day may very well covet this privilege of so knowing Christ, as we learn the desolateness of everything here.

Shall we not say, "Sweet is Thy voice and Thy countenance is comely?" How this will cause us self-examination that there may be the ruthless judging of anything that would bring in reserve and distance. Hence it is "Take us the foxes, the little foxes that spoil the vine." She has heard his voice "the rain is over and gone." And for us beloved, the storm of God's judgment broke over Jesus, who in the moment of love's testing, said: "All thy waves and billows have rolled over Me." What a call there is, at the present moment, for affection to Christ and loyalty to Him, in the midst of so much disloyalty and treachery to the claims of His Person and work. Well may we sing:—

"Cleansed from our sins, renewed by grace.
 Thy royal throne above,
 Blest Saviour is our destined place,
 Our portion there Thy love.

Thine eye in that bright cloudless day,
 Shall with supreme delight,
 Thy fair and glorious bride survey,
 Unblemished in Thy sight.

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."

We are called upon by God to be loyal to Christ, and any moment may terminate our service here. In Chap. iii. v. 2-3 she misses Him. She is alone and in darkness. She seeks her Beloved and finds Him not. There is affection but no joy. She questions the watchmen in Jerusalem who go about the city. As soon as she passes from them she finds Him. And note the difference to that of Chapter v. Here there is no rebuke, for it is love's awakening, but in Chapter v. she is culpable, for the light of the revelation of John xx. is typified in Chapter iv., and if we sleep after that, can we wonder that our veil will be taken away? The watchman has to do with law and order and the maintenance of a godly walk. Hence "let us walk becomingly as in the day" is our safeguard against resultant discipline. We have to do with One Who is intensely sensitive. "Thou gavest Me no kiss" in Luke vii. would suggest how the blessed Lord takes full account of our state, as well as of our service. In Chapter iv. we have the sweet declaration of what she is in His sight, although she has been in the lion's den. Indeed our suffering and afflictions call forth all His tenderness and grace. It is from thence that He says: "Thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee." If we are prepared for suffering for His sake, we have laid in our souls a basis for a truth of transcendent importance. It was when Mary missed Him, and said **My** Lord, that He could announce that, which is the Assembly's peculiar portion,

"My Father, Your Father; My God, Your God."

What wonderful unfoldings to the heart when we miss Him, like Mary, and must have Him at all cost. "If ye then be risen with Christ seek those things that are above." Ask the spiritual man,

why does he abstain from things which he might enjoy? His answer is "**Jesus is absent,**" He would be like Mephibosheth, who "neither dressed his feet nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes from the day the king departed until he came again in peace" 2 Sam. 19. 24. Thus the test to our hearts to-day is, "Am I in sympathy with the rejection of Christ the absence of My Lord?" May our response be unequivocal and immediate. If we love the Name and Person of Jesus, the Son of God, the prospect of his loved, and longed-for, appearing, will deaden our affections to the things of this world. To the affectionate and loyal heart the thought

"What Harm Is There

in this thing or that?" has no place. Such language is far too cold and calculating. What an amazingly wondrous privilege is ours here and now, to say "Father" to God. "Beloved, **now** are we the children (or sons) of God" (1 John iii. 2).

"**My Sister.**" What can this mean, but as having One Father. Of course, He is ever exclusively the Son.

My spouse—

One suggests that this is a little farther than Paul's thought of being betrothed; this is John's apprehension of things. He shows us the bride, the Lamb's **wife**. This is the true supper moment. It is love's disclosure moment. And so we are for Him a

"Spring shut up, a fountain sealed."

No longer "the garden of Eden" where man in innocence could commune with God, as a faithful

and beneficent Creator and giver of all good; past too the garden of Gethsemane, where our adorable Saviour and Lord **anticipated** what He was afterwards to experience in reality—the wrath of God against sin. And thus John xx. 15. “She supposing Him to be the gardener.” What joy to the Lord on that first resurrection morning to come into His garden to “gather His myrrh with His spice, to eat His honeycomb with His honey.” All His, blessedly His! We, the fruit of His long dark night of suffering and shame and forsaking. How He delights to tell His friends, and then, oh, blissful moment, He comes into their midst and says “Peace unto you.” “Eat, O friends! drink yea drink abundantly.”

I know of nothing, personally, greater than this on earth, for He loves to draw near to us in the grace of His Person, the freshness of His work, the power of His suffering love—all are calculated to draw out every fibre of our moral being in response to Him, our thrice worthy Lord. “Awake thou north wind and come thou south.”

The North Wind

would speak of our hearts' appreciation of all that He endured, and the effect is to blow away all the dust that has accumulated upon the garden of our affections.

The South Wind

speaks of the tranquillity of divine favour that has descended as the dew of Hermon upon a heart cleansed from defilement. Thus the spices (the fragrance of His love permeating our souls) flow out. One likens it rather to John xiii. which may

be described as the vestibule into the sanctuary. He comes into our condition of things only to take us into His, to enjoy with Him, and to share, those affections that exist between the Father and the Son. It is all His. **My** honeycomb, **My** honey, **My** wine, **My** milk. He says to Peter, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with Me." (John xiii.)

Paul speaks of the Commandments of the Lord, but John gives us the manner in which they are taken up, that is, in the power of affection; in the devotedness of love. In John xiii. we get the blessedness of being in relation to the Lord Jesus, and the practical effect of feet-washing. There remains no cloud between Himself and our spirits. His love is strong as death, nay, stronger than death, for He has burst the bands of death. Then there is the reciprocity of affection. She describes Him, but His description exhausts every vocabulary; then comes that remarkable expression "Return O Shulamite." Yes in the thoughts of God there is that aspect of the Church which speaks of divine workmanship. "We are complete in Him." Col. 2. 10.

Peter had to learn this as a living and practical truth (Acts x. 16), and also when he reports to his brethren in chapter xi. 5, he says . . . "and it came even to me," How very personal is Salvation and acceptance! How essential to see that everything for God and man is in **Another!**

The sheet has come from heaven, and goes back to heaven. The verse preceding this S. of S. 6. 13 awaits fulfilment. There is shortly to come a moment when every redeemed blood-bought soul will say simultaneously "Come Lord Jesus," and He will satisfy immediately, love's desire,. The Holy Spirit of God is working for this, to present us to

the bridegroom. Shall we, dare we, defer the rapture by carelessness of walk? Has the blessed Saviour and Lord to say to us individually "Ephraim is joined to his idols, let him alone." May God awaken each of our hearts.

In Chapter viii. 8, we get "We have a little sister, and she hath no breasts," i.e., undeveloped as to affections. No doubt the dispensational bearing is Ephraim, which never had the same development that Judah received through the manifestation of Christ, and through all that took place after the captivity of the ten tribes.

At the present moment, alas, Ephraim is "joined to his idols." O may it never be that Christ has to say concerning us "Let him alone!"

Judah and Benjamin will experience the time of Jacob's trouble because those two tribes were morally guilty of the rejection of the Messiah, and I apprehend that the earthly bride will come from Judah and Benjamin. Judah, when perfected, will enjoy the favour of the Messiah. Ephraim will enter into the enjoyments of the results of divine intervention, after the sorrow. "I have heard Him and observed Him." Then they will say as invited by the Spirit of God, "From Me (Christ) is thy fruit found." Hos. 14. 8.

But it goes on to say, "What shall we do for our sister in the day when she shall be spoken for." "If she be a wall, we will build upon her a palace of silver, and if she be a door, we will enclose her with boards of cedar." And so it is left for you and me to carry on the work of Christ towards His own; to make room for the development of affections by bringing in the silver (redemption and salvation)

and the Cedar (the stateliness and dignity of our high and heavenly calling).

To recapitulate: the Assembly loved, redeemed and belonging to Him—having by the Spirit understood His perfections; having known Him in the work of His love, yet she does not possess Him as she knows Him. Nevertheless she sighs for the day when she will see Him as He is. And all the experiences of the way teach her to judge all that which weakens in the heart the appreciation of her Beloved. Shall not our hearts in unison with the bride of Canticles say, 'Make haste, my beloved, and be Thou like to a roe or to a young hart upon the mountains of spices.' I believe that the Lord Himself is waiting to hear that, from our hearts.

In Rev. xix. we see that when the great harlot has been judged, the Bride comes into view. The King of Kings and Lord of Lords is about to come forth in victorious power. But before He does so "the marriage of the Lamb" is celebrated in Heaven. The bride whom He has wooed, and won, by His suffering love (and by all that has been made known of Him by the Spirit, whilst He has been hidden in heaven), will be united to Him. The interval, between His death and His appearing, has been productive, through divine grace and power, of the bride. By suffering love He has won the heart of His bride, and in royal glory He will own and display her. In having His wife, He has the answer to what He suffered as the Lamb. The fact that she is viewed as the Bride, the Lamb's wife, would indicate that she has learned to be suitable in that character. And so we are called to be patient now, that our spirits might be educated for companionship with Him. Then will come the judgment seat of Christ, which will be preparatory for rule during the

thousand years of His blessed sway. During this time, Satan will be bound, but at the end of the thousand years he will be loosed from his prison and will lead, in a last final rebellion, against the Jerusalem on earth. This will eventuate in his final overthrow and also of those in league with him. He will be cast alive in to the lake of fire, where the beast and false prophet were cast a thousand years before, and then comes the closing history of this present earth. It is swept away before the presence of the Lamb. The Great White Throne will have upon it the Lamb; the dead, small and great, will stand before God, books opened and, O solemn thought, all not found written in those books will be cast into the lake of fire, together with death and hell. Then "The New Heavens and New Earth" and "God all in all." May these contemplations of the varied aspects of the Church energise our spirits and quicken our affections towards the "Christ Who loved the church and gave Himself for it."

We have now reached the final thought of all. Not as in Ecclesiastes xii. 13. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God," For it has been the earnest prayer of the writer that this happy state has long since been the starting point of every reader, young or old. For to trifle away our birth-right (i.e., God's acceptance of Christ's atoning death in our stead and our having stretched out the hand of faith, endorsing this) like Esau, is to eventually have to suffer the consequences of our folly. When too late he sought (the blessing), carefully with the tears of remorse, but found no place for repentance.

To such, I would say solemnly: "If you die in your sins you will most certainly be raised in them." So that to fear God rightly, it means that we are prepared to listen to all He has placed on record in

His own Holy Word. Firstly as to our fall by nature, as belonging to Adam's race: **Man** sinned, and redemption was necessary for the glory of God, and the salvation of men. Who could accomplish this? Man needed it himself: an angel had to keep and fill his own place and could do no more; otherwise he would not have been an angel. Who amongst men could be the heir of all things, and have all the works of God put under his dominion, according to the Word? It was the Son of God who should inherit them; it was their Creator who should possess them. He then, who was to be the Servant, the Son of David, the Son of Man, the glorious Redeemer, was Jesus, the Son of God, God the Creator. What perfect rest this gives the soul. It is the contemplation of His glorious Person that bows the soul in the presence of God in worship, praise and thanksgiving. God has given His Son to be **for** us, and His Spirit to be **in** us.

But, we were saying that, we have now reached the final thought of all, and of course this leads us to Rev. xxii. 17, "And the Spirit **and** the bride say Come . . . and whosoever will let him take the water of life freely." Blessed fruit of the unceasing service of Christ on high, and the Spirit below, we see the Bride not submerged in the world, not asleep, but in harmonious concert with the Spirit. Her heart expresses itself in that one word, Come! We admit that not all saints are actually joining in that cry. Hence provision is made by God that it should be so "And let him that heareth say Come." The Spirit will finish His work, for there will not be a single believer on the earth not saying Come! All must join, for all are going to be caught up together, at the assembling shout of the Lord to meet Him in the air (1' Thess. iv. 17). There are also thirsty souls. Their desires and exercises, wrought upon by God

Himself, have not yet been met. Only one answer for saint, and sinner, and that is **CHRIST,**

Then "whosoever will, let him take

the water of life freely."

The moment is **now**; because this is the final call of infinite long-suffering grace. Tender and gracious Shepherd; we love the grace that waits upon us and serves us so patiently, but oh, we want so much to see Thy face. Come quickly, Lord!

We are told that the moon is opaque, and its face is said to resemble a vast ruin of nature as viewed through a powerful telescope. Whence then is the light which shines during the night? Ah, she is facing the sun and derives all her shining from it. **The light of the moon is not her own.** Thus it is with the Church, (and the individuals who compose the Church) and Christ who is the Sun of Righteousness. How earnestly we should guard against everything that would hinder the reflection of the heavenly light of Christ in all our ways. Blessed truth that on the fourth day of creation (Gen. i. 16) the moon appears in association with the sun, and not only so, but **"He made the stars also."** Now the stars shine in other spheres and have little connection with this sphere, except that their twinkling can be seen. So all is in view of another day. Christ, as Son of Man, (the Man of God's counsels) will shine in living and everlasting lustre. His body, the Church, will reflect His glory beams on a restful creation, while the saints individually (the stars) shall shine in those spheres, which a righteous Judge has allotted to them, as a reward of faithful service during the dark night of His absence. (See also Daniel xii. 3). In His final word to His Church He says, "I Jesus" be-

cause He is writing a letter to **His wife**, but it is correct for us to address Him individually (and collectively too) "as Lord Jesus" because of who He is, "God over all blessed for ever."

May that day be hastened.
Come, Lord Jesus, Come.—Amen.

" O, Jesus. Saviour, Son of God!
Our hearts are won by Thee,
Who bought us by Thy precious blood,
That we Thine own might be.

With joy we contemplate the grace
Displayed by Thee down here,
Passed angels, to man's lowly race,
The Father to declare.

The Father's name, the Father's heart,
The Father's love to share.
That we with Thee might have our part
Thou Calvary's shame must bear.

God's righteousness, His glory, too,
Maintained upon the Cross;
Darkness and death, Thou passed'st thro',
Suffering and anguish, loss!

Soon heaven's best wine, without alloy,
Will cause each heart to thrill,
For Thou with Love, Life, Light and Joy,
The universe wilt fill.

We antedate that glorious Day,
Anticipate that rest,
When God's own glory Thou'lt display
And we with Thee be blest.

O Jesus Saviour, name of grace,
Our hearts by Thee are won,
We **long** to see Thee face to face
Amen! Lord Jesus Come" !

F. A. PERIGO.

