

BIBLE HERALD 1880

by Unknown

A collection of articles and writings from Bible Herald 1880, covering various biblical topics and Christian teaching.

59 Chapters

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A Dying Paul

2 Timothy illustrates the victory of faith and hope in Paul's soul. He was in prison, forsaken by brethren, apprehensive of the ill condition and of the coming apostasy of the Church; but all was faith and hope in his soul, sure and bright; and in further proof of this victory, he is thoughtful of others. Hope has purified him See like victory in dying Jacob and in dying David (Gen. 47., &c.; 1 Chronicles &c.) See it also in the camp at the close of their journey (Josh. 1-4). Faith overcame all accusing recollections; hope overcame all present attractions in Jacob and David.

The sense of the glory lies so instinctively on Paul's heart that he speaks of it as " that day " indefinitely (chap. 1:12, 18; 4:8). Faith and hope get their perfect victories in the soul of Christ (see Heb. 12:1, 2). See Him as dying (John 13, &c.; xix. 27). The Church is always to be thus (Rev. 22:17). " The spirit and the bride say, Come," &c.

By Faith Ye Stand

2 Corinthians 1:24

IN the first recorded intercourse between the Lord and Moses, after Moses had pitched the tabernacle outside the camp, when "the Lord spake with him face to face, as a man speaketh unto his friend," Moses was emboldened to ask, "Show me now thy way." Surely, as Moses himself afterward testifies, " His work is perfect, for all His ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is He;" yet His way of dealing with His people after their failure, is strongly contrasted with man's way, and proves that "His way is higher than our way," and blessed in proportion to its highness.

This way of God is remarkably carried out by the Apostle Paul in his conduct to the saints of Corinth. The manner in which he addresses himself to deal with them, distracted as they were by divisions, debating even the fundamental doctrine of the resurrection, and conniving at a gross outrage on moral decency, is replete with instruction. Before he utters one word of direct reproof, he seeks to establish their souls in the faithful grace of God. He thanks God for the grace given to them by Christ Jesus. He acknowledges their many gifts; needed indeed for the time, but not essential; because there would be no need of such gifts at the coming (or, revelation, marg.) of our Lord Jesus Christ. He leads their souls to Him to confirm them blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, and reminds them of the faithfulness of God who had called them into the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ. Surely this is the divine way. It is ever the way of man to reason from himself Godward, but the way of God is the reverse. He acts from Himself and for Himself. Christians are very apt to use the way of man, by reasoning from man to God—because the constitutional disease of Christians is unbelief. They are ready enough to doubt their own saintship; and when others would press on them their failures as a proof that they are not saints at all, they are thrown off their stability; and reproof and correction entirely lose their power.

In this Epistle, although we find the absence of direct reproof at the outset, it is remarkable that, in the very act of establishing their souls, there is indirect reproof. The Apostle, under the guidance of the Spirit, could at a glance survey their condition, and whilst he thanks God for the grace and gifts bestowed on them—there is a silent rebuke of their short-coming in the grace, and misuse of the gifts. The Apostle could not say to them as to the Philippians; "I thank God for every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all, making request with joy, far your fellowship in the Gospel from the first day until now." He found cause indeed for thanksgiving in the grace of God to the Corinthians, but none for their fellowship in the Gospel. They lacked the stability in the grace of the Gospel which characterized the Philippians. Pride of knowledge and pride of gifts, made them forget that knowledge (at best but in part), and gifts of the highest order would cease at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. It was Christ Himself, and not His gifts, which would confirm them blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ; and it was the fidelity of God who had called them to which they had to look, and not to the acquirements of their teachers.

After this (1 Cor. 1:10) the Apostle plainly tells them of the report which had reached him of the disorder among them, but he makes no direct mention of authority — till the end of the fourth chapter. "Now some are puffed up, as though I would not come to you. But I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them which are puffed up, but the power. For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power. What will ye? Shall I come unto you with a rod; or in love, and in the spirit of meekness?" Instead of using direct apostolical authority, he addresses himself to their consciences pointedly and yet delicately. Thus, in the case of the incestuous person, he mentions the crime which they were tolerating as unheard of even among the heathen. They were puffed up instead mourning. He would have them act in concert with him—but he does not disturb them from their standing, as being unleavened. In the matter of going to law before the heathen tribunals, he shames them that they could not find a wise man among themselves to settle their disputes, and that they had forgotten their high destiny of judging the world; and then very justly indeed insinuates that there was defect in their apprehension of grace. Wearied almost, at the low tone of their questions, he interrupts his replies in the seventh chapter by the solemn and weighty sentence, ver. 29-32. The liberty resulting from knowledge he denies not, but he contrasts it with the thoughtfulness resulting from love, chap. 8. To the question raised as to his Apostleship, he appeals to their saintship as the seal of it, chap. 9. To guard them against the danger of relying on outward ordinances, chap. 10., he refers to the conduct of Israel, with the delicate introduction "I would not have you ignorant, brethren." Again, after the admonition "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"—with what address does he allude to their special danger of becoming involved in idolatry by the desire of social intercourse. "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye what I say." In noticing irregularities in their assemblies for worship, chap. 11., he praises them, first, for their general attention to his directions (ver. 2); and when he has to advert to their gross disorder with respect to the Lord's supper, he commences thus: "Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not." In treating of spiritual gifts, where their very folly had marred their very end and use, he commences, "I would not have you ignorant" (chap. 12.); and in correcting their grievous ignorance of the resurrection, he introduces his discourse with the declaration of the Gospel he had preached unto them.

Thus, where there was the fullest consciousness of authority, so that he might have carried it with a high hand, using the rod, there was the patient exercise of grace. His object was not the assertion of his authority, but the awakening of their conscience, and the calling out their faith into exercise. The immediate presence of the Apostle at Corinth would doubtless have had the effect of silencing faction. He might have authoritatively ruled the many points in discussion, some bowing through real respect, others through fear; but this would have defeated his object. His authority, and with it himself, would have come in between their consciences and God; and thus he would have habituated them to bow to some present authority, and to feel it as a positive need, so that conscience and faith would never be exercised at all. The Apostle, with unquestionable authority, and the full consciousness of the possession of it, saw the danger of this and avoided it. The history of the Church has too plainly proved the reality of the danger, by Christians doing that which the Apostle avoided. They have themselves constituted an authority to which they bow, but by the acknowledgment of which they effectually hinder the exercise of faith and conscience. Is there an ordered and regulated society of Christians to be found which has not interposed its own authority, where the Apostle would not introduce his, and in which personal influence is not extensively used? If personal influence ever could be safely used, it surely might have been by the

Apostle; but he acted in a manner even to lose it, because his object was Christ and the real blessing of saints,—not himself and a party of Christians. The presence and influence of the Apostle had kept the Galatian churches from allowing the introduction of the Judaizing error. "It is good to be zealously affected, always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you." It was his presence, and not faith and conscience, which had kept out the evil; so that when he was gone, there was no real barrier against the evil. In the Philippians, we find the happy contrast to this: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure." Here we find faith and conscience in exercise before God. It was not Paul, but God who worked in them. Happy the condition of saints when thus their souls are kept by faith in immediate contact with God. They will then readily own any authority, and profit by any ministry which is of God; but they will not allow either the one or the other to displace God.

The delay of the Apostle in carrying into execution his promised visit (1 Cor. 4:18-21), had laid him open to the suspicion of fickleness (2 Cor. 1:17, of being bold when away, cowardly when present, and of trying to terrify them by letters (2 Cor. 10:1, 10, 11; 12:14; 13:1, 2). In the Second Epistle, he explains his conduct; it was regulated "not by fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God." He had to wait upon God and to do the work of God, in God's way and God's time. He might indeed apparently compromise his character for steadfastness in his purpose, but the grace of God and the wellbeing of saints were more in his estimation than his own character. His intention was to have visited them before this, that they might have "a second benefit"—and what hindered? Nothing positive—as when Satan had hindered his intention of visiting the Thessalonians (1 Thess. 2:17,18); but God "waiteth to be gracious," and he had to wait. Doubtless there was wholesome discipline in all this to the Apostle. His letter appeared to have had no effect in arousing the consciences of the Corinthians. It had been written out of much distress of soul (2 Cor. 2:4); and as he had received no tidings from Corinth as to how it had been received—this led to deeper anxiety—so as to make the Apostle for a moment to regret that he had written as he had done (2 Cor. 7:8). It was thus that he who had the fullest confidence, that he was "nothing behind the very chiefest of the Apostles," was made to feel in himself, that he was "nothing." But how amply was his painful experience repaid by proving the God with whom he had to do, to be "the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort;" and as the "God who comforteth them that are cast down." Had he either acted at the outset authoritatively, or had his letter produced an immediate effect, the burst of adoring gratitude, in the commencement of the Second Epistle had never had a place. He must needs learn his own personal unworthiness, and then he would be able to use his authority not only powerfully, but also discriminatingly, "having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."

How admirably does the Apostle meet the charge of fickleness, by urging that neither with him nor any man was "Yea" and "Nay." That was with God alone—"with Him there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning;" but man is properly dependent—it is his blessing and strength to be so—and for him to arrogate "Yea" and "Nay" to himself, would be mere obstinacy. And how many a man has persisted in his purpose when he has found it wrong, in order that he might appear consistent; but not so the Apostle. The Corinthians might think him fickle, but there was no uncertainty in his testimony, in that which he preached to them. "But God is true: our word toward

you was not Yea and Nay—for the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you, was not Yea and Nay, but in Him was Yea." It was not the authority he had as an Apostle which established him, but God; and the same God could establish them. He sought to lead their souls to God, and not to come in between their souls and God. "Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God." How readily will saints rest on derived authority, even when such an authority is only pretended; but it would be dangerous to rest on it, even supposing it to be real. God is a Rock, the only Rock, the only one who can establish. It was to this Rock the Apostle would lead the Corinthians. He solemnly calls God to witness, that it was to spare them he had not yet come to Corinth. There is patience with God; but there is severity also. What patience had God shown towards Israel during the long period of prophetic ministry, "rising early and sending " to them, " till there was no remedy," and then came " severity"—God showed himself in judgment. The Apostle had authority; but once and again he asserts that it was given to him "of God for edification, and not for their destruction." It was of God, and therefore not to be questioned. Had he gone immediately to Corinth, he must have silenced every gainsayer by the direct exercise of his power, which would have thus been used for their destruction. On the other hand, the Apostle dared not lord it over their faith. Submission to him personally might have hindered the exercise of faith in God. He would indeed help their joy by leading their souls to God—but he dared not to come in between their souls and God, for "they stood by faith." There is no place for faith in God where authority occupies the supreme place, which of right belongs to God alone. In his preaching, the Apostle guarded against the danger of the faith of his hearers resting "in the wisdom of man "instead of" in the power of God," and the like danger he sought to avoid in his conduct. Orthodox confessions of faith, and even valuable ministry, have often taken Christians off the ground of "standing by faith," which can never be ordered or ruled, although it may be greatly helped. An apostle could infallibly denounce error and proclaim truth—he could also authoritatively correct irregularities in the Church—but he could not command faith. In order to lead the disciples to stand by faith, he acts in a parental character, by seeking to get their souls into contact with God, and not to be awed into submission by the presence of apostolical authority.

It is here we discern the divine way and order. God, who alone is Omnipotent, declares His name to be " gracious and long-suffering," however despised His name so declared might be. The Apostle, in the consciousness of power derived from God, could even allow his power to be questioned, and himself to be insulted, rather than use his power "for destruction," when God had entrusted him with it" for edification." Where there is power in the Church pretended to be of God, but really humanly derived, it is ever accompanied with the impatience of personal feeling, so as to require immediate bowing to its authority. Such humanly derived ecclesiastical power has for the most part been exercised against Christ, not for Him; for destruction, and not for edification. Those who claim it take the very place which the Apostle dared not take, as lords over the faith of the saints, so as to render it impossible for them to stand by faith, by this interposing their presumed authority. But this does not lessen the great sin of the professing body, in allowing the claims of derived authority to supersede the authority of God himself over their consciences.

"By faith ye stand." Faith in a present God, able to meet the actual need of the soul, can alone produce healthful action in the saints. The exercise of apostolical authority to punish the refractory, infallibly to declare the truth, or to correct irregularities, was most legitimate: but if this was all—if contumacy was silenced, truth acknowledged, and decorum restored, by the actual presence of

the Apostle, this would afford no ground for their continuance in a healthy condition. When the authority which had produced the reformation ceased to be present, a relapse was almost certain to follow, or else (what has actually taken place in the Church generally) the establishment of an authoritative ministry. Christians have themselves settled that which the Apostle so anxiously sought to avoid, a formally ordered and recognized ministry, in order to produce the end which faith in God alone could produce. The Apostle used his authority for edification. He had gained his point when he had led their souls up to God, so as to act in the acknowledgment of the rightful supremacy of God over their consciences. He dared not put his authority in the place of their faith, He dared not transact that for them which he would gladly do in concert with them. He would gladly " help their joy." Many among the Corinthians would readily allow him "to have dominion over their faith." This is what the saints have in all ages desired. They desire to be led by men—men of God, indeed—but they desire to be led, and this when the higher leading of the Spirit of God is the privilege of each individual saint.

There is no faith in attaching oneself to a gifted teacher, but there must be faith in order to be led by the Spirit. The Apostle knew full well the readiness with which saints cling to the lesser and forego the higher blessing, and he desired so to use his authority for their edification as to lead them to a higher blessing—to stand by faith in God. He hesitated not to depreciate (if the expression be allowable) ministers, where the Corinthians were so ready to "glory in man." "These things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes, that ye might learn in us not to think above that which is written." Where there was authority unquestionably from God, and service the most devoted to God, the Apostle could see the danger of man displacing God, to the great damage of the souls of saints, " for," says he, " by faith ye stand."

" The man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people." It was fitting that it should be so, because it corresponded with his ministry, his glorious ministry. But when the excelling glory of the new ministry was introduced, it was the ministry itself that claimed regard, not the minister. The glory of the ministry was of that order that it could only be in safe keeping in earthen vessels, "that the excellency of the power may be of God," and not of the vessel. When the ministry exalts the person of the minister the ground of faith is lost—the man is admired rather than "the righteousness," and " the spirit," of which he is the minister. It is on the ground of that righteousness and that spirit that we have direct intercourse with God, and we "stand by faith." This is the great practical point. No present authority, however legitimate, no creed, however orthodox, no regulations, however wise, can supply the place of standing by faith, which is the ground of all healthy action in the Church.

The Apostle gained his object with the Corinthians; he had so used his power that it was for their edification, but it was at the expense of deep exercise Of soul, and at the risk of personal character in the very point where a man is most sensitive, so that nothing short of the consciousness of acting before God could have sustained him. The Corinthians, aroused as to their consciences, were turned to judging themselves before God. Their sorrow was godly, and it wrought so in them (2 Cor. 7:11 ad fin.), that the Apostle could write to them on the subject of a contribution for the poor saints (2 Cor. 8, 9.). The last four chapters of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians are very peculiar, but still bearing on the Apostle's own conduct, which appeared to some so questionable as to lead them to speak most disrespectfully of him (2 Cor. 10:1). His weapons were " not carnal," such as human wisdom, eloquence, power, influence, but " mighty

through God; " and as he had wielded them effectually to the restoration of many to the simplicity of faith, so, when the time came, these weapons would be found effectual " to revenge all disobedience." In this we discover 'an important " way " of our God. When faction and dissension have come in among Christians, accompanied by strife and personalities, they often seek redress among themselves—but this is not the way of God. He waits for a while, obedience to him is thereby proved—and when the soul is brought into its right place before Him the time is arrived for dealing with refractory or disorderly individuals. We must set ourselves right with God before God will set us right one with the other. This is the way of God, hard to us indeed, because of our readiness to view personal offense in a much stronger light than that of the heart's departure from God.

The Birthright; and the Blessing

Genesis 25:27-34; 27:30-36

GOD'S ways and dealings with His own people are marked by strong peculiarities, and distinguishing blessings. As a rule, we are not sufficiently alive to them, and fail to realize that the one great object of Christ was, not only to redeem, but to purify for Himself a peculiar people. There are two distinguishing peculiarities which mark us in these relations to God, —first, the birthright; second, the blessing. We find this to be so, even in nature. Ask a Scotchman what distinguishes him from any other man: and he will at once speak of his nationality, and tell you it is by his birth. To bequeath a blessing is beyond any earthly power to do, but birthrights are handed down from father to son. This is merely for the sake of illustration. There are, likewise, certain immunities and privileges peculiar to God's people. Another thing we find is, that our experiences govern us in these matters a great deal. A believer has, or has had, two sets of experiences; as a natural man the experiences of the heart are shown by their fruit, viz., discontent, envy, bitterness, malice, etc. But do you think that a Christian can be destitute of right experiences? Can he have knowledge of Christ, and be in communion with God, and yet have no corresponding experience; and is he not nourished by what he has got? A Christian stands here as "peculiar, "for he cannot be a discontented man, because he has got Christ; and not only this, but God makes this a realized power, and it produces experiences." I will dwell in you by my Spirit; "our bodies are only the vessel; but the Holy Spirit in the believer is the felt power. Where are we to look for our birthright? Not in this world, nor of man, for we are "born of God." Is not this peculiar? You are not merely something better than you were, but you must altogether refuse to acknowledge what you were as in the flesh, because you are "born of God." This is a distinguishing truth, and a fact, as you read in John 5:21, "The Father quickeneth." In Israel's days, many who were halt, and diseased, came to the pool of Bethesda, waiting for the angel,—but " My Father worketh, and I work," supersedes all remedial measures of the law; for this quickening power is the beginning of a new creation by birth. Is this not peculiar? People speak oftentimes of national creeds, and lean upon them; but a church-creed is not a life-giving power, whereas the word of God is a living word. "God gives life" through His written word. If we turn from all these considerations, to recognize others, and look on the great fact of God sending forth His Son, by the mystery of "flesh and blood at the incarnation, will not this give a new object for faith, and bring experiences and feelings into the soul by the Holy Ghost? If not, then we can have no adequate conception of God's unspeakable gift to us, and no experiences, except our own sinful ones, which fall to our lot through the first Adam and a corrupt nature.

God creates and forms new experiences in those who are in Christ. We may have conflict between the flesh and the Spirit, and between the old and new natures in us, but conflict should never discourage; on the contrary, it is a good sign. The Spirit of God in the believer makes him live out the new life, which he has by birthright, as one with Christ, and transformed from the world. It is like the steam-power overcoming everything which is contrary, whether winds or waves, and the vessel reaching its port depends on it. Our right by birth is as sons of God, and heirs, and the

pathway is to Christ at the right hand of God in glory. It is He who worketh in us to will and to do, and the Spirit is the power which leads us along through all the difficulties of the way; they only prove the mighty power which has surmounted them, when at their highest point of danger. Divine life in Christ is now the life; and our being partakers of His nature makes experiences in us of a new character. In this world, and amongst the generations of men, all the cultivation is given to the mind; they do not cultivate the heart. In Proverbs, I see: "My son, give me thy heart." Nothing here masters the heart; for how can man grapple with his own heart? It is God's prerogative, and God takes this up. "Christ dwelling in the heart by faith," and "Christ in you the hope of glory," are our birthrights by the effectual grace of God our Father. "Strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man" (Eph.), must produce many experiences of a new and right sort. The Spirit resists the lusts and desires of the flesh, and of the mind, and the bad nature; but here it is more. We have eternal life "to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." We are likewise strengthened with might by His Spirit to comprehend, etc., and to know the love of Christ; this is a new history, and it is our birthright. If we lose sight of our birth, and rights-by-birth through grace, and begin to look at ourselves, Satan says, Do you think this is your portion, are you pure and lovely? But the believer looks at what Christ is, and we behold ourselves in His comeliness, and we are blessed according to the Father's love to Him. Nothing was too high for Christ; He is set at the right hand of the Father, and we are joint-heirs with Him. This is, then, your birthright, else you deny the love and grace of the Father, and you deny the efficacy of the blood of Christ, and the witness in you by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is not by the will of the flesh, nor by man, nor of men, that we get our own right, for they are Christ's rights, and His alone,—and this is a distinction. It is a great comfort that God insists on this with us, as the result of our redemption. We are spoken to as those who are "bought with the blood of Christ;" we are not our own, and belong to God; our bodies are His. All these new and divine rights produce heavenly feelings and affections (as they well may) in the believer's heart, supplied through the Holy Spirit. "It has not entered into the heart of man, etc.,.... but God has revealed it by his Spirit." Moreover, the anchor to our souls is inside the veil; and when tossed up and down by the wind and waves, or by the wear and tear of the wilderness journey, we look where the forerunner has for us entered, inside the veil, and this hope is the anchor of the believer. There may be rough and stormy seas, but faith and hope work out their salvation by means of them, like a gallant ship which runs out her anchor in proof thereof, and swings quietly, and peacefully thereby. "We look at things unseen, knowing that things seen are temporal." If you drop these blood-bought peculiarities, you must take up with mere earthly experiences; and the heavenly ones will not govern you, and characterize you, and, may be, will not occupy you.

In this 27 chapter, we see that Jacob and Rebekah valued so greatly the birthright and the blessing, that they falsified themselves to obtain them from Isaac. What a rebuke is this to us, it may be—if we ask, "How do we value that which we rightly and lawfully possess?" In verse 29 of the 25. chapter, Esau is guided by His own present experiences, for he was faint, and at the point to, die;—whereas his brother Jacob's heart was set upon the birthright, though Jacob acted wrongly as a supplanter; and had he been patient, God would have given the birthright by election (see Rom. 9), and bestowed upon him the blessing in His own way. Esau says: "What good shall this birthright do me," for I am faint, and he gives up his birthright for a mess of pottage. If you do not look at your birth by the grace and calling of God, you will undervalue the right, and practically you will give it up for what will suit your haste, and serve you at the present moment. Look to Christ,

who gives the standard and value to the birth, and its rights, and the blessing, according to the purpose and calling of God, as displayed in the glorified Son, on the right hand of the Majesty in the heavens. We are to be like Him; so if faint, look to Him for strength. Of a natural man it is said, "When he dies, all his thoughts perish;" but the Christian's thoughts get brighter and brighter. It is not I dying, but all that is of sin, and my former self is separated from me forever, and the Spirit goes to Christ. The flesh and sin are left behind, and this is how faith sees it now, and despises the mess of pottage. If God did not summon us in John's Epistle to behold "the manner of the Father's love" in calling us out to glory, and telling us we are "sons of God," we could not speak on this subject; but there can be no question about these blessings in and with Christ, any more than of our birth. Many a natural man is born without any birthrights; but where are the heirs of God to turn for their birthright as sons? Thanks to "the Father," we find the roll in numerous Scriptures. Take Eph. 1:3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies." Here we get birth, birthright, and blessing. Our new experiences of ourselves are according to the new creation, and take their form from Christ where He is, and we learn there is something outside and far beyond Adam, and the first heaven and the first earth, and self. There is, therefore, a new prayer offered up 'by Paul for us in verses 15 to the end, because the birthrights, and the blessing go so infinitely beyond us all, so he prays for "the spirit of wisdom and revelation, etc." Do not be afraid to say you think it beyond all that your heart ever knew, or conceived in you, for it shows, at least, that you see the birthright is there, and think rightly of it.

Take another Apostle, and a different Epistle, and see how Peter brings the inheritance down upon a level which shows that it is not beyond anyone. The fact is, that in chapter 1:3, we are viewed in our birthright and blessing "as begotten, by Christ's resurrection from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and which fadeth not away." Is not this wonderful? If I went to any conveyance and told him I came about an inheritance, he would ask me, "What is your title?" It is by death, I reply. Very well, he understands me so far; but if I add, and it is by resurrection, would he not look surprised, as indeed he well might? Suppose I went on to say, in further describing this inheritance, that "it was incorruptible (he never heard of such a thing), and undefiled, and fadeth not away;" he would tell me he could have nothing to say to me, or to do with my case. He had never drawn up a conveyance of such a character, or for such an inheritance, and it was quite foreign to all practice in conveyance in the courts below; but such is the believer's birthright! Go about with this thought of Peter's, that you are begotten to an inheritance reserved for you in heaven with Christ the heir, and that you are kept for it by the power of God through faith unto salvation; passing the time of your sojourning here in fear watching and looking for Christ, "as God's obedient children," till He come. Beloved brethren, ye do not get this exhortation in 1 Peter 1:14, until the Holy Spirit has brought out the birth, the birthright, and the blessing; then ye are addressed as obedient children, calling upon the Father if "faint or ready to die." We are nearer to our inheritance by all the circumstances and personal experiences on the way. Nearer by death, than now; therefore it can have no terrors for us. One thing more, in Gen. 25:33, take care none of us do what Esau did, when he thought lightly of the birthright, for he sat down to eat and drink, and rose up, and went his way; Jacob loved the inheritance, and Esau despised it. Jacob saw there was one thing worth having between God and His purposes of blessing, and that was the birthright. In Eph. 1, "Blessings in heavenly places" revealed to us as the heirs of God, joint-heirs in the glory; and this is told with all the freshness of the Holy Ghost's unction by Paul, as he

unfolds the Father's counsels to us by the Spirit. This must produce feelings and affections. As to all else, everything worketh together (under the sun) for unmixed "good, to those who love Christ," and are the called according to His purpose.

Touching our pathway with Him, Jesus said, "If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, or whether I speak of myself." Obedience is the divine way of learning for us; and we know the Father by doing His will. The higher you mark and estimate your birthright, the more practically, and in character with it, you will walk down here, " as sons of God, without rebuke in the, midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world," etc. (Phil. 2:15, 16).

Leviticus the Consecration of Aaron and His Sons

THE next section of this book comprising chapters 8.-10., treats of the consecration of Aaron and his sons for their office of priests unto God, the holy priesthood, in contradistinction to the royal priesthood, which the Lord promised to the nation of Israel conditionally on their obedience. This priesthood was to be Aaron's and his sons' forever, "an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations" (Ex. 40:15). And though for centuries it has been in abeyance, the altar and temple having been laid low, by-and-bye, when both are restored in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, the sons of Zadok shall resume their office, and discharge afresh their sacerdotal functions (Ezek. 44:15). But since the Aaronic priests must have somewhat to offer, the offerings as we have seen are specified in this book before the consecration of Aaron and of his sons is detailed to us.

Of the high priest's dress, and the garments of the common priests we read in Ex. 28, and the procedure to be followed for their consecration, we also have recounted in that book (24:1-35.) But, as Exodus describes the setting up of the tabernacle, and all that belonged to it, we read also, in the chapter just referred to, the directions about the altar and the daily-and sabbatic burnt-offerings. In Lev. 8, on the contrary, we are called, as it were, to witness the consecration of Aaron and his sons throughout the seven days that the ceremony lasted. Ex. 29 tells us how they were to be consecrated. Lev. 8 depicts to us that being done in the presence of all the congregation of Israel, in obedience to the word of the Lord.

Washed all of them with water, Aaron was next arrayed in the pontifical garments of glory and beauty, the colors of which are described in Ex. 28. But even the washing and dressing did not take place till the requisite sacrifices to be offered up had been provided. For, looked at as a man, Aaron was only a type of Him who was made priest by an oath (Heb. 7:21). So at times what he was in him-self is set before us, at times he appears in his typical character. Viewed in the latter character, he stands out in this scene apart from the priests. Viewed as a sinful man, he and they are associated together. As a man, then, with them, one born in sin, he was first washed with water; then, to be seen in his special office of high" priest, he was dressed in his garments of glory and beauty, and anointed with the holy oil, before the other priests were apparelled, or any offering had been offered up on their common behalf. Arrayed in the long robe of blue, with the ephod upon him, and the breast-plate with Urim and Thummim (for these were distinct from it, as both Ex. 28:30, and Lev. 8:8 intimate, since Moses put them to the breast-plate), and with the miter on his head, fastened to which was the golden plate, the holy diadem, with holiness to the Lord engraved upon it, Aaron was ready for the anointing oil, which Moses poured upon his head, anointing him, and that without measure, to sanctify him, after he had first anointed the tabernacle and all that was therein, and had also sprinkled of the oil on the altar and the laver, which were in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. In common, then, with the tabernacle and its vessels, both within the holy place, as well as in the court, Aaron, the type of the Lord Jesus Christ, as God's high priest, was anointed with the holy oil, and that before any sacrifice was offered up on the son of Amram's behalf. For the Lord Jesus was anointed with the Holy Ghost whilst still in life (Matt. 3:16, Acts 10:38), but His people can only receive the anointing on the ground of His death. A

perfect man must be different from all other men. Such an one Moses and Aaron knew not, so of themselves they could never have planned this marked difference between him and his sons, a difference the more remarkable, because subsequently the garments of Aaron and those of his sons, as well as their persons, were together sprinkled with the anointing oil and the blood of the ram of consecration (Lev. 8:30).

At first, however, Aaron was anointed alone, when dressed in his pontifical attire, the garments of glory and beauty. How clearly was delineated the truth about the person of the Lord Jesus Christ in that action of the law-giver. But, if Christ is High Priest, all His people are priests, so Aaron's sons are next seen clothed, according to God's commandment, in the dress prescribed for them to wear. Blue, purple, scarlet, and white, all these colors, each expressive of truth about the Lord (Num. 4), were required for the high priest's vestments. In white alone, it would appear, were his sons arrayed, and with linen bonnets on their heads; for under the law men covered their heads before God. All this was appointed by God. In garments of L His choice were all His priests to be dressed.

Aaron and his sons properly clothed, the sacrificial rites of the day began. First the sin-offering was brought, and its blood duly dealt with for them, and for the altar, sanctifying it to make atonement (not reconciliation, as A.V. states) upon it. Here Aaron appears as a sinful man in common with his sons, the one sin-offering availing for them all. Aaron clothed, and anointed in connection with the sanctuary and its vessels, was a type of the Lord Jesus Himself. Aaron with his sons sharing in the results of the sin-offering, was really reaping benefits from the atoning death of Him, of whom as High Priest he alone was the type. A person without sin Aaron was not, but the Lord was (Heb. 7:26); so Aaron was anointed previous to the killing of the sin-offering. But Aaron as a sinful man had need of a sin-offering, and here confessed it before all. Thus God's holiness was maintained, Christ's spotlessness declared, and man's sinfulness met.

Next followed the burnt-offering, which Moses offered in accordance with the ritual concerning it. After that came the special offering of the day, the ram of consecration, with its accompanying basket of unleavened bread. Here God's order is instructive, That which we might have put first, the ram of consecration, really comes last; for as sinful creatures, they could not be consecrated to God's service apart from a sin-offering, which met what they were, and from the burnt-offering, which foreshadowed the voluntary surrender to death of Him who was made sin for His people. Hence on this and on other occasions, such as the setting apart of the Levites for their work, as well as at the completion of the Nazarite's vow, on the eighth day of the leper's cleansing, and on the day of atonement, the sin-offering took precedence of the burnt-offering. On the chief festivals this order was reversed. Where man is the prominent figure, the sin-offering is generally made prominent where God's favor to man, what God is to him, is to be set forth, the sin-offering can be put into the second place. But the sin-offering on any of the occasions noticed was not sufficient without the burnt-offering as well. The voluntary surrender of Christ to do God's will in death was each time brought to remembrance before Him. Unless the substitute had died, the sinful creature could not be accepted before God; but the sacrificial victim must be one on whom death had no claim. So the burnt-offering had its place on each of the occasions above-noticed, but its place in the day's ritual was regulated in accordance with the special character of the occasion.

The ram of consecration, slain after Aaron and his sons had put their hands upon its head, the first dealing with its blood was to put it on the tip of Aaron's right ear, the thumb of his right hand, and the great toe of his right foot. Next the blood was put in the same way on the same parts of the body of each of his sons, and then some was sprinkled on the altar round about, intimating that the ear, the service, and the walk of the priests were all to be consecrated to God, and for that consecration the death of the sacrifice was needed. Death, however, having thus been brought in, there could be no receding on the part of the priests from the position and condition they were placed in before God.

With the rest of the animal Moses was now concerned. Partaking of the character of a peace-offering, the inwards, the right shoulder, with the fat and one cake of unleavened bread, and a cake of oiled bread, with one wafer, were put upon the hands of Aaron and of his sons, and were waved for a wave-offering before the Lord. The peace-offering character of this ram of consecration is both interesting and especially suited to the occasion. In the peace-offering, as we have seen (Vol. 3 p. 193), the energy of the one perfect sacrifice was in type, as consecrated to God. Here, then, when priests were to be set apart for God's service, that character of sacrifice, all must see, was most suitable for the occasion. Further, all was here waved, not heaved, as in the ordinary peace-offering (7:14); for, though both actions signify dedication to God, heaving is used where a portion of anything is claimed for Him, but waving was the proper action where the whole of that which was typified by the thing waved was set apart for God. On this occasion, of course, the whole energy and strength of the priests was to be devoted to God. So all that was put into the hands of Aaron and his sons was directed to be waved, and waved by them, after which it was burnt on the burnt-offering, for a sweet savor unto, the Lord. Then Moses himself waved the breast of the offering. That which expressed what the priests were to be for God, all of which Christ was perfectly, as His death and life fully declare, Aaron and his sons waved before the Lord. The breast, the common portion of all the priests out of every peace-offering, Moses had this once for himself.

All now having been done at the altar which the Lord commanded, the last action of the day took place, viz., the sprinkling on Aaron and on his garments, and on his sons, and on their garments likewise, of the anointing oil and of the blood. Thus Aaron was sanctified and his garments, and his sons and their garments also. On Aaron the anointing oil had been put already, as we have seen. His sons are here, for the first time, sprinkled with it, but not without blood, intimating, as we can understand it, that no one of the holy priesthood can receive the anointing of the Holy Ghost (2 Cor. 2:21) apart from the atoning death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Without the Holy Ghost, true service to God, as set apart to serve Him, cannot be carried on; but to receive the Holy Spirit we must own and share in the results of Christ's atoning death, here typified by the blood. Washed first, typifying the washing of regeneration (Titus 3:5), which is connected with the new birth (John 3:5), and is part of the result of Christ's death (John 19:34), the priests consecrated by blood, and then sprinkled with the anointing oil and the blood, were fitted for their work when the seven days' service of consecration had ended. During that time they abode day and night inside the court at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. The camp was not their place during the week of consecration. Inside the court of the tabernacle they were to remain, to keep the charge of the Lord, that they should not die. And whilst keeping that, the Lord provided for them the rest of the ram of consecration, with the remainder of the basket of unleavened bread, being their appointed

daily portion. A full provision this was, more than they could eat, so all that remained of it day by day was to be burnt with fire. On Christ consecrated to God in His death and in His life they were constantly to feed throughout that eventful week, after which Christ in His life, typified in their daily meat-offering, would be the example constantly set before their eyes.

Jesus' Love Shall Never End

(John 13)

JESUS' love shall never end—

Perfect love to banish fear;

Pow'r divine is in His hand—

All resource for help and cheer:

He it is, from glory's seat,

Stoops to wash and wipe our feet.

While poor Egypt's fare we bought,

Purchased at its deadly cost,

Jesus' prayer went up, unsought,

For the ruined and the lost:

He it is, from glory's seat,

Stoops to wash and wipe our feet.

When we groped in darkness drear—

Sighing for delivering power,

Did not Jesus then appear—

Free us in the trying hour?

He it is, from glory's seat,

Stooped to wash and wipe our feet.

Satan vanquished, too, may plan

(In his hate) to snare—defile

Those in the triumphant Man,

Waiting through the " little while:"

Jesus still, from glory's seat,

Stoops to wash and wipe our feet.

Every throb of grief He knows, .

Every faltering step He sees-
Ere the humbled glance arose,
Or the weeper bowed his knees;
Love and pow'r, from glory's seat,
Stoop to wash and wipe our feet.
Watchful Shepherd, soon Thine own-
Safe beyond the desert toil-
Perfected, and on Thy throne,
Garments never more to soil-
Shall their Lord and Master greet-
Him who washed and wiped their feet.

" by Faith Ye Stand."

RARE are the occasions in which a Christian can venture to answer a fool according to his folly—yet on the fitting occasion the Apostle turned " the carnal weapons " (for irony the most delicate must so be reckoned) with overwhelming power against those who had assailed him. What strange beings we are, readily succumbing to usurped authority which has no credentials from God, and at the same time questioning or fretting against that power which carries its own credentials as of God with it. What is it? Man hates to be brought into direct contact with God. This can only be done through faith in Jesus Christ—or else God comes into contact with men in judgment. How readily might the Apostle have vindicated himself from every ground of charge against him. He might have demanded maintenance, but he would not forego his privilege of preaching the Gospel freely. He might have appealed to the fruit of his ministerial labors, but he had rather glory in his infirmities. He might have broken silence as to the marvelous revelation vouchsafed to him, but he brings into prominence the messenger of Satan to buffet him. He might have gone to Corinth at once, to prove the steadfastness of his purpose, instead of writing: " Behold the third time I am ready to come to you. This is the third time I am coming to you.

... I told you before and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time." He might have given them sensible proof of his power by its exercise in terrible discipline on themselves, but he had far rather that they should do " that which was honest," so that he needed not to exercise his power, although it left the question of his power unsettled. None but one conscious of divine power could have afforded to act in such a manner. None but one reckless of his own character among men, and yet conscious of acting before God, could have marked out such a way for himself. None but one having as a single and supreme object the glory of Christ in the saints, in other words, their edification, could have been content to leave himself and his authority in so questionable a position.

It is written of the Lord Jesus himself—"In his humiliation his judgment was taken away." Satan and Pharisees, tempting Him, alike demanded proofs of His Sonship and Christhood, which it was not consistent for Him, in having humbled Himself, then to afford. "His brethren " also (John 7) would have Him publicly show Himself to the world—publicly show Himself to the world—little thinking, if He had done so, it could only have been in judgment. But Jesus waited, and still waits (and His appeal—with what full credentials!—is still to the conscience of sinners), ere He appears in the irresistible glory of his own person in judgment. He, conscious of His own essential glory, did not need external proof for His own satisfaction. He could allow all His pretensions to be questioned by others, because of that which He really was. He left His claims unvindicated, save to faith and conscience, because He knew there was a set time in the counsels of Eternity for the public vindication both of His own essential glory and of every claim which He had preferred. Thus conscious, " He was crucified through weakness." Faith indeed looks to Him where He now is; faith now owns the glory of His person, faith rests on the value of His work—faith owns His work as the Lamb slain—faith owns now that all power in heaven and earth is given unto Him as the glorified man; faith bows now in the fullest acknowledgment of the name of Jesus. But Jesus

himself is yet long-suffering, even though His long-suffering causes His own name to remain unvindicated, and His saints to continue in sorrow and trial. His long-suffering is to be accounted salvation. How marvelous, yet how gracious, is Thy way, Lord Jesus! and Thy " chosen vessel " did, according to his measure, follow Thee in this Thy way! He was conscious of the authority which the Lord himself had given to him; and on the ground of this consciousness he could allow his authority to be questioned. He, too, was " weak " with his Master, leaving the demonstration of his power to the fitting time and season. He, too, knew of a demonstration to the soul far beyond that produced by the mightiest external proofs. " He that believeth on the Son path the witness in himself," and the Apostle could appeal to such a kind of testimony. " Since ye seek a proof of Christ speaking in me, which to you ward is not weak, but is mighty in you.... examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves.

Know ye not that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates; " without proof answering to their seeking " a proof." The Apostle appeals to their own consciences; if his authority was not commended there, the only resource must be in judgment. Were they in the faith? Was Jesus Christ in them, by revelation of the Holy Ghost? Then their own faith; the very consciousness of Christ in their souls was the irrefragable proof of his Apostleship, as he had before said—" The seal of mine Apostleship are ye in the Lord." It was by the manifestation of the truth that he had commended himself to their consciences, and he could do nothing against the truth, but for the truth. God had once dealt with men by signs and wonders, with the most marked demonstration of His power, but conviction resulting from such evidence (such is man), lasted only so long as the demonstration itself of the power of God was before their eyes., " He saved them from the hand of him that hated them, and redeemed them from the hand of the enemy; and the waters covered their enemies, there was not one of them left. Then believed they his words—they sang his praise. They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel." So, again, he visited them in after-time, and with the like result. The Israel at the time the Day-spring from on high visited them, Jehovah-Jesus, proved themselves to be the like faithless and perverse generation as their fathers in the wilderness. To this He speedily testified. Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, on the feast day, many believed in His name, when they saw the miracles which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself unto them; " for he knew all men, and needed not that any should testify of man, for he knew what was in man." He left them indeed without excuse, because they rejected Him, coming as He did with all the credentials of Messiah. But there was deeper condemnation than this, " they had seen Him and believed not." " They had both seen and hated both Him and his Father." God has left man without excuse—He has appealed to their senses, He has appealed to their understanding. He now makes His last appeal in the Gospel of His grace to the consciences and affections of men, and if this is rejected one solemn fact alone solves the phenomenon: " The God of this world hath blinded the minds of those who believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine into them." Jesus, knowing His own essential glory, and the fullness that was in Himself, desired to be received on His own testimony rather than on the demonstration of His miracles. "Believe me, that I am in the Father and the Father in me: or else believe me for the Very work's sake." Jesus presents himself, and is presented in the Gospel, to our conscience and affections, and this on the ground of his own essential being. If this claim does not commend Him to us, in vain would be the outward attestation, of His works. So His servant, Paul, conscious of the power given to him of the Lord, not anxious to prove it by judgment on others, sought to rouse the conscience of the Corinthian

saints, and this being effected, he was content to leave his own pretensions in question, save that he was ready, in obedience to the Lord, to "use sharpness" when the time came. In this we find the real value of ministerial authority, it appeals to the conscience: the outward demonstration by the most convincing signs was quite a secondary thought in the mind of the Apostle. When the conscience of the most disorderly saint is reached, what happy and gracious results follow; and Adieu the consciences of many are so exercised as to prove them "clear in any matter," the weight of their ententes, apart from outward demonstration of power, will be felt by the disobedient and refractory—hr it is sanctioned by the Lord himself.

There are two great hindrances to healthful action in the Church of God—assumption of authority, and leaning on authority. These are connected; but, whether united or separate, effectually hinder "standing by faith." Pretension to authority in the Church is generally found great in proportion as it is lacking in divine credentials to the conscience. It never appeals to the conscience; it aims at domination over faith—it is used, not for edification, but for destruction. Of this character is the authority claimed by Romanists and Anglicans for a presumed sacerdotal standing. It professes to be of God, it boasts of wonders, it is loud, authoritative, terrifying. It appeals to itself, not to conscience. That they are of God is the point of faith, and not faith recognizing divine power, commending itself to the conscience by manifestation of the truth. But there is a charm in this usurped authority. Men, and men of superior mind and of high moral worth, will "suffer if a man thus exalt himself." Whence this phenomenon! It tends to lull all exercise of conscience towards God. It keeps man in his natural element of distance from God, while persuading him that he is honoring God. We have seen, at Corinth, authority most unquestionably of God refused, and usurped power acknowledged, the one appealed to the conscience to lead it into exercise before God, the other claimed subjection to itself and prevailed, and thus interposed itself between God and the conscience. Such usurped authority carries with it a strong conventional claim. Deference to it was early inculcated, and has grown with our growth, so as to become a settled habit. What if the holder of this presumed authority did not commend himself to our moral judgment? Still there was a sacredness attached to his office. In many instances, men who have had discernment to see through the hollowness of the claim have been too impatient to satisfy themselves as to the truth, too busily occupied with the world to step out of their vocation to investigate, as they judge, a mere matter of opinion, dreading the alternative of infidelity if they rejected such venerable authority, and have tacitly allowed the claim on the ground of decent usage and legal acknowledgment, which they thoroughly despised in their hearts. "They put away a good conscience and make shipwreck of the faith," for such is the force of educational prejudice that, in the minds of the majority, the claims of the authorized minister and the claims of Scripture rest on the same basis, so that to undermine the one would be to jeopardize the authority of the other. And when from time to time an independent mind, disgusted by assumption of authority, has carried out its own thoughts, it has only found in skepticism relief from domination over faith. Alas—that it should be so, but of whom shall the blood of such be demanded? They, indeed, are in awful condemnation; for God holds every one responsible to himself to hear what He says. But God will not hold those guiltless who have, by means of their system, hindered the direct exercise of conscience before God. It was a serious charge the Lord had to make against Judah. "In thy skirts is found the blood of the souls of the poor innocents. I have not found it by secret search, but by all these." And it is a very solemn thought, that the great professing body has used authority so effectually to hinder the exercise of faith and conscience, as to leave apparently no alternative

between submission to its authority and skepticism. However definite may be the interpretation, the principle applies to the great professing body—"In her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth."

Real Christians need serious warnings as to the danger of allowing their faith to rest in the wisdom of man, instead of in the power of God. There may be large dominion over the faith tacitly allowed by Christians, even when such dominion is neither sought nor asserted by their teachers. Man is impatient under the sense of responsibility. He would persuade himself that he can do things by proxy, and thus relieve himself from care. The Solicitor cares for his worldly interests; the Physician for his health; and the Minister takes charge of his spiritual concerns. The Lord, in His ministry, and His servants subsequently, warned against this tendency. We have the double warning—"Be not ye called Rabbi."

"Call no man your father on earth"—and the direct acknowledgment of Christ Himself as Master of all, both of teachers and of taught, and confidential intercourse with the Father is the alone preservative. "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren." ", One is your Father, which is in heaven." "By faith ye stand." Relinquishing traditional authority, need not land us in skepticism. We assert the authority of God with whom we have to do; and if we claim independence from human authority, it is in order to be dependent on God. This is the point. On the one side, we find all that is merely conventional tottering; on the other, men promising themselves great things from the emancipation of man's will from the tradition of ages. The very shaking of conventional authority has given occasion for the assertion of authority (as of God) over the consciences of men in a more undisguised manner in this land, than at any period since the Reformation; and the very fact of its not being politically asserted, gives more validity to its pretensions. On the other hand, a philanthropical theory is attempting, vainly attempting, to control the emancipated will of man, in order to produce "peace on earth," and "good-will among men," but entirely disregarding the essentials of Christianity. Between these two sections—the "little flock of God," to whom it is His good pleasure to give the kingdom, will be lost sight of Happy for them, if, in the midst of the disruption of everything, they seek not unto visible authority, as the basis of their faith, but "build themselves up on their most holy faith." Happy for them, if when the mind of man, emancipated from traditional authority, is running again its wayward course to folly, in the vain profession of wisdom, they be found' with their consciences exercised before God, standing by faith in Him, and holding to the unshaken, eternal, and invisible realities, which the Holy Ghost Himself reveals to them.

Leviticus Aaron and His Sons Entering on Their Priestly Functions

THE week of consecration over, the eighth day arrived, the commencement of a new period of time. Now fully consecrated, Aaron and his sons could enter on their priestly functions on behalf of all Israel, and, directed by Moses, Aaron provided the offerings for: himself and his house; a young calf for a sin-offering, and a ram for a burnt-offering. The elders of Israel, too, brought the sacrifices for the people, viz., a kid of the goats for a sin-offering, a calf and a lamb, both of the first year, without blemish, for a burnt-offering, and a bullock and a ram for peace-offerings, to sacrifice before the Lord, and a meat-offering mingled with oil. And now, for the first time in their history, and in the world's history, was there a high priest duly consecrated, and able to make atonement by sacrifice for the congregation of the Lord. But how closely were they bound up with the high priest, who made atonement first for himself and them together with the young calf and the ram, and subsequently for them apart from himself with the offerings provided on their behalf. To see the glory of the Lord appearing without divine judgment overtaking them, these offerings were requisite. Atonement had to be made on their behalf, if that display of glory was not to consume them. Unless the people's offerings were rightly treated, atonement could not be made for them; but, had not Aaron first made atonement for himself and them as well, how could they have been before God without judgment consuming them? They had a high priest to represent them before Jehovah; and they were to learn that their acceptance was bound up with his. Atonement he made for himself and them. Apart from the standing of Aaron as high priest before the throne, they had no standing. Apart from his ministrations separately on the people's behalf, they could not have shared in the blessed results of atonement by blood.

All duly offered for himself and his house, and for the people, Aaron, at the altar with uplifted hands, turned towards the people, and blessed them. Then coming down from the altar, he entered the tabernacle in company with Moses, and the two came out again, and together blessed all Israel. "And the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat; which, when all the people saw, they shouted and fell on their faces" (9:23, 24).

The moment that Aaron had finished offering the sacrifices, he could bless the people. Till that moment he never had so acted towards them. But all rightly offered, he waited not a moment. Teaching this is, instructive to us as well as to them, because it shows us on what ground it is that people can be blessed, viz., the acceptance of the sacrifice. Apart from Christ's death typified in the offerings sacrificed, this could not have taken place. As soon as the sacrifice has been accepted, God is able righteously to bless. So the Lord could bless His disciples before He went to heaven (Luke 24:51).

But the grounds of blessing, and the time of blessing, are two very different questions. For Israel, both are shadowed forth in this scene. We have seen the grounds on which it can take place, as Aaron blessed them whilst still at the altar. We next learn the time when Israel will enjoy it. For, coming down from the altar, Aaron accompanied Moses into the tabernacle, after which the two

came out together and blessed all Israel. When within the sanctuary they were hidden from Israel's gaze, just as the Lord now in heaven cannot be seen by them. He will, however, by and by come out, and appear on Israel's behalf. So, typical of this, Moses and Aaron came out, and together, as the king (Deut. 33:5) and priest, blessed all the people. And the glory of the Lord immediately appeared, and the sacrifice and the fat all could see were consumed by the fire from heaven. Here, then, we have a millennial scene, depicting the future blessing of Israel at the Lord's return from heaven, when they will have ocular proof that He was wounded for their transgressions, and was bruised for their iniquities, the chastisement of their peace was upon Him, and with His stripes will they be healed (Isa. 53:5). Then will they know what Israel saw that day in type, that divine judgment, typified by the fire from heaven, was borne by Him that they should not endure it. And with Him in their midst, full earthly blessing will be theirs.

A millennial scene it surely was, but only a passing glimpse of that which will be, and perhaps ere long. Bright with hope the eighth day had commenced, nor were the people's expectations disappointed, for the glory of the Lord appeared unto them. But, ere night had set in, gloom must have enshrouded the camp by the death, under the hand of God, of the two eldest sons of Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, for offering strange fire before the Lord, which He commanded them not. Millennial days clearly had not yet arrived. Had the Lord now taken them unawares by thus dealing with them? They may have forgotten what Moses remembered, and quoted to Aaron, " I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people I will be glorified" (Lev. 10:3). When God had said that does not appear. Ex. 19:22 contains the nearest approach to it. In what a solemn way, however, was it verified.

But what had these two done to call forth such marked displeasure and immediate judgment from heaven? They had dared to kindle incense, which typifies the sweet savor of Christ, with strange fire, i.e., not the fire which came down from heaven. That, God would not allow. No sinful creature is permitted to present the fragrance of Christ to God, apart from the acknowledgment that the One whose merits are a sweet savor suffered divine judgment. So at once the Lord acted. Fire had come down from heaven to consume the sacrifice. Fire came out from the Lord and devoured them. In both cases the fire symbolizes divine judgment. In the former it, consumed the sacrifice, in the latter it cut off the guilty ones, and made all see that no one, however close he had been brought to God, could escape judicial dealing when guilty of such a sin. All Israel must have learned that, as the bodies of the offenders were carried outside the camp by Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uzziel, Aaron's uncle, whilst their father and brothers were not allowed to uncover their heads or rend their garments, on pain of death overtaking them, and wrath coming upon all the people. For if they had been defiled on this occasion by the dead, the whole service at the altar and in the sanctuary must have ceased. Obedient, then, to God's injunction by Moses, they kept inside the door of the tabernacle of the congregation. And further, Aaron held his peace, bowing to the stroke so unexpectedly inflicted upon him.

But, if God smites, He can act in loving-kindness. And Aaron must have felt that, as the Lord now spoke directly to him, and not through the channel of the law-giver. He had cut off his two sons in their sin, yet He would not deprive Aaron and his remaining sons of their priesthood; and, that they should not at any subsequent time call down the like judicial dealing, the Lord warned them against the influence of strong drink, whenever they should enter the tabernacle of the congregation. His care for them was thus manifested. Neglect of this warning might entail on them

death, or would hinder the proper discharge of their priestly functions in putting a difference between holy and unholy, and between clean and unclean. At other times they might drink wine, but when discharging their sacerdotal functions, and especially in the sanctuary, they were to abstain from it. Though Nadab and Abihu sinned, the priests lost none of their privileges, and Moses reminded Eleazar and Ithamar of what was their portion out of the sacrifices which had that day been offered. Seeking the sin-offering which belonged to the priests, for its blood had not been brought into the tabernacle of the congregation, he learned that they had burnt it. Their spiritual instinct was on this occasion right, though the letter of the law they had thereby violated. But Moses was content when Aaron explained about it.

With this the day ended. Israel had been blessed by the high priest. They had been blessed also by the king and priest together. The glory of the Lord had appeared unto them, and had consumed the sacrifice. All this was the token of Jehovah's goodness to His people, and of His acceptance of the sacrifice on their behalf. But side by side with this, God's character was maintained by the execution of unsparing judgment, whilst He proved Himself to be the Lord God merciful and gracious in speaking direct to Aaron, and warning him and his sons lest a like judgment should overtake them. With this millennial scene, God displayed as the blesser of His people, but as a judge likewise, the first great division of the Book of Leviticus is brought to a close.

The Table, the Confession of the Lord

THE Lord's table is spoken of in 1st Corinthians, chapter tenth, as the CONFESSIO of the Lord by those who partake. Various, we know, is the aspect given to this precious legacy left to us of the Lord. Circumstances in the conduct of the Corinthians brought it into another point of view. The Israelites were baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; God therefore vindicated His glory on many various occasions, because He was not duly acknowledged in His attributes towards His people. Subjection according to their deliverance was forgotten; "Remember how I brought you out of the land of Egypt, with a mighty hand and outstretched arm," was the burden of the call of the Lord to Israel. "Now all these things happened to them as ensamples (for us), and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come." The Apostle argued, therefore, that as to join the altar of the idol was to have fellowship with the idol; that it could not be with impunity. To join the altar of the idol was fellowship with the idol; owned it, in fact, confessed it. If it were the table of devils, it was communion or fellowship (the word is the same) with them. Singleness of confession then was that which the Lord, strong as He was jealous, required. To confess any other lord was incompatible and impossible; and as a common act (which the introductory act of Christianity was not) it partook of the nature of a common confession. At the table of the Lord, the assembly was one bread in the participation of the one bread or loaf. Saved by grace, there was no question of salvation, it was—who was Lord? Whatever character, therefore, of worship, thanksgiving, or of memorial of the grace in the Lord's death, was found in the Lord supper, it was the parallel between the example of the Israelites (separated to God in the cloud and in the sea) and the assembly, that the instruction given by the Apostle lies in this chapter. It is then the unmixed confession of the Lord by a practical separation to Himself, without any admixture of other subjection, that we find in this chapter. In the Hebrews, the Apostle says, "We have an altar (I do not suppose that this alludes to the table) of which those who serve the tabernacle cannot partake." It is a much more serious question, but which indicates the purity and singleness of the confession intended to be made by the table of the Lord.

Christendom looks on Christ as commonly acknowledged within its bounds, as received on earth, and mixing Himself with the world. God looks not at it so. Christ was rejected on earth and received in heaven. If we would acknowledge and confess Christ aright, it would be as rejected on earth, and now at God's right hand. If we belong to Him, we belong to Him there. He does not, as supposed, belong to us down here; we show forth His death till he come from where He is. This is the proper and true confession of Him, giving our confession its just significancy in the world; waiting for Him and separate unto Him in that expectation. This manifest instruction from this chapter shown in these observations does not, however, pretend to include other doctrine in the chapter.

The Closing Days of Christendom

I HAVE just been thinking how the great apostate systems, whether civil or ecclesiastical, are destined to advance in strength and magnificence, as their day of doom and judgment approaches. Witness the condition of the Woman in Rev. 18, and that of the Beast in Rev. 13 and 19.

And I ask, Is not this present moment, through which we are passing, giving pledges of this? Do we not see the great apostate ecclesiastical system advancing to occupy itself of the world, with something of giant strides? And is not the world, as a civil or secular thing, spreading itself out in improvements and attainments, and cultivation of all desirable and proud things, beyond all precedent? Are not these things so, beyond the question of even the very least observant? And are they not pledges that all is now on the high road to the full display of the Woman and of the Beast, in their several forms of greatness and grandeur, which are thus, according to God's word, destined to precede their judgment? These things, I own, are very plain and simple to me.

But again I ask—Is there any notice in God's word, that the saints, or the Church, are to rise to any condition of beauty or of strength befitting them, ere the hour of their translation come? The apostate things, as we have seen, are to be great and magnificent just before their judgment—but I ask, is the true thing to be eminent in its way, strong and beautiful in that strength and beauty that belong to it, ere its removal to glory?

This is an affecting inquiry. What answer do the oracles of God give us?

Paul, in 2nd Timothy, contemplates "the last days," in their perilous character, and the ruin of the Church, which we have seen, and do see at this day, all around us. But what condition of things among, the saints or elect of God, does he anticipate as following that ruin? I may say with all assurance, he does not contemplate any restoration as to Church order, any rebuilding of God's house, so to speak, any recovery of corporate beauty or strength worthy of this dispensation; but he exhorts the pure in heart to call on the Lord together, purged from vessels to dishonor in " the great house," and there also, together, to follow the virtues, and cherish the graces, which become them and belong to them.

Peter, in his 2nd Epistle, contemplates " the last days " also, and very fearful unclean abominations among professors, and very daring infidel scorning of divine promises in the world. But he gives no hint whatever that there will be restored order and strength in the Church, or in corporate spiritual action; he simply tells the saints to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord and Savior, and to be assured of this, that the promise of His coming and majesty is no cunningly-devised fable. He speaks to them of an entrance into the everlasting kingdom, but never of a return to a restored order of things in the Church on earth.

Jude, also, in like manner, anticipates "the last time," and many terrible corruptions, such as "turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness." But what then? He promises nothing in the way of restored beauty and consistency as in earlier days, but just encourages the " beloved " to build

themselves up in holy faith, and to keep themselves in God's love; but he is so far from encouraging any hope of recovered order and strength in the Church on earth, that he tells them to be looking out for another object altogether, " the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life."

John, in his way, gives us the judgment of the seven Churches in Asia, in Rev. 2 and 3. It is a very solemn scene. There is some good and much evil found in the midst of them. The voices of the Spirit, heard there, have healthful admonitions for us, both in our individual and gathered condition. But there is no promise that the judgment will work correction and recovery. The Churches are judged, and they are left under the judgment; and we know no more of them on earth; the next sight we get of the elect is in heaven (see chap. 4.).

All this is serious and yet happy; and all this is strikingly verified by the great moral phenomena around us, under our eye, or within our hearing, at this moment. For we know that the great apostate things, the things of the world, whether civil or ecclesiastical, are in the advance, ripening to full bloom of vigor and of beauty, while we see the true thing broken, enfeebled, and wasted, in no wise promising to regain what once it had in days of corporate order and power.

But it is well. It is gracious in the Lord, thus to cast up before us, in His word, the high road along which we were destined to travel, and the sights we were appointed to see. And it is happy to know, that our translation does not wait for a regained condition of dispensational order and strength; for, according to present appearances, we might have to wait long enough ere that could be. But mark, further, on this, same truth.

At times, when the Lord Jesus was about to deliver the poor captive of Satan, the enemy at the very moment would put forth some fresh energy of evil and his captive apparently be in its most grievous estate.

This was another form of the same thing that we notice throughout God's word—that the apostate thing is in peculiar strength and magnificence just at the time when its doom or judgment is at the door, and that Christ's thing is in weakness and brokenness, just as the deliverance He brings with Him is at hand.

Joseph, Moses, and David, are samples of this also. One was taken from, a prison, to feed and rule a nation; another was drawn forth from an unnoticed distant solitude, where he had the care of flocks and herds, to deliver a nation; another was raised up and manifested from under the neglect and contempt of his own kindred, to sustain, by his own single hand, a whole people and kingdom. And what may really amaze us in the midst of such' things is this—that some of these were in the place of degradation and loss, through their own sin, and the judgment of God.

Thus it was with both Moses and David. Joseph was a martyr, I grant, and went from the sorrows of righteousness to the greatness of the rewards of grace. So was David in the day of Saul, when David at last reached the kingdom. But David in later times was not a martyr, but a penitent. He had brought on himself all the loss and sorrow and degradation of the rebellion of Absalom—and the sin that produced it. all had this heavier judgment of righteousness resting upon it, " the sword shall never depart from thine house." Nor did it. And thus he was under judgment; he was in the ruins which his own iniquity brought on him; he was the witness of God's visitation in holiness, when suddenly his house, in the person of Solomon: broke forth in full luster and strength. And so Moses before him. Moses was a martyr, I grant, in his earlier days, in Malian, and comes forth

from the place where his faith had cast him, into the honor and joy of being Israel's deliverer. But like David, in later days, Moses was under judgment, judgment of God for his unbelief and sin. He trespassed, as we know, at the water of Meribah, and so trespassed as at once to forfeit all title to enter the land of promise. And nothing to the end could ever change that divine purpose. In that sense, the sword never departed, from Moses' house, as it did not from David's. He besought the Lord again and again, but it was in vain. He never entered the land—and thus he was judged, and still under the judgment, when grace abounds; for he is (in principle) translated, borne to the top of the hill, and not to the fields of Canaan, to the heights of Pisgah, and not to the plains of Jericho and Jordan.

These things were so, But it is better to be judged of the Lord, than to be condemned with the world: for the poor, weak, and judged thing is drawn forth in the light and redemption of God, while the proud and the strong bow under Him.

So, I say, there is no New Testament promise, that the church shall recover her consistency and beauty, ere her translation comes. She passes from her ruins to her glory, while the world goes from its magnificence to its judgment—ruins, too, I add, which witness the judgment of God. The sword has never departed from the house, May I not say, beloved, in the light of these truths, comfort yourself as you look abroad, and see what it is that is strong now-a-days, and what it is that is weak. But let me add—let not the weakness of which I speak, the corporate or church weakness of the saints, be the least occasion for personal moral relaxation. This would be a sad and terrible use to make of the truths we are speaking of, and gathering from Scripture. We are most surely, to be separate from evil as distinctly as ever, and to cherish all the thoughts and ways of holiness as carefully as ever.

But further. We may find some hesitation in knowing exactly how to speak of Israel's history, whether it be that of a martyr or a penitent. It has something of each in it, more, however, I judge of the latter. But whether or not, their recoveries and redemptions illustrate the mystery which we have now before us, that the apostate thing goes to judgment in the hour of its chiefest strength and greatness, and the true thing rises from amid its infirmities and ruins to its glory and blessedness.

They were in a low condition in Egypt, as brick-kilns and taskmasters tell us, and the exacted tale of bricks without the accustomed straw, just as the Lord was sending Moses and his rod for their deliverance.—So again in Babylon. The enemy was insulting their bonds, making merry in infidel despite of the captivity of Jerusalem and her temple, when that very night, the Deliverer of Israel entered Babylon. So again in Persia. The decree had fixed a day for their destruction, and that decree' would not, could not, be changed. Their Amalekite persecutor was in power, and all, as far as the eye could reach, was utter destruction—but Haman fell and the Jews were delivered. And so will it be again with the same people, (Deut. 32:36 and Isa. 59:16). "At evening time it shall be light." The city will be taken; all the people of the earth will be round it in its day of siege and straitness; half of it will go into captivity; the houses shall be rifled, and all will be waste and degradation—but the Lord from heaven shall, in that instant plead their cause. "At evening time it shall be light." The shadow of death shall be turned into the morning (see Zech. 14) And again, Cesar Augustus was in strength and majesty. His proconsuls were in far distant provinces, his decree had gone to the ends of the earth, and the whole Roman world was set in beauty and

order, just as Jesus was born (Luke 2). But the remnant were feeble. The family of David lived at Nazareth, and not in Jerusalem. The hope of the nation lay in a manger at Bethlehem. A devout, solitary, expectant saint or two frequented the temple, and it was shepherds during their nightly watches who had glories revealed to them. Israel had thus fallen, together with the house of David, and fallen, each of them, by their iniquity and the judgment of God. The sovereignty of the Romans could command the chief of Israel's sons from Galilee to Judea, to be taxed and estimated, like the rest of Roman property. But the Lord was at hand. The child, who was to be for the fall and the rise of things, and people, was just born.

Let us be emboldened according to God, and judge not according to flesh and blood, but by the light of the Lord. And again, I say, as the Apostle teaches, it is better to be judged of the Lord, than to be condemned with the world. Judgment has begun at the house of God. He abaseth the proud and exalteth them that are cast down. The candlesticks are visited in the keen and searching power of Him whose " eyes were as a flame of fire"-and as far as we know them here on earth, there they are left-but the place of judgment proves itself to be next door to the place of glory (Rev. 1-4)

It is all right and comforting to faith; strange to the reasoning and religion of nature. The church will go from her ruins up to glory—the world will pass from its proudest moment of greatness to the judgment. God taketh the beggar from the dunghill to set him among princes.

Would that the saints of God were apart from the purposes and expectations of the world. " Come out of her, my people."

" The feeble saint shall win the day,

Though hell and death obstruct his way."

The Lord will vindicate his own principles, and establish His own thoughts forever, though the voices that witness them be feeble, and well nigh lost in the din of the world's exultation. May the heart of the humbled, broken saint be comforted in Him

The Four Shoshannim Psalms. a Few Brief Notes

(1) Ps. 69th, a Psalm of humiliation, the Cross and rejection (Isa. 53) The four gospels tell how the lilies of his graces in deep shades of the valley of humiliation grew and gave forth their lowly testimony to the altogether lovely One, the man Christ Jesus—perfect in all things, His beauty matchless, when He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief (1 Peter 2:21-25). " Consider the lilies how they grow! Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." " Consider Him who endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself." Also Phil. 2, Heb. 2; 1 Peter 2:21-28. The whole of the four gospels tell out the lily graces of the Lowly One. Perfect loveliness and perfect purity in the lowest place! There is only Shoshannim—the lilies, attached to Ps. 69 For " Himself " was the testimony to what and who he was: so "eduth" is not added: for He says, " I am the light," and He needs no testimony to Him—the lily grew in stature and in favor with God and men. His lowly presence in all the relations of life—His hiding Himself—His quiet, lonely course, " foxes have holes," &c.—"the Son of man hath nowhere to lay His head"—His perfectness with Satan in the wilderness, taking the lowly place of a dependent man living by every word of God. Perfect in His dealing with men—the suffering—the sorrowing, the bereaved—friends—enemies—reasoners—accusers—perfect in lowliness, in life—in Gethsemane—at Calvary—and in death "crucified through weakness." He " humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the Cross." All that Paul says of " Charity " in 1 Cor. 13 was true of Him: and a thousand times more. " Yea, He is altogether lovely! "

There is no Psalm so often quoted as Ps. 69 The Spirit in the New Testament refers to Him specially in His humiliation. For there His deepest glories shine in all their lowly lily beauty and perfection. It is quoted seven times in the New Testament, as the utterance of the Lord. There is seven-fold perfection in Christ in His life on earth; the one perfect, spotless Son of man is seen in His seven-fold loveliness of character. When our one life is detailed into seven foldness, the imperfections are seen at once, but every detail of our blessed Lord's life was perfect as the lily! God delighted in Him (Matt. 3 and 17.; see also Acts 2) The perfection of Christ in His humiliation and rejection, when all in Him was tried, was that of the divine and heavenly lily in all its purity in the most unfavorable circumstances. I have gone on so far with Ps. 69 (though the half hath not been told), that I must merely mention what is in the other three Psalms.

(2) Ps. 45 is a Psalm of the kingdom, and the glory both of the Bridegroom and the earthly Bride. It is Shoshannim only, " The Lamb is all the glory of Immanuel's land!"

In Ps. 69 we had the sufferings of Christ: here in Ps. 45, His glories. But we know the hidden glories—glories in the heavens—the things of purpose and counsel—" things above; " but where Christ sitteth in all His personal and official glories. The Epistles open the heavens to see the lilies there since He ascended, for " We see Jesus who was made a little lower than the angels crowned with GLORY and Honor "... "Consider the lilies!"... CONSIDER the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus! "Think of His glories as Head of all creation -Head of His body, the

Church—Head of all principality and power; the glory in the Father's house as Son of the Father, and His many sons—glory in the golden city, glory in Israel and the nations. " The glory of the Lord shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.'

(3) Psa. 60 is a Psalm of warfare. Here we have " Shushan-eduth,"—the lily of testimony. Here we have the Lord as a man of war, and through Him His people doing valiantly. " We triumph in Thy triumphs, Lord," &c. The testimony is of the Lord's triumphant conquest, and dividing the lands as the spoils of conquest. There is a banner to be displayed because of the truth. The truth is He has triumphed, not we. To us it is " be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might " &c. (see and read Eph. 6:10-20). Then, as the Psalm is of Israel, the banner of the Lord will yet float over Mount Zion and Jerusalem, when He treads down all their enemies, and reigns before His ancients gloriously, &c. He subdues all through the millennium, and delivers up a peaceful kingdom to Him who is God and Father. " And when all things shall be subdued unto Him, then shall the Son also Himself be subject unto Him that put all things under Him, that God may be all in all." This speaks of His lowly character when all His warfare shall be over for all his subjugation of the world will have been accomplished as servant of His God and Father, and not that he might retain the kingdom, but deliver it up to Him. Moreover, as Son He retains the place of subjection that this new kind of obedience—the Father commanding and the Son obeying—might have in Him its model and manifestation before the universe forever and ever.

(4) Psa. 80 is a Psalm of failure; and the Shoshannim-eduth—the lilies of testimony to what God had done at the first grow in a very low valley. Only read this Psalm! It is a plaintive wail. It recounts Joseph-days, tabernacle-days, wilderness-days, when their camp was guided, guarded, and gladdened by His presence, " Ephraim, Benjamin, and Manasseh," seeing the pillar cloud of the glory rise before them to lead them on their way (Num. 10:22-24). " Shine forth! " Everything was freshly established then, and the testimony of the Psalm is to that—God's past doing in view of man's failure; and this leads to dependence for the present, and hope for the future. " Let Thy hand be upon the Man of Thy right hand, upon the Son of man whom thou madest strong for thyself," &c. Thus the very Psalm of failure is a Psalm of the Man of God's right hand And where such failure as in the Church? And where does this lead us? To the Man in the glory—the Man of God's right hand—strong by Himself, and back to that which was from the beginning! Blessed be His Name! Let us think of His lowliness and long-suffering that He still goes round the wilderness with us in all our failure, and waits patiently for the Father's time to arise and hare His name vindicated! HALLELUJAH! (Matt. 11:25-30; 2 Thess. 3:5; 2 Peter 3:18).

SON of the Father hail! Son of God eternal!

Jesus, the Sinners' Friend, whose favor knows no end;

Love made thee condescend, with man to make abode,

And thro' Thy precious blood, we're now brought nigh to God.

Thee, Savior-Lord we bless—our Lord Jesus!

Full of truth and power; Highly-blessed,

Blessed, evermore!

" Behold Nathan the Prophet."

Revelation. 3:20. 1 Kings 1

" The grace of God and the gift in the grace "-(Romans. 5:15).

SEE the palace doors unfolding—

Opening to the power of grace;

Anxious eyes are there beholding,

Hearts recalling former days.

See that foot that quickly enters,

Well prepared with grace's claim;

Bright the light that round him centers

As they herald forth his name.

O ye saints, whose hands are falling—

Tremblers in a heavenly calling,

Scan it all, lest ye may lose

Aught that fills such fruitful views.

Will he bitter waters mingle,—

He whose lips could tell a tale,

Causing every ear to tingle;

And the yearning heart to fail?

Why not broach the buried story—

Use it to enforce his words?

What to him that sheen of glory,

Or its retinue of lords.

List, ye fainting souls in sorrow,

Hopeless of a bright to-morrow,

Gather near that ye may sing

Round the dying grace-led king.

He could send the pointed arrow—
Strike it deep in hardened hearts,
E'en dividing joints and marrow,
Speaking to the inner parts,—
Bring the balm; and, binding—healing,
Leading to the house of God,
Ceasing not till full revealing
Mercy's path before untrod
As he " bows to earth," beseeching,
Gracious majesty is teaching—
Opening out the very thing
Longed for by the shepherd-king.
This is Nathan: well we know Him
Who have learned the deeps of grace:
Hearken then, ye souls who owe Him
Never-ending songs of praise.
Through the " Solomon" He gave us
From His own exhaustless store,
Givers, too, His love would have us,
Praising still and praising more:
In the fruit of grace He tended,
Food from off the fire He handed;
Davids, Peters, seldom miss
Seeing depths in scenes like this.
As our spirit looks behind us,
Towards the days of shame and dust,
He doth haste with grace to bind us,
Lest His " Jacobs " might not trust.
All we wrought-a desolation:

Like an Abram on his face,
Power divine in new creation
Proves the rights of sovereign grace.
Jacobs, Davids, tell a story—
Grace's ways that end in glory;
Each has fruit that fills his heart:
Show, " good Lord," how great Thou art.
O, how little have we known Him
In His patience heretofore,
Till our opening " door " doth own Him
As in love He chastened sore!
Like Mephibosheth at table,
Weak to serve, but strong to praise,
Learn ye, that our Lord is able
(On " the bed," in closing days).
Gazing on that wondrous seer,
Think on Jacob's God at Beer,
Telling sinners-Look and live,
Telling " rebels "- " I will GIVE."

The Shell and the Kernel

ONE great result which God has made known to us in His word, respecting Himself by all His works, is that "the invisible things of Him" from the creation 'of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even " His eternal power and Godhead." Indeed, it is this very fact, which creates responsibility in this Adam-world, and leaves mankind "without excuse, for not glorifying God as God."

This material system may, therefore, be viewed as the great outward sphere of His display in wisdom and power, by all that He has wrought Creatorially therein to make Himself known, and by what He has done, and is doing, and will yet do governmentally with it, as " the Judge of the whole earth." He works out His own ways, amidst all the confusions and delusions amongst men in this world, whilst Satan, the usurper, is its prince, and allowed to be at large thereon; and it is in this light, "the shell," which, nevertheless, holds the germ. The kernel (if we may so say) lies in this, that God has likewise revealed in His word the fact of His internally working out in it (though in mystery) all His secret counsels in Christ, for " the glory of God and his elect," in new creation power, and under another life and headship (with their divine relations) in the Second Man. The scale of this work, is "according to the riches of his grace, wherein he hath abounded towards us, in all wisdom and prudence," and all such can say, as being in this secret of God, " old things are passed away, and all things are become new." These walk by faith, and not by sight, and look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen—" knowing that the things which are seen are temporal." God has likewise brought out from Egypt. by the hand of Moses a people for His name, and these are the Israel of Jehovah; moreover, He is ordering the world externally in government in reference to this people, and will again gather them together out of the four corners of the earth as a nucleus for the earthly and millennial blessing; " Israel shall blossom and bud and fill the face of the world with fruit." Obedience and dependence produce confidence; and these were normally the existing mad necessary elements in the creature, for any and all enjoyment, and intercourse with God from the beginning. This, Adam realized when he stood in innocency, and in the unsullied image of Him that created him.

In an unfallen creation where " all was good," even up to the standard of what suited the Creator, for " His own rest "-such a perfect order of things, and such a state as this existed in Eden, though but for a while, and was, alas, speedily turned into a vanishing point, which declared tile distance of Adam's moral departure from God. Life and liberty and happiness grew up together, and were then found and enjoyed in the presence of God, without any let or hindrance to the outcome of all the powers, and capacity for blessing in the creature. Before Satan and evil came in, and when God could, and did bless everything as He finished it, there was no occasion for any check to the energy, and outflow of all that was in the mind and heart of man, and which made him, in body, soul, and spirit, capable of unmingled joy and gladness before God, in the midst of everything that was made.

But more than this, yea much more—the primary object of God in creation, was His own satisfaction and delight, in all the living intelligencies, whether angelic or human, by whom He was surrounded, and of whom He was the supreme and self-existent center. Nothing short of His own glory, in all that He fashioned and made, was daily before Him, and thus even "the crowned elders" in the Apocalyptic -future, celebrate their Creator, saying, "for thy pleasure they are, and were created." What a source of blessing was this to every creature that could and would only live, because "the living God" lives. What a warrant and spring of joy to all in the heavens, and upon the earth, was God's own delight in the works of His hands, and what a guarantee was this, for all besides!

By the work of the six days of Gen. 1, the first five (wonderful as they were in their order and progression) were but prefatory to the bringing in of the representative Adam of the sixth day, who was "made in the likeness of God." All these six were only preparatory in their turn, and necessary to introduce, and then give place to, that masterpiece and seal to all time, in the seventh day, or "the Sabbath of rest" which God sanctified for Himself. Thus, at the onset of this terrestrial Genesis, the outer creation was formed, and made to hold these sacred and glorious deposits of the sixth and seventh days for the Creator and for the image-man, who was after all of the earth and earthly. Principalities, and powers in the heavenly places, viewed these great and stupendous actings as further proofs of the majesty, and supremacy, of Him who made them, when "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy." The Creator rested from the works of His hands, and found a rest for Himself in them. The creation was then God's rest, and will be so for the Jehovah-Messiah's millennial rest—though postponed (because violated by sin) and "groaning therefore at present under the bondage of corruption." Yet, nevertheless, "there remaineth a rest for God" with His redeemed people, and with those whom He will ransom from the grave, when this great external shell, which holds their dust, shall be called "to deliver up the dead" which are therein.

If we pursue our theme of "the shell and the kernel," it will be necessary to quit this first circle of an unfallen creation, and its seven days' developments, in order to learn other lessons from the historical heavens and earth, in their connections with "the fall of man," and the righteous government of God on account of sin. Such paths as we may have to follow (strange as they are, because of this awful rupture), ought not to be foreign, in their general outline at least, to any who have begun to learn God in "his ways," towards the children of men, from the closing up of paradise—and more especially since "the translation of Enoch," out from its corruption, "before the flood." The grand principles of individual obedience and dependance (as we have already said) were essential for communion with God at any, and at all times, as well as for holding fast the subsequent testimony to Himself, through dispensed truth, which He has now committed to men. These principles are only embodied, as they are carried out a step further, and put into their proper form in us by some veritable act of separation from evil, and in the true confession of holiness, which are due to God. This was eminently so with Enoch, when the great external shell of "the world that then was," yielded out its first ripe fruit, in the man who walked with God upon it, and who carried about "the inward testimony that he pleased him." The one of that era "was translated, that he should not see death." Adam's earth which was of old, with its inhabitants, perished by the deluge, only yielding eight souls as the nucleus of another formation. They went into the ark with Noah, out of that world of judgment, till the appointed time for them to come forth

upon the next, as a new company under " the rainbow of God's sure covenant " in blessing. Moreover, in following out this external history of creation, as under the government of God, we find that "the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men." In fact, the 2nd Epistle of Peter puts the created heavens and earth (because of sin) whether before the deluge, or since, into one vast dissolving view; and then reveals " a new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness," and in which the tabernacle of God shall once again, and forever, be with men. "Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be... looking for, and hasting to the coming of the days of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat."

By such records as these, and from other Scriptures, we are taught that the heavens and the earth, and the elements, are viewed simply as a great and external shell, for the manifestation of God in His majesty, and providential goodness, to an Adam-creation, and then to a Noah-world, by which He " giveth to all, life and breath, and all things, and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth. He hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitations, that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him: "and escape, through faith in Christ, out of its condemnation and coming judgment. The majesty and goodness of God were the attributes which he displayed in the first circle of creation, whereas redemption, as declared in the salvation of Noah, and all who were in the ark, out from the waters of death and of judgment, was displayed in this second circle, or " the world that now is." Again, in the first circle, God had manifested His wondrous actings as Creator, and formed a Sabbath of rest for Himself and a paradise for Adam, in the midst of a great celestial and terrestrial system, in which "God rested and was refreshed." Redemption was afterward brought out, and established in a still fuller way, by the deliverance of the nation of Israel, as the chosen people of God, out from the cruel bondage of Pharaoh in Egypt. Of this redemption, the great and external Adam-world has become historically the object and witness, and ever will be, for the accomplishment of all the precious promises in blessing to Noah, and mankind likewise, and to the twelve tribes, together with the Gentile nations. This will be manifested in the bright millennial days of their future glory, with Messiah in "the city of the great king," or, as the Son of Man, when He sits upon His own throne in righteous rule over the world.

But we must now take another view, and a far grander one, of the purposes of God to be wrought out in, and by "the Son of His own love," in what we have compared to the kernel. These great and external heavens and earth, or the shell, did not express His secret purpose, or disclose His hidden counsel of "Christ, and the Church," though creation might, and did contain this kernel, or mystery, and wrap it up.

If we would become acquainted with these "deep things of God," which lay hidden in Himself, we must pass from these outward circles of God's ways, whether in creation or government, by which He is carrying out His intentions on the earth, for His own glory with His chosen people Israel, and enter " the garden which the Lord God planted." It was here He wrought according to His Godhead counsel, and brought to light His hidden purpose in the mystic man; and the further one of a second Adam, as the beginning of the new creation of God, and "Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all." How divinely and differently God wrought out these counsels, may well occupy us! These purposes which were fore-ordained

from " before the foundation of the world," but have been manifested in these last times for us, and wrought out by the Holy Ghost come down from the ascended and glorified Son of man. In the garden we behold Him, as in a sacred enclosure, working by the mystery of Adam's sleep (outside nature), that He might draw forth the mysterious rib from his opened side," out of which to fashion and form the woman, as an help-meet for the man; " and set up in type the master piece of Christ and the Church. It was to Adam she was brought by the Creator for a Bride, and as the completion of the mystic mart, that " they might be one flesh," as the last, and crowning act of divine wisdom, and power, and glory.

And now, we may ask, what did these inner acts and deeds in." the garden" pre-figure, which the great outward world could not? What but the coming forth of the " second man " who was ordained from everlasting to descend into these " lower parts of the earth," to purchase and redeem it, and pass through His deeper sleep of death to gain His bride, and finally lead her forth by resurrection unto His own eternal glory. It was He alone who could change the sepulcher of sleep in His garden of Cedron into a birth-place; and on the morning of that third day, come forth as "the first born Son" in resurrection," the head of His body," the bridegroom, and " the beginning of the [new] creation of God." Again, what do all these silent, and inner acts, and deeds, mean when taken out of type, and figure, by the Holy Ghost, after this deep sleep in the womb of the earth—and then passing up into connection with the glorified Son of Man, at the right hand of God? What further can such works (curiously wrought out, in the darkness of the grave in death, and then illuminated by " the right hand of the Father" in glory) proclaim to us but the fulfillment of that blessed pattern, of the man and the woman set up before the fall—or, " the great mystery," of Christ and the Church, to be seen in the coming glory of the Father and the Son?

If we have come out to learn God as one with Christ, not only in the first circle of Adam and his creation, with its Sabbath of rest—nor merely in the second circle, by a world after the flood, bright with its rainbow pledges, and covenants of promise to Noah, and the Patriarchs, and to Israel—but likewise in the inner circle of the planted garden and its mysteries—we shall find this disclosure can only be known by the revelation made to us by God in His word, and by being born again of the Spirit. " This is life eternal to know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent"—and such are sanctified by the truth, and waiting to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, &c. Liberty from the flesh and the world and the power of Satan, by our death and resurrection with Christ, are thus found through redemption—and by the gift of eternal life in the power of the Holy Ghost.

It is this transformation which separates us from our fellow-men, and is properly the birth-right and blessing of every believer in Christ. These peculiarities mark the state and ground on which we are set " before God our Father," as new creatures, by our union in life and righteousness with the Lord Jesus. We are thus born of God, and not of this world, but " translated out of darkness into light." It is only when so standing in grace, with " Christ the hope of glory" full 'before us, and in us, as our new stand-point, that we are able to look at everything above and below in the light of divine truth. We then learn our first, and early lessons of faith, by which "we call things that are not as though they were"—and growingly live in the power of " things not seen which are eternal." Consistently with this, as believers in Christ, we are called out from this present evil world, to walk " as beloved children" with God, under the anointing of the Holy Ghost; though we may be hidden in our turn for " a little while " in it, like men (as we have said) that wait for the coming of their Lord.

It is true that the style and character of this life, and our walk with God (as such) must vary, and has become diverse-according to the name, and the relations, in which He may have declared Himself to one and another, throughout the varying dispensations, and the pathway therein, which He takes with His elect. "The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" is the name in which He is revealed to us, whom He is now "calling out into fellowship," by the Holy Ghost, into another creation, in the second Adam at His right hand in heaven, and a new order of things, "kept secret from before the world was." We are coming historically to the close of the seven thousand years of old-creation reckoning, with all its characteristic responsibilities, and expectations. "The end of all things is at hand," and Babylon with the Gentiles must speedily go down into the dust, because "the time to favor Zion" is at hand, when Jerusalem and Israel "will arise and put on their beautiful garments," and pass once more into their highest places of dignity and glory under the sun, and shine brighter than in the days of Solomon.

We, too, who are of "the planted garden," are passing out of the mystery form, into its accomplishments in the other and new creation, for "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" even now; and to such an one, "old things are passed away; and all things are become new," as headed up in Christ, at the right hand of God. These peculiarities of our heavenly calling, may have made it difficult for some Christians to connect the original principle of our separation from this present world (to walk with God, as the translated Enoch did)—with the practical confession of Christianity to a rejected Christ below, and a glorified Lord in heaven. This path"(for the man of God now) is the more difficult to the uninitiated, because they find even the "wind and sea contrary," and they are themselves against the course of everything, and every one is against them, for "His name's sake." Moreover, this is felt the more acutely in a time of declension like the present, as regards those who stood for a while in the truth of this confession of Christ rejected below, and glorified above, but have become weary "in well doing," and lost the power and joy of the blessed hope of the Church. Nevertheless, this demand is made on the faithful, by "Him that is holy and true," yea, even to stand apart from the ripening apostacy of these last days, in the actual possession "of gold tried in the fire," and that they should be clad in white raiment. God will presently, in supreme power and righteousness, take all into His own hands, and make the heavens which had long ago received the ascended Son of Man, open themselves out in like manner, as the pathway and home for the glorified Church with her Head and Lord. Meanwhile, the Holy Ghost is upon earth to form it!

The counsels of God in their full accomplishment and manifested glory, will then find their perfection in the administration of the fullness of times,— "when all things shall be gathered together in one, even in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even in Him." The new order of manhood in Christ, and the new creation of which He is the beginning and Head, will be established eternally. "In

whom also we have obtained an inheritance being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will; that we should be to the praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ."

The new creation, with its heavens and earth, will ever after contain, and manifest to perfection from their new center—the kernel—which the old or former creation once had held, though hidden, till the opening mystery of "God manifest in the flesh." It failed to appreciate or retain Him, as He

passed along through it, in the light of promise and prophecy, and purpose, but in the veiled glory of His manhood, that He might thereby descend into the lower parts of the earth, to win all back for Himself, and for the glory of God, by His mysterious sleep in death, and hold it by His triumphant resurrection at the right hand of the Father.

Leviticus

WE now enter on the second great division of the book (xi.-xvi.), which treats of defilements, and the legal manner of cleansing therefrom, and closes with the directions to be observed on the day of atonement.

Sacrifices appointed, and the priests consecrated; Israel are reminded that they are a holy people unto the Lord, and must therefore guard against that which would defile, or be cleansed from defilements, as the case might be. And the first subject that is taken up is that of animal food, which necessarily points out the “difference between the unclean and the clean, and between the beast that may be eaten and the beast that may not be eaten” (Lev. 11:47).

After the flood, God gave to man a grant of every moving living creature for food (Gen. 9:3). Here, under the law, He introduces restrictions. Were men, then, contaminated in their souls by the indiscriminate use of animal food? Was that a source of moral defilement? Demons would instil into man's mind that it was. But the Lord has taught us (Matt. 15:18) from whence the moral defilement comes—even from out of the heart of man. Hence abstinence from meats will not promote true piety (1 Tim. 3:16; 4:5). But why these restrictions? Because the law not only places man at a distance from God, and makes him conscious of it; but it also is meant to teach him the great difference between standing on the ground of its observance, and on the ground of grace. How simple and free was the intercourse between the patriarchs and the Lord Jehovah whenever He made Himself known to them; whereas, though He dwelt in the midst of Israel, it was in thick darkness, and they never could get personally into His presence. How free was the grant to Noah and to his sons? How stringent the restrictions placed on Israel! For, since it was Jehovah who brought them up out of the land of Egypt to be their God, they were to be holy, for He was holy (Lev. 11:45). The privilege of being God's people, which was great, entailed on them responsibilities which were not to be neglected. So it always must be By Israel, as we are told in this chapter, ceremonial defilement was to be carefully avoided. With Christians the danger arises from that which is within (2 Cor. 7:1).

The distinction between clean and unclean animals was known before the flood (Gen. 7:2). Here, however, the Lord for the first time gives marks by which to distinguish them, whilst in Deut. 14:4, 5, Moses, by God's command, mentions the beasts that were clean. The distinguishing marks were two; the one relating to their habit, the other to something which characterized them in their walk. The habit was that of ruminating, or chewing the cud. The characteristic about their walk was that they parted the hoof, and were cloven footed. Thus the habit, and the character of the walk were common to all the beasts of which the Israelites might eat. Such comprised those of the herd, or of the flock, from which alone sacrificial victims could be selected, and the hart, the roebuck or gazelle, and fallow deer, the wild goat, the pygarg or antelope, the wild ox or oryx, the chamois, or perhaps mountain sheep. Of these the hart, roebuck, and fallow deer, were served up daily at Solomon's table (1 Kings 4:23). The rest are not mentioned elsewhere in the Old Testament.

To be a beast fit for an Israelite's table, it must have had both the above-mentioned distinguishing marks. The presence of the one without the other, whether real or apparent, would not suffice. We say real or apparent, because though neither the coney nor the hare chew the cud, yet they move their jaws in such a way that a common observer might class them as ruminants with the cow and the camel. So to instruct such as would never be naturalized, the law-giver uses language which is not scientifically correct. He spake in a manner that all could understand. This is often the way in Scripture. By the rules laid down, then, the camel, the coney, the hare, and the pig, were all excluded from the list of beasts fit for the people's food. Of their flesh they were not to eat, nor their carcasses were they to touch. They were unclean to them. These directions, however, about clean and unclean, rested not here. All animated nature was thus classified, and in a very simple way. Beasts, fishes, birds, insects, and reptiles, were arranged by the Creator in one or other of these classes.

As to fishes, the possession of both fins and scales were requisite for any of them to be reckoned clean. Of birds, all were clean, except certain kinds which are enumerated. Carnivorous, omnivorous, foul-feeding birds, and night birds were unclean. By this standard, eagles, vultures, ravens, hawks, and owls, were shut out, as well as the ostrich, translated "owl" in verse 16, the gull, translated "cuckoo," the ibis, perhaps translated "swan," and the lapwing or hoopoe. Everything, too, which crept, though it had wings, was forbidden, except such as had legs above their feet to leap withal upon the earth, which comprised, it would seem, four species of locusts, among which the beetle could never be classed, for the word chargol, translated beetle (verse 22), must be taken as the name of some kind of locust. Of creeping things that creep upon the earth, the weasel (or perhaps mole), the mouse, and different kinds of lizards, translated in the authorized version tortoise, ferret, chameleon, snail, and the mole (or perhaps the chameleon) are enumerated as unclean. Besides, however, being merely unclean everyone was to be an abomination unto them, it was not to be eaten. "Whatsoever goeth upon the belly, and whatsoever goeth on all four, or whatsoever hath more feet among all creeping things that creep upon the earth, them shall ye not eat, for they are an abomination" (verses 41, 42).

No one, then, of the common people, even when made acquainted with the marks which distinguished the clean from the unclean animal, need make any mistake. Scientific distinctions, however correct, or the classification of genera, however full, would have been here out of place. God could have given such by Moses, had it pleased Him! From whence has man derived his knowledge of the things of nature, but from the Creator? (Isa. 28:26). But for the unlearned, the common people, scientific distinctions would have been of little use without a special education, and natural ability to receive it. Now, in no country are all the inhabitants capable of such an attainment. Yet it was necessary that every one in Israel, from the highest to the lowest, should learn about clean and unclean animals. Hence God directed Moses thus to classify them. For it is probable that a ready and a simple way of distinguishing what they might eat and what not, was all that they were intended to understand; coupled, however, with the reminder that enjoying the privilege of being Jehovah's people, they were to keep themselves from being defiled by eating of animals of which Gentiles were free to partake. But we, who are taught in the New Testament deeper lessons than Israel ever were, may draw from these directions about clean and unclean, important teaching for ourselves, learning from the characteristic marks enumerated by Moses, what those moral features are, which in God's sight are regarded as clean.

To chew the cud and to be cloven footed, marked the clean beast. To ponder over the truth we receive, and to walk firmly, and after the pattern of the Lord Jesus, should characterize Christians. "Let this mind' be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." "Be ye followers of me as even I also am of Christ." "Walk so as ye have us for an ensample " (Phil. 2:5, 1 Cor. 11:1, Phil. 3:17). These, and kindred exhortations, treat of uniformity in walk. To have fins and scales characterized clean fishes. Motive power, and guidance to go even against the stream, and to pass through the surrounding element without being hindered by it; such features should be seen in Christians who are exhorted to overcome (Rev. 3), and to resist the snares and attractions of the world (1 John 2:5; 5:6; James 4:4). Carrion eating, foul feeding, omnivorous, and night birds, as well as everything that crept upon the earth, locusts excepted, which had legs above their feet to leap withal upon the earth, were unclean to the Israelite. So the loving of darkness rather than light must be foreign to a Christian; and the having fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness must be wholly eschewed (John 3:19, Eph. 5:11). Carnality, too, is to be avoided. (Gal. 5:19-21, Eph. 5:3,4, Col. 3:5); and that lack of discrimination as to teaching, so common in these days, with the imbibing of any and every form of doctrine, is to be carefully guarded against (1 John 2:20-27, 2 Tim. 4:3, 4), and all groveling propensities are to be avoided (Phil. 3:19). Further, it should be noticed that, whereas the beasts which did not chew the cud, nor were cloven footed, were simply called unclean; the fish, the birds, and the reptiles that were forbidden the people are written of by the law-giver as abominations. Now, whatever the Israelite might have thought of this difference in terms, to us who get moral instruction from this subject, the distinction is intelligible. The absence of the characteristic features of the clean beast in any Christian would indicate something lacking in that person, whereas the presence in any one of such features as characterized the unclean fish, &c., would be manifested by ways and habits which should be wholly foreign to every one who fears the name of Christ.

On the Feast of Tabernacles

(LEVITICUS. 23:33-34)

DISTINCTIVE is it to this feast, that it has no antitype.

There were three great feasts-the Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles; in each of these all the males were to present themselves at Jerusalem. Christ is our Passover; the Holy Ghost is our Pentecost; the feast of Tabernacles is not yet come, and nothing in the history of the people of God as yet answers to it. This feast occurred after the harvest and the vintage. The harvest is the end of the age, the ingathering and judgments of God which distinguish and sever; the vintage is the vintage of the wrath of God on the vine of the earth, whose grapes are ripe for the treading in the winepress of the wrath of God.

The feast of Tabernacles cannot be kept save when Israel, after having traversed the desert, is in the land, in commemoration of which they were wont to pass seven days in tabernacles. Herein we have the joy of the people of God: it is not merely the joy in our hearts of salvation; but God, whose will it is to have His people around Him, attracts them by the love of Christ (the Passover), gathers them by the Spirit (Pentecost), judges the evil and delivers His people, in order to put them into possession of the joy of that promise (Tabernacles). Deut. 16 gives us these three great feasts, with a difference, however, as to their moral object.

There is, in a certain sense, joy in not being a slave in the land of Egypt; but then there is, at the same time, the bread of affliction. Precious is it when the means by which God will deliver us are before us; but inseparable therefrom is the thought, that we have been slaves in the land of Egypt. The leavened bread, which has to be put aside, recalls the prohibition: we are in haste; there is deliverance, -but after partaking we need to hasten home. The Pentecost goes a little further.

The leading thought in it is joy and grace due to the stranger, the orphan, and the widow; and the name of the Lord is the center of the joy of the people who surround Him. By their very joy, the people are seen to be no longer slaves; this answers to that which is said to us about walking in the Spirit.

In the feast of Tabernacles there is no longer need even to be on one's guard. 'Tis pure joy, and the commandment is "to rejoice." When God has done all for the gathering of His people-when the people are in the enjoyment of all-when Satan, bound, can no longer hinder our joy-the joy will be without mixture, without fear, and without end.

At the Passover there is the bread of affliction; at the Pentecost there is still need to be on one's guard in this world of sin, to observe the commandments; but when we shall be gathered to God we shall be in possession of the promises, and the only commandment is to rejoice.

The child of God is still in the position to remember the bondage of Egypt, and to watch that he may walk in the Spirit. He sighs for the time of the full blessing, and that so much the more, because we more fully understand the things which God has prepared for those that love Him.

When changed, or raised from the dead, the more completely our hearts range abroad, the more will God be glorified. Now joy exposes us to the danger of a fall, if we do not remember our deliverance from Egypt, and if we are not watchful to walk in the Spirit, whilst we are still in the flesh. Rev. 14:15-20 speaks of the harvest and of the vintage of the earth; Isa. 63 speaks of the wine-press of the wrath of God; Matt. 13 shows that the harvest is the end of the age: there is not merely judgment but gathering, separation of the tares from the good grain. The vintage takes place when that which remains is decidedly bad, and is trodden in the press of the wrath and indignation of God. It is after this that the fullness of the joy of the people of God takes place, when the evil which prevents us enjoying the goodness of God has been destroyed. Music and singing come after the judgments, and the deliverance of the earth laid waste by sin.

The trumpets in the Apocalypse are the trumpets of woe; the seventh in the Apocalypse is followed by songs of triumph. The feast of Tabernacles is divided into two parts-glory terrestrial, and glory celestial. It will become Israel to remember that it has been in the desert. As for us, it is not sin which keeps us in the wilderness, it is Christ-it is our portion as being partakers of the sufferings and of the death of Christ, If death comes there will be naught but joy, if we walk faithfully in the wilderness. Such is our position. And it is on this account that there is added to the feast of Tabernacles an eighth day, commencement of a new week, into which we must enter by resurrection. The joy was obligatory; the great day of the feast all were there. It is something over and above the seven days which God gives to the earth, and it enters into a state of things into which resurrection' alone introduces. John 7 gives us a commentary on this. It was not yet time for Christ to show Himself to the world; that will take place when He shall appear at the true feast of Tabernacles. His brethren represent the unbelieving Jews. Later He goes up to the feast privately; but the great day, the eighth day, He shows Himself openly, figure of what was to take place by means of His death and resurrection.

He proclaims the river of living water for those who shall believe-He proclaims grace to whosoever thirsts. It was concerning the reception of the Holy Ghost, who is the earnest of that heavenly glory into which Jesus was about to enter, of which He spake.

The Holy Spirit is the witness in our hearts of that glory of man-of the Son of Man-seal in our souls, earnest of the inheritance which is given to us while waiting for the full manifestation of the glory. It is not merely the Holy Spirit as the principle of life, that is given in John 3, but a river which overflows on every side of us, because we have the knowledge of that joy and of that glory which belongs to us. This it is which makes us sigh after the time when such things shall be ours, and when we shall enjoy, in liberty, all the fruits of grace.

To the Christian, death is ceasing from death, dying is ceasing to die. Here death surrounds me on every side, in every form, and I am dying daily; but this ceases to me at death. Then I leave all that into which death and dying can enter, and I go there, where all is life. True, I shall not have my resurrection-body then, but absent from the body and present with the Lord, I shall be there where life is, and where life fills all according to its measure.

Ordinances

WITH the Apostle Paul, there was a great question between faith and ordinances—but he never surrendered the right of the one to the pretensions of the other.

In the former dispensation, ordinances abounded. The soul, so to express it, was only on the way to salvation then; but now we are called to enjoy accomplished, perfected salvation, to know it by faith.

Accordingly, all the ordinances of the house of God in this age are celebrations, and not helps. They are made to celebrate our redemption, and we triumph in them instead of being helped by them. Baptism celebrates our personal salvation, and the supper in the midst of the assembled saints tells of their redemption by blood, the blood of the precious Lamb of God. But so in like manner, other ordinances—the covered female and the uncovered male, and the presence of the Holy Ghost in the midst of the gathered saints, have voices likewise that are heard telling of salvation. And so outside or abroad in the world, all our service (being the service of love and gratitude), and the prospect of our souls (being in expectation and desire, and not fear), with equal certainty and clearness, tell the same mystery of full deliverance. We wait for the Son from heaven who has delivered us from the wrath to come.

All, in a certain sense, though in a different way, celebrate salvation. The ordinances of God's present house may remind us of the lame man who took up his bed and walked, as soon as Jesus had spoken the word of healing to him—for, in token of perfected health and strength, we hold up what once helped and strengthened, and sustained us.

The Tillage of the Poor

THE Lord abhors the trafficking in unfelt truth. In heaven there may be ignorance, or want of knowledge, but no such thing as the possession of unfelt truth. The angels are heavenly creatures, but they confess their ignorance by their desire to know (1 Peter 1:12). Ignorant of certain truths they are, but not uninterested about them.

A little knowledge with personal exercise of spirit over it is better than much knowledge without it. As the proverb says " There is much food in the tillage of the poor." For the poor make the most of their little. They use the spade, the hoe, and the mattock; they weed, and they dress, and they turn up their little garden of herbs. And their diligence gets much food out of it. And we are to be these "poor Ones, 'Never to use divine Scripture as they carry out their tillage, and make the most of our little. It may be but milk we feed on, but if we use our diligence to put aside malice and hypocrisies and envies, and the like, we shall be really feeding and growing (1 Peter 2). And because of this much more savor of Christ do we often find in those we have less knowledge, for their's is this " Tillage of the poor " (Prov. 13:23).

True Condition of Soul in Order to Be a Worshipper

"WORSHIP always supposes self-will to be broken. In the preceding chapters of Genesis Abraham is seen in Egypt, and we have observed that, while there, he built no altar; but Abraham left Egypt, and then, having given it up, he could build an altar to the Lord. When David saw the child he loved sick, he fasted and frayed, but he was wrestling with God—his will was of brought into subjection. When the child Was dead, David changed his raiment, ate and drank, and then he could come into the house of the Lord and worship; because the struggle in his heart ceased, and his will was broken. Job, after those heavy afflictions described in the first chapter (the loss of goods and children), rent his mantle indeed (ver. 20), (in all this he sinned not we are told—his sorrow was legitimate—it was not wrong in him to grieve at the loss of his children); but he fell down before God and worshipped; He could worship, because in him self-will was broken, and he could say, "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord!" But, in this chapter, we find something beyond what we have seen in Job and in David. They indeed acquiesced in the will of God, but their submission was passive, requiring no act on their part. This is not the case in Gen. 22:4 Abraham is not only called to accept the will of God, but to act against himself. He is obliged, so to speak, to offer himself up, for to offer up his son was nothing less. God says to him, "offer up thy son, thine only son." The name of a person expresses to us all that concerns that person, and our relationships with him. Thy son! That word touched the tenderest feelings—and he was to offer up that son! That name, moreover, recalled God's promises, and it was in this son that they were to be fulfilled, for God had said positively, "In Isaac shall thy seed be called." But he whose will is subject to God, rests satisfied with two things, "God will provide," and "I am with God." All hope in the flesh as to the accomplishment of the promises, must be given up, so that God may stand alone as the spring of life, blessings, and promises; as the one whose resources can never be exhausted, even when those means He has Himself pointed out fail for the accomplishment of His promises.

Thus God tries the heart, in order to destroy all confidence in the flesh; but at the same time, knowing that the heart needs support in the trial, He sustains it by a new revelation, which enables him to conquer. Thus we see (Heb. 11:19), that Abraham had a revelation of resurrection (which was then understood), in connection with the sacrifice that was demanded of him. Thus God causes us, in His infinite mercy, to gain in Him what we lose in the flesh.

It was apart from the servants, that is, alone with Isaac and God, that Abraham received this revelation, and learned to offer up the goat instead of his son, as he had himself said, "God will provide Himself a lamb." And it is in the secret communion with God that we learn most of Him. In Jesus, the true Worshipper of the Father, there was no self-will to be broken: the cup was (we know,) full of bitterness; but He, so to speak, forgets this bitterness in his desire to do the will of God, and exclaims, "The cup which my Father hath given me shall I not drink it?"

" Light Affliction."

2 Corinthians. 4:17.

LIGHT affliction for a moment,
Working glory even now,
Tribulation working patience,
Through the desert as we go.
Weight of glory, far exceeding
All that ear of man hath heard,
Present thing or things to-morrow,
What can change His wondrous word?
Had we looked at things now passing,
Did we rest on nature's shore,
Lost we not the blest renewings,
Day by day and hour by hour.
Strengthened from the power of glory,
Vessel-grace He'll still bestow,
As we bear the peerless treasure,
All the checkereda journey through.
Light we, freighted with such glory;
Fainting not though weak within.,
Bright to faith, the blest to-morrow,
Lost in love, at home with Him.
Here we wander on with Jesus,
Tourists once, but pilgrims now,
Home to hope in sweet communion,
Lights the path we onward go.
There on high, our hearts' affections

Carried by Himself within;
Here on earth the Christ's rejection,
Shrouding every earthly scene.
There, Himself in all His glory,
Satisfaction, rest, and borne;
Here His cross, and shame, and sorrow,
Bear we gladly till He come.

Sons of the Highest: " " Sons of Light."

Luke 6, 16

WHO are these with fruit and beauty

In a famined earth?

In the deeps of Grace's glory

They have had their birth.

Fruit from off the Tree of Wisdom,

(Gold could never price),

In the garden God hath planted,

His own paradise.

In a richer grace than Zion's

They are sent to shine,

Whence the ark itself is dwelling,

He—the Life divine.

Not Jerusalem that rested

Neath Mount Zion's care,

Blest indeed, but Joab-builed,

Soon his fate to share:

Walled on earth, compact together—

Unity of sight,

Till the womb of counsel travailed

With the sons of Light.

Now, Jerusalem their "mother,"

From her timeless place,

Gives to Zion, out from heaven,

Treasures of "all grace."

There they joy and there they worship,

There, the Head and Spring,
Rivers of whose living waters,
They, the vessels, bring.
Thence they live, in favor nourished,
Children of the day,
Meting with the wondrous measure
Fit for such as they.
Not a mere position only
Have the Highest's sons;
They are " heirs through God "—His givers,
Consecrated ones.
Come—to prove they are His vessels,
His, in -Whom is life, (John 1:4).
Giving 'mid the wild commotion
Of the people's strife.
Givers, like the sun in heaven,
Silently below,
Blessing even "the unthankful"
Everywhere they go.
Joyous, in the steps and errands
Of the hidden Christ,
Satisfied ere yet they served Him,
With Himself sufficed.

A Man in Christ

"I KNEW," says the apostle, "a man in Christ;" but this is often very vague in many a Christian's heart. In paradise, without law, under the law, and through the presenting of Christ to him, man was responsible for his own conduct as a living man, for things done in the body. He was viewed as a child of Adam, or "in the flesh." He stood, that is before God, in that nature in which he had been created, responsible for his conduct in it, for what he was in the flesh. The result was, that in respect of every one of these conditions he had failed; failing in paradise, lawless when without law, a transgressor when under law, and worst of all, the closing ground of judgment when Christ came, proved to be without a cloak for sin, the hater of Him and His Father. Man was lost. In a state of probation for four thousand years, the tree had been proved bad, and the more care the worse the fruit. All flesh was judged. The tree was to bear no fruit forever. It was not all, that man fallen, and guilty, was driven out of paradise; but Christ, come in grace, was, as far as man's will was concerned, driven out of the world, which was plunged in the misery to which sin had led, and which He had visited in goodness. Man's history was morally closed. "Now," says the Lord when the Greeks come up, "is the judgment of this world." Hence it is we have "He appeared once in the end of the world." But now comes God's work for the sinner. He who knew no sin is made sin for us. He drinks graciously and willingly the cup given Him to drink. He lays down the life in which He bore the sin, gives it up; and all is gone with it. The very life our sin was borne in on the cross was given up, His blood shed. He has put away sin for every believer, by the sacrifice of Himself, has perfected them forever. The death of Christ has closed for faith the existence of the old man, the flesh, the first Adam-life, in which we stood as responsible before God, and whose place Christ took for us in grace. What the law could not do in that it was weak, through the flesh, God sending His only Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin condemned sin in the flesh. In that He died, He died unto sin once; in that He liveth, He liveth unto God. If we are alive, we are alive now on a new footing before God, alive in Christ. The old things are passed away, there is a new creation; we are created again in Christ Jesus.

Our place, our standing before God is no longer in flesh. It is in Christ. Christ, as man, has taken quite a new place, that neither Adam innocent nor Adam sinner had anything to say to. The best role formed no part of the prodigal's first inheritance at all; it was in the Father's possession, quite a new thing. Christ has taken this place consequent on putting away our sins, on having glorified God as to them, and finishing the work. He has taken it in righteousness, and man in Him, has got a new place in righteousness with God. When quickened, he is quickened with the life in which Christ lives, the second Adam, and submitting to God's righteousness, knowing that he is totally lost in the first and old man, and having bowed to this solemn truth, as shown and learned in the cross, he is sealed with the Holy Ghost, living united to the Lord, one Spirit; he is a man in Christ. Not in the flesh or in the first Adam. All that is closed for him in the cross when Christ made Himself responsible for him, in respect of it, and died unto sin once, and he is alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. He belongs to a new creation, having the life of the Head of it as his life. Where he learned the utter total condemnation of what he was, he learned its total and eternal

putting away. The cross is for him that impassable Red Sea, that Jordan which he has now gone through and is his deliverance from Egypt forever, and now he has realized it, his entrance into Canaan, in Christ. If 'Jordan and the power of death overflowed all its banks, for him the ark of the covenant passed in. It is just his way into Canaan. That which, if he had himself assayed to go through, as the Egyptians, would have been his destruction, has been a wall on the right hand and the left, and only destroyed all that was against him. He was a man in the flesh, he is a man in Christ.

One God and Father of All

THERE is something very remarkable about what is written of "One God and Father of all," in Eph. 4:6. (1) " Who is over all, and (2) through all, and (3) in all." I compare it with 1 Cor. 15:24; "To God and Father," i.e.," to (Him who is) God and Father." It is very obvious that in 1 Cor. 15:24, it is " God and Father " (of all), as in Eph. 4:6—" One God and Father of all." It is not in either place the Father of Christians (though the same Person who is so), but the first Person of the Trinity that is designated Father..It is not in His relationship in Christ to us, but in His mode of existence. It is God the Father in His creatorial, providential, and all-pervading nature who is spoken of. He is no doubt all this to Christians, but there is their added relationship to Him as God and Father in Christ: "My Father and your Father my God and your God " (also see Eph. 1:3-6).

"In all " (Eph. 4:6) is the true reading: not " in you all," which was the mere gloss of acknowledge, and because they did not see that it was " God and Father of all " in universal sovereignty as having all in His possession. They thought it must refer to the Church. But it is true that He who is God and Father of the universe, is He who in Christ Jesus is the Father of all who believe in the Son of God, and have the son standing.

This (v. 6) is God and the universe, and shows the all-comprehending sweep and magnitude of that into which we have been brought in Christ Jesus.

The unity is threefold.

(1) One Spirit and one Body.

(2)One Lord and one Christendom.

(3)One God, who is Father of all, and One Universe.

Spiritual Strength

No one will deny, and very many will sorrowfully own that Christian vitality is at a low ebb. On the one hand, there are numbers of true Christians scattered over the land; on the other, Christian life expresses itself but feebly. The doctrines of grace are widely known; great and glorious truths are on the lips of multitudes, but the practical exposition of the truth is little manifested. A few years ago the truth of, the coming of the Lord was, comparatively speaking, strange to evangelical Christendom; here and there one rejoiced in it; now thousands accept this truth. The believer's standing in a risen and ascended Christ not so long ago, was almost unknown language to multitudes of God's people, who at this present day accept the fact of this their position. We might enumerate other truths now generally received, which a few years gone by were only recognized by a handful of God's people. In the presence of unquestionable evidence we have the acknowledged fact of knowledge widely distributed, and also of spiritual vigor feebly existing.

Perhaps the solution to this anxious question may be indicated by the way in which truth is laid hold of. The few gained it by prayerful search, and by digging into the treasures of God's Word for themselves; the many gain it by the means of availing themselves of the labor of the few. The race of Bible students is not numerous. That is but little valued which costs but little to acquire. Again, there is a vast difference between laying hold of the truth, and being laid hold of by it. The truth makes free those whom it actually holds. The truth, is strong and strengthens our spirits.

There is, however, beyond these things a grave reality, to which we now desire to call our reader's attention; that is, our reader, who sighs over the little spiritual power which he finds in himself and also around him. It is the fact that truth is frequently taken up into the soul apart from Christ Not that any Christian is without Christ, for he is in Christ and Christ is in him, but in the sense that "apart from me ye can do nothing," truth may be acquired.

There are saints of God knowing their position in Christ, who are like men brought into a palace and told that the palace and its glories are theirs, and who rove from room to room astonished at its wonders. There are others, who, upon being brought into the palace, fix their affectionate longings upon the One who is its joy. We shall not value less the glories of the place into which we are brought, because we value more and more the Person of the Lord, who is the glory of the place.

Now it must ever be to the law and to the testimony, in the word and by the word the remedy shall be seen and administered by the Holy Spirit. We would then inquire, whether the moral beauties and excellencies of the life, of Jesus are sufficiently engaging our attention? Surely we are set in the palace of heavenly blessings in Christ that we may better know and appreciate Himself. It is spiritually easier to comprehend doctrines about Christ, than to perceive the loveliness of His ways. We need, beloved, to have the evangelists more in our hearts, and not their histories, as unfoldings of God's dispensational ways merely, but as life-words bringing to our souls, face to face, and to the eye and ear, the person of Jesus.

"The life of Jesus! " How great is the moral glory of His silence when He answered His accusers never one word. Even Pilate, the gentile governor, " marveled greatly." Herod hoped to see some miracle wrought by the meek and lowly One, he hoped to witness a mark of external power, but the silence of Jesus before him was power more wonderful still. Herod was blind to the glory, and he and his men of war set the lowly One at naught and robed Him in gorgeous mockery, and then sent Him back to Pilate. But this silence of Jesus commands our adoring worship. And do we not read, " Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifest in our body " (2 Cor. 4:10). Were His death truly reckoned on ourselves, His life would express itself, though feebly, we own, in our bodies.

Behold Him at the grave He came to empty of the beloved brother of Martha and Mary. See the tears flow down His face, and note His groans. Thus do our hearts learn by the life of Jesus to weep with those who weep. There do we obtain from Himself the treasure of His sympathy. Brethren, how softened would our spirits become if we held more company with the Lord. The Jews said, "Behold how He loved him." The Master's tears and sighs touched even their hearts. Oh! for bowels of Christ, His, who fills the palace of God's glory with everlasting luster, and who fills broken hearts below with peace. It is only as in company with Him, and as bearing about in our bodies His death, that the life of Jesus shall be manifested in us.

Yet without this manifestation, what is our Christianity? The religious world has its Christless Christianity; may not we be in a like danger! It is really futile to have knowledge at our fingers' ends if Christ be not flowing out in our lives. The perfect Man knew no jealous feelings, and this bane of God's servants will be abolished from their souls so long as they bear about in their bodies "the dying of Jesus." The simple reason why Christian vitality is at so low an ebb, is because there is so little of personal dealing with Christ Himself.

We must get back to the gospels, beloved, if we would walk as Christ walked. It is in the evangelists that we trace His steps. God grant us to study Him in His thoughts, His words, and His ways; to consider Him in His sighs and His tears, in His peace and His joy; to engage our whole souls with Him in His relationship to His God and Father, and in His ministry below. Our ambition should be that the life of Jesus should be manifested in our mortal bodies. To attain to this we must know what the life of Jesus is; and to do this, must get into the very atmosphere of the four gospels. The epistles teach us what it is to bear about in our bodies His dying. Perhaps, with this doctrine we are familiar. We know that He has died, and that we have died with Him; such is our liberty—marvelous and most wonderful liberty— freedom from self-self—gone in the grave of Christ. Yes, beloved, but how shall we deal with this liberty in relation to our state? Ah! then the question is personal and practical. How, indeed? How shall we bear about in our body His dying, when the flesh would not keep silence? Try it; yes try it, and see how much you know practically of a crucified Jesus. Bring this to bear upon the worries of daily life, on life's cares and follies, and see how much Christian vitality you possess. It is in proportion to the extent of your manifestation of the life of Jesus.

Heat, clamor, evil-speaking, uncharitableness, an overbearing spirit, all witness to the little Christian vigor that exists. Many, who have physical strength sufficient to roll away the stone of Lazarus's grave, lack the spiritual ability to weep with broken hearts. We need a humbler and more Christlike Christianity. We need go to the four gospels, brethren, for Christ. It would be a happy

thing, indeed, if having by grace been brought into the glorious place of our heavenly privilege in Christ, our enjoyed privilege was to be solely engaged with Christ Himself, and " so to walk even as He walked."

The Transformingpower of Seeing Christ Where He Is

Acts 7:54-60

As in the thief on the cross I get the model sinner—the pattern illustration of grace, so in Stephen I get the model Christian—God's pattern specimen of a saint on earth, linked with Christ in heaven. I show you a man of like passions with yourselves, going out of the world, and yet superior to everything in the world, before he goes out of it. If Moses of old said, " I will turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt," we may well occupy ourselves for a little, with the wondrous nature and extent of proper, distinctive, Christian position and power, as exhibited in the Scripture I have read. We behold a poor, feeble creature like you or me on this earth, mark, in the midst of the most trying circumstances in which you could conceive a man to be placed, subjected to the uncontrollable fury of religious bigotry, issuing from the masters in Israel—the highest ecclesiastical dignitaries in the land—the victim of the ungovernable rage of a cruel and excited mob, thirsting for his blood; yet grandly borne by a power not his own, so entirely and magnificently above and beyond the whole concentrated strength of the opposition of the nation, that his very enemies have to own they see his face shining like that of an angel. Could anything exceed this-beloved?

But what fills his vision all this time? On what is his attention rivetted? Is it on anything on earth? No; an all-absorbing, unparalleled object meets his entranced and delighted gaze, as he looks through the opened heavens. He sees the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God. Full of the Holy Ghost, his eye is steadfastly, undeviatingly, and unflinchingly fixed on this great, this stupendous sight, and he is equal to anything, surmounts every obstacle, and is carried in triumph above every opposing element around him, He is lost in the contemplation of a Savior in glory. Does this exempt him from suffering, or make an easy path on earth? Let the gnashing of teeth, and the stones answer. Does the suffering or the persecution turn him aside from beholding Jesus, or divert his eye from that allengrossing heavenly object? Assuredly not. His occupation is undistracted and uninterrupted; and that, too, in spite of the most formidable, difficulties against which it is possible to contend. Nothing moves him. He is commanded and controlled by what he is beholding, and he practically reproduces on earth what he sees in heaven. Now, I ask you to mark this model, It is a picture you ought to have in every one of your houses. I do not mean materially, but you ought to have it before your minds. I direct your attention to a wonderful fact, in connection with what is before us, and press it. Heaven was never opened to a mere man on earth before. Enoch was translated, and Elijah went up in a chariot of fire.. The heavens opened on Jesus when here; but He Was more than man. But never till this did heaven open to a man like you or me down here in this World, and, beloved friend it has been open ever since. From that moment to this it has never been closed. It is no longer what the angel said to the disciples in the first chapter, " Why stand ye gazing, up into heaven?" Then, the earth was not done with. In answer to the, prayer of our Lord upon the cross, " Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," God, in the riches of His mercy, gave the nation a further opportunity of receiving their Messiah in glory, even after they had rejected Him on earth. Alas, we know how they treated this

additional token of 'God's long-suffering patience, this lingering over them in love, and compassionate reluctance to give them up. They refused Christ in glory, as they had refused Him in humiliation. They would not have Him on earth, neither would they have Him in heaven, and Stephen is the messenger, they are about to, send after Him, to say: " We will not have this man to reign over us."

But God had something in reserve. Failure has succeeded failure in every dispensation in which man has been placed here, but after each failure God has brought out some further blessing. To this very messenger, the sending of whom seals the nation's doom., and leads to the definitive setting aside of earth, as a place of blessing for the present, heaven is opened before he goes, and the unfailing One is presented in an unfailing place, and, instead of it being said, " Why stand ye gazing up into heaven," that 'becomes the very thing for the Christian to do, for we read: " But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked 'up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God." Earth is closed, so to speak, heaven opened, and this is henceforth to be the Christian's occupation. The remarkable change in the dealings of God in Acts 7, as contrasted with chap. it is of the utmost moment to note, if we are to answer to the thoughts of Christ about His, people now. I get even-a further thing in Paul still. In Stephen get heaven opened 'to a man on earth, who is going out of it, superior to everything in it, yet going out of it; but in Paul I get a man, who is caught up to the third heaven, and then sent back again to the earth to communicate to us the wonders of the place. Not only heaven for a saint going to die; but heaven for a saint going to live; and as to going, there are three states of soul, which I will enumerate, and give an example of each. In Simeon I find one who is ready to go; in Stephen, one who is happy to go; and in Paul, one who longs to go. I am anxious every one of you should clearly apprehend, that what we have here is the introduction of a new dealing of God. It is an inauguration scene. It is the opening out of what is distinctive. We always get the special features of a thing at the time of its inauguration. There are two characteristics which I desire to bring before you at this time, as taught here:—I. Association with Christ, where Christ is. II. The power of Christ, where Christ is not.

Let me try, by God's help, to trace for you first, the former of these two characteristics, viz.,

Association With Christ Where He Is

Turn for a moment to Gen. 3:24, " So he drove out the man, and placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubim, and a flaming sword, which turned every way to keep the way of the tree of life." You observe, it is not only man is driven out; but he cannot get back. The Cherubim, and the flaming sword turned every way to guard the entrance, and prevent the possibility of return. Man is driven out of a place, and kept out of a place. The glory of God required this. Afterward, when we come to the thief on the cross, everything is cleared. What makes him fit to enter is effected, and the barrier to the place is removed besides, for our Lord says, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise;" in other words " a place with me in my place; " consequently, the flaming sword is gone. But at this point, what I wish you to note here is, that the glory of God drives man out and keeps him out. To take you a step further, I will not now refer to the glory in connection with the law. You will remember how, that, making a demand on man, he could not endure it, not even the reflection of it on the face of Moses. It said "Keep at a distance." Man could not draw near, lest he die. You might look, however, with me at Isa. 6:1-8. There is Isaiah, a prophet of God, and of course converted, but the moment he gets a sight of the glory of God; he exclaims, " Woe is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." It is clear he was not in it, when the very sight of it terrifies him, and overpowers him with the sense of his unfitness for it. But one of the seraphim flew to him with a live coal. Now, mark, it was a live coal, a burning coal. Observe the double action, he closes his mouth, and addresses his ear. He laid the burning coal on his mouth, and said, " Lo, this hath touched thy lips," that is, you are set aside in judgment, and your mouth is stopped; but now comes the story of grace, the tale of love, and from that very glory that so alarmed him, which is the remarkable thing: " thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Now his fear is gone. If such a message has come from that very glory, there is no more terror in that direction, and when the voice of the Lord is heard saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go? " Immediately Isaiah cries, " Here am I, send me." No terror now; all fear has fled. Still, dear friends, blessed as this is, it was something from glory: he was not in the glory. There is no association, and could not be, for there was not even a man in that glory to be associated with yet. Next we shall look at Ezek. 1., where we have a description of the glory of the Lord about to depart. In verses 26, 27, we find the wonderful circumstance related, that there is a likeness as the appearance of a man, conspicuous in the vision of this receding glory. The sin of the people is driving it from the earth.. Man is actually driving it away, and yet, marvelous to behold, in the very brightest spot of that retiring glory, shining with amber-colored brilliancy, is to be seen the figure of a man. Not yet the fact; but there is the likeness of a man in the glory of Jehovah, as it takes its departure, never to be seen on this earth again, until the real Man is born into the world, that Holy Thing, born of the Virgin, and called the Son of God. Accordingly, we read in Luke 2:9-11. "And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon (the shepherds), and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them: Fear not; for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Then in verse 14, "Glory to God in the highest, and on

earth peace, good pleasure in man." At last we have the Man, God manifest in the flesh. One who glorifies ad in everything. Thirty years in private life He maintains a spotless walk, perfect in every detail, magnifies the law and makes it honorable. At the end of this period heaven opens upon Him, and announces its fullest delight. A voice proclaims the Father's good pleasure: "Lo, this is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." He goes forth to public service, is the obedient and dependent Man, whose meat is to do the will of His Father, and finish His work. He `ever does those things which please the Father; manifests God in every act, and word, and look; delights to do His will; glorifies God in public life, as before He had done it in private life. And in Luke 9:28 we find, that glory claims Him. On the transfiguration mount, " the fashion of His countenance was altered, and His raiment white and glistening." As Peter says, " We were eye-witnesses of his majesty, for he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory; This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him on the holy mount." He could have gone to heaven then; the glory salutes and claims Him; but the astonishing subject of the conversation of Moses and Elias, who talk with Him, is death, not glory. "They spake of his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem." Like the Hebrew servant, He could have gone out free, but He would have had to go alone. He says; "I love my master, I love my wife, and I love my children," and He gets His ear bored, ' that He may have them with Him too. Was ever love like His? He descends from the mount; but He does it to die. In John 12:24, He tells us, " Verily, 'eerily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." He must abide the one, solitary grain, or go into death. No union with Him this side His grave; hence the impossibility of association with Him here. There is no getting others, who were lying in death, to be with Him, except by putting Himself first in death for them. Therefore, we find in the next chapter (John 13:31,32) Jesus saying when Judas had gone out, " Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." In the former chapter, thee Son of God had been glorified in raising Lazarus from the dead, but now is the Son of man glorified by going into death Himself. "And God is glorified in Him." He had glorified God in private life, He had glorified God in public life. Glory found its home with Him in Bethlehem, when born into the world; in manhood, when heaven opened to express its unmeasured delight; and when he had reached the close of His public service, God's good pleasure is expressed once more, as the answer to that perfect spotless life, and from that holy mount He might have gone up into the excellent glory; but He would not go there alone, and the same Blessed One who was shining brighter than the sun on the mount, when the voice from the excellent glory claimed Him as " My beloved Son," now goes down to glorify God under all the terrible weight of judgment, and to enter an impenetrable gloom, without one ray of light, and to cry: " My God, my God, why halt thou forsaken me? " "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him." God is perfectly glorified, sin perfectly manifested, and the work completely accomplished, which puts it away; in a word, God, in all that He is, glorified in the death of His Son. And what then? "If God be glorified in him, God shall also glorify him in himself, and shall straightway glorify him." The glory of the Father raised Him from the dead, and after forty days on earth He ascends. " He led his disciples out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them; and it came to pass while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven." What a wondrous fact to contemplate. A Man has gone up into the glory of God, more than man surely, but a real true man. Imagine what a sight it must have been for the heavenly hosts to witness as this blessed One

ascends. Higher and higher He goes, passing rank after rank; principalities, powers, angels, all left behind in the marvelous ascent, till He reaches the very highest point in glory. As Eph. 1 puts it, "Far above all principality and power, might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come." Where does Stephen see Him? At the right hand of God. Now I have got a Man in glory, and a Man who did not go there until He accomplished a work whereby I might be there too. Now there can be association, and you see, beloved friends, what a wonderful thing association is. I must first have the Man in order to have association with Him; but where? "At the right hand of God." Did it ever strike you how the Spirit of God seems to labor to educate the children of God on this very point? It appears as if He would spare no pains to get us instructed as to the exact spot where Christ is, and yet how little it is realized. Mark 16:19, "He was received up into heaven, and at on the right hand of God." Acts 2:33, "By the -right hand of God exalted." Twice over in this portion of Acts 7, which we are considering, we have "on the right hand of God." Rom. 8:33, "Who is even at the right hand of God." Eph. 1:20, "Set him at his own right hand." Col. 3:1, "Where Christ sitteth at the right hand of God." Heb. 1:3, "Sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

Chapter 8:1, "Who is set on the right hand of the throne in the Majesty in the heavens." Chapter 10:12, "Forever sat down on the right hand of God." Chapter 12:2, "And: is set down on the right hand of the throne of God." 1 Peter 3:22, "Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers, being made subject unto him." Is there no purpose in all this? Depend upon it, beloved friends, where Christ is, is of momentous interest to you and me. Why, the Holy Ghost could not be given, till Jesus was glorified, and there could be no union to Christ without the Holy Ghost. But why so careful to present Him in that special spot, "the right hand?" Because it is the very highest point in glory, and the moment it becomes a question of association, the position of the One to whom you are united determines everything. If I am on the shoulders of the Shepherd, the higher I see Him the higher I see myself, as there by His grace. The right hand is the place of honor, favor, and acceptance, and likewise the place of power, and, I ask, is Christ there for Himself? Nay, but for us. He might have remained forever in the glory He had with the Father before the world was, had it been a question of Himself; but He became a man, perfectly glorified God in life and in death here, and entered into glory as man, that He might share it all with you and me. Then if He is there for me, if He is my representative, am I not to get the good of what He represents? I am in the same favor, the same acceptance, for I am accepted in the Beloved. But how can I, a poor feeble creature down here, be associated with that blessed One up there? In no way, except by the Holy Ghost. And is not the right hand the place of power as well as the place of acceptance? Does not Peter tell me that it is the very spot from which the Holy Ghost, who is the uniting power, comes? "Therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." What is the astonishing result? Poor good-for-nothing creatures like you and me down here, are associated with that glorious Savior up there. I am endeavoring to speak of it to you; but have any of us the sense of what association with Christ in glory really is? It is not merely some wonderful favor received from Christ, though the favors we have received from Him are unspeakable. Government might confer some remarkable benefit on me; but that would be a very different thing from me being in the Government itself, a member of the Cabinet. The Queen might present me with some precious jewel; but that would not be bringing me into the circle of royalty, or making me a member of the royal family. I am sensible, dear friends, of the poverty of the

illustrations; for what illustration could adequately convey the full significance of the astounding reality? Poor sinners like you and me, not only cleared of everything in the sight of God, forgiven, and the recipients of the most wonderful benefits, but united by the Holy Ghost to Christ in the highest glory, a part of Himself, a member of His body, one Spirit with Him, associated with Him in the place where He is. Who is sufficient to unravel the depths of this? Still it is ours, and the enjoyment of it can only be known in association with Christ where He now sits at the right hand of God. The Spirit of God in us always directs the eye there. Here is Stephen, "full of the Holy Ghost, he looked up steadfastly into heaven and saw the glory of God and Jesus."

(To be continued.)

The Remnant

You ask about the term remnant. You are correct that it is used in Scripture of God's earthly people Israel, but not of the Church of God.

Israel being God's people not by profession merely, but in truth, whether they were individually converted or not, the Lord in executing judgment on them for their sins did not exterminate them, but left a residue, a remnant; in the land after the Assyrian invasion of Samaria, and will yet bring back a remnant when the time for their final blessing shall arrive.

Now at no time since the capture of Samaria by Sargon, has the whole nation been in the enjoyment of divine favor; nor will it ever be, as a whole, though the twelve tribes will be preserved, and reinstated in the land, as Ezekiel states. But from him we also learn that not every individual among the ten tribes who will be recognized as of the seed of Jacob, will re-enter the land of promise; the rebels and transgressors amongst them will be purged out, whilst the tribes are on their way (Ezek. 20:38). As to the Jews restored to their land in unbelief, two parts will be cut off and die, and only the third part will be finally preserved; so it will be in the future as it has been in the past, that only a remnant of the nation will share in the favor of God.

From the days of Hezekiah the term remnant became applicable, and was used. He himself used it, asking the prophet to lift up his prayer for the remnant that was-left (2 Kings 19:4). The answer of God by Isaiah assured the king of that remnant's then preservation (v. 31). Subsequently God announced, that the remnant was to be forsaken because of their sins (2 Kings 21:13,14). That took place under Nebuchadnezzar, whose dynasty falling, and with it the Babylonish monarchy, paved the way for a remnant to return in the days of Zerubbabel and Ezra, in order that the Messiah might come by whose death Israel will by and bye be finally blessed.

Hezekiah viewed all that remained as only a remnant in his day. Ezra viewed those that returned in a similar light (Ezra 9:14). And Haggai and Zechariah speaking by the Spirit of God, acknowledged them as such (Hag. 1:12-14; 2:2; Zech. 8:6), and the latter gave hopes of blessing for the remnant in the future (8:11, 12). These blessings will surely be made good, but it will be only to a remnant, as Zech. 13:9, tells us.

Meanwhile, a remnant still shares in blessing, and becomes part of the Church. Of this Paul was a witness, and, with all the other believers from Israel makes up the remnant, according to the election of grace (Rom. 11:5). At whatever period then, of their national history from Hezekiah's days and onwards there has not been, nor will there be, anything but a remnant, which will in the future enjoy all the national blessings of which the prophets have written.

Turning our thoughts to the Church it is manifest the term remnant would not apply, for the assembly is viewed as existing as a whole on earth, though in one sense, as spoken of in Eph. 1,22, it is not all on earth at any one time. But in both its local and general aspects, it is regarded as on earth, and in the enjoyment of the privileges of the Church of God.

There is, perhaps, a confusion in some minds between the remnant" and" the rest" (Rev. 2:24.). Addressing the local assembly at Thyatira the Lord distinguishes between those unfaithful and those faithful, and calls these latter " the rest," thus marking them off as distinct in His thoughts from those who aided and abetted Jezebel; but in doing that, He addresses the local assembly as a whole. Much instruction we may surely derive from the remnant of, Haggai's days, but a remnant, or " the remnant " is a term one would not use with reference to the Church. We should deny thereby, the existence of the Church as a whole on earth viewed in its general aspect, about which Paul wrote in 1 Tim. 3:15.

Leviticus

BUT the directions in this chapter, not only defined what was suited for an Israelite's table, they also taught him in what light he was to view the creature when dead. If a clean beast died of itself, contact with its carcass communicated defilement, and the one who had touched it had to wash his clothes, and to be unclean until the evening, i.e., until the close of that period of time. For death is an unclean thing, being for man the fruit of sin, and Israel were always to remember that. Hence any man who eat of such a carcass was thereby rendered unclean, as well as the man who might have carried it, and both of them had to wash their clothes in water, and to wait till eventide to be clean (verses 39, 40). How easily defilement was contracted. Unwittingly, the Israelite might have touched the carcass, or perhaps necessity may have required it, yet, no matter from what cause, the effect was the same, the man was thereby rendered unclean.

Suppose a festive occasion, on which the family and household were about to partake of their portion of a peace offering, any one among them who had touched the carcass of a clean beast that had died of itself, would on that account be shut out from having fellowship with the others. All the rest would be feasting on the peace offering, but he would be excluded from any part of it. Necessity might have brought him into contact with the carcass; nevertheless he was rendered unclean, and as such, shut out from the feast. How hard on him some might have thought, but that was not the real question. Jehovah his God was holy, and He could not allow anyone in uncleanness to have fellowship with Him.

If such was the inexorable law regarding the carcass of a clean beast, which had died of itself, little wonder would be expressed, as a man heard of the regulations concerning the carcass of an unclean beast. Of course the person who touched such a carcass would be unclean till the evening (31). But more, " Upon whatsoever any of them when they are dead doth fall, it shall be unclean, whether it be any vessel of wood, or raiment, or skin, or sack, whatsoever vessel it be, wherein any work is done, it must be put into water; and it shall be unclean until the even, so shall it be cleansed. And every earthen vessel where into any of them falleth, whatsoever is in it shall be unclean; and ye shall break it. Of all meat which may be eaten, that on which any such water cometh shall be unclean, and all drink that may be drunk in every such vessel shall be unclean, and everything whereon any part of their carcass falleth shall be unclean. whether it be oven, or ranges for pots, they shall be broken down, for they are unclean, and shall be unclean unto you" (32-35). Such were the rigorous directions of this law touching the carcass of any creeping thing. A man, his meat, his drink, his garment, or vessels for household work, all would be rendered unclean; and the ranges for pots, or fire hearths, had to be broken down, if a dead mouse, or lizard, or other creeping thing had fallen on any of them. Uncleanness was easily communicated,

and the carcass of an unclean creeping thing defiled everything that came into contact with it, except it were a fountain or pit wherein there was plenty of water, or sowing seed intended to be sown, and on which no water had previously come (36-38).

To an Israelite these exceptions might have appeared simply as positive precepts, the reasons of which were not communicated to him. To Christians they appear in the light of moral precepts, the reasons for which are apparent. For in the midst of this scene of moral uncleanness from the presence of sin, there is One who cannot be defiled, viz., the Holy Ghost, who is figuratively spoken of in the Word under the emblem of water (John 4:7). Undefined was that water the Israelite learned. Undefined, we gladly own, is the Holy Ghost, whether we think of Him as the Spirit of God coming from above, or as dwelling on earth in the assembly, and in the saint. There was something, then, which the carcass of the creeping thing could not make unclean. There is One who, though on earth, is absolutely pure, whilst the whole world lieth in the wicked one, and sin dwells in those in whom He also dwells. But He cannot be defiled, though man, alas, and even the saint can. And never does God allow this distinction to sink into oblivion. Even this chapter teaches it, as we read that, though the water in the fountain or pit was not defiled, the one who touched the carcass of the creeping thing which had fallen into that water, was thereby rendered unclean. What is man? A touch of the carcass defiled him. For but one man was there who could touch what defiled without becoming unclean, for in Him is no sin (1 John 3:5). With us, as with Israel, the case is different, for if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us " (1 John 1:6). Will this state of things then always last? It will whilst we are upon earth, but, thank God, a day is coming when sin shall no longer be found in the believer. By death, if he passes through it, or by the change that he will experience when the Lord comes, should he live to see that, sin, the flesh, the old man will forever be purged out of him. This deliverance our chapter also in measure teaches.

"If any part of their carcass fall upon any sowing seed, which is to be sown, it shall be clean. But if any water be put upon that seed, and any part of their carcass fall thereon, it shall be unclean unto you.' Definite surely are these directions. But why give them? The holy people had to keep themselves from uncleanness, and to separate between clean and unclean, for the Lord their God was holy. Again and again were they reminded that on such matters man's opinion could have no weight. God's character, with whom as His redeemed people they had to do, formed the groundwork for these requirements (verse 45). Any and every human standard must therefore fall short of that which God would set before them. Hence the Lord had to reveal what was requisite. Seed about to be sown was not made unclean, if the carcass of any creeping thing fell upon it. But, if water had already fallen on that seed, contact with the carcass would defile it. The moistened seed beginning to germinate could not die again. But the dry seed when sown would die, so it was not to be reckoned unclean. This to the Christian should be intelligible, for it is by death, if he dies, that he gets free from the presence of sin within, him. Nothing short of death can affect his deliverance from that defiling thing, the old man, the flesh, which we derive from Adam by the fall. When death comes in, then freedom from it will be effected. Till then, unless caught up alive to meet the Lord, that cannot be enjoyed. In this sense death acts as a purger from what defiled.

Hence the distinction made between dry seed about to be sown, and that already moistened with water, is to us intelligible and consistent; and we cannot rightly read this chapter without being carried on in thought to the future. Now we contract defilement, though the Spirit of God in us, and

on earth never can be defiled. But freedom from the presence of sin we await, and by death, if we die, it will be at once and forever effected. Thus, as far as we have gone in this book, we can trace out an orderly arrangement of teaching. Commencing with the Lord Jesus who came to die, and to be made the offering for sin, we next witnessed the introduction and establishment of priesthood, and now are reminded of the presence of the Holy Ghost on earth, and that freedom from the presence of sin which the saint is taught to expect.

(To be continued.)

The Knowledge Of' the Son of God

WHILE I believe that we are called on at the present hour most carefully to weigh the doctrine taught, and to take our share in the exercise of discipline, there is a present-day occupation for the saints, which few of them seem to be very fully engaged in. There has been ample teaching on the Church, and the coming of the Lord; but what we are called for to our blessed place in. Christ above, and our holy plane in the Spirit below, is not to go round and round in a mill-course of: well known doctrine; but, having got our place and standing, what is now to be our occupation? Is there no thing to be known or done further? Everything. For true Christian life now begins. The Father and the' Son, into whose fellowship we have, been brought, are to be known (see 1 John 1). Place, doctrines, and things cannot satisfy either the mind or heart of the sealed saints of God. What Eph. 4:13, teaches, points out to us our great present occupation to, be the seeking after more of acquaintedness with the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God. We have learned a little of the unity of the faith from St. Paul: but is not the Spirit now pressing into prominence the full-knowledge of the Son of God by St. John? I stand with Peter to learn from his (Paul's) epistles, what Paul teaches (2 Peter 3:15,16), but must I not also stand with Paul and learn further St. John's teaching of the highest of all truth, the full-knowledge of the Son of God, leading on to. God in His nature, personality and relationships? This is, I think, the occupation for the present moment,, in the mind of the Spirit: a very different thing from pottering at a variety of worn-out ecclesiastical odds and ends, and living at the level of the zealous ecclesiastic.

I write thus, dear brother, that you may, by getting this higher occupation, be delivered from your present occupation and bondage: for divine deliverance is what is needed in such cases. The Lord will enable you to throw all unprofitable discipline-engrossment clean out of your mind if you only ask Him. Making it an object it becomes a distinct " snare of the devil," set cunningly by him as " an angel of light," and the willing captive is held as by the very authority of Christ Himself, thinking he is bound by faithfulness to Him to make this his sole occupation! One never knows how deep he is in a pit until he tries to get out.

The Mind That Was in Christ

(Notes of Lecture by G.V. W, Priory, Jan. 1870, on " John 17")

" FATHER.... glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." When I think of this in connection with Phil. 2:8, " He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." I say what a wonderful mind was that of the Lord Jesus Christ! But first let us consider for a moment the position we take as believers; we have "put, off the old man," we have "put, on the new." We have put off the old coat, as it were, and come out in this new 'livery. It is all in the past tense (see also Eph. 4) God's statement is, that we have put on the new man, that is life, not the Holy Ghost. We get the question of life in 1 John 1, the eternal life which was with the Father. In Corinthians we are seen as having the mind of Christ, we are looked upon by God as having done with the old life—and having life in the Son, who is with the Father—that life, having a mind of its own, and we have got it. I 'find in Christ, the mind of the Son coming out in the sent one. What I am afraid of in us, is, that we try to get rid of ourselves in ' divine blessing; it is not the right way. All that He is become our shelter; but besides this, if we have this life in Him, we want to get His mind coming out in us down here, and by the Spirit working in us, it is the power "to walk, as Christ walked." How entirely I get the secret that was in Him—that "He became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." We see Him, as the Son of the Father, leaving divine glory, standing in the place of obedience. He can say, "I am King of Israel, owned as a King, riding upon an ass's colt. Head, too, of the Gentiles when they come up: but if I am to bring to me the thought of my cross: Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die it abideth alone." That had a secret in it, which those standing round about Him did not understand, that He from whom He came was God, who " would have compassion on whom He would, have compassion " and who " would have mercy on whom He would have mercy " That His heart yearned to have many sons brought out of a world of sin, home to Himself, who should be able to say, what no angel or archangel could say, " I have tasted of a mercy which guided Him down to death and that, the death of the cross." No one was His counselor, no one understood His mind; but He knew all that was in the Father's heart, knew every thought in the Father's mind, every joy the Father had in that perfect intelligence. He knew all that the Father wanted to have done down here, and that one thing guided Him down here. If the Father wants to bring many children to glory it cannot be, save by my death. Oh, how beautiful, the fellowship with the Father's mind! How beautiful the comprehension of the largeness of the Father's heart! His heart took up all, and the mind of the Son, came out in His course down here; not in perfect service merely, but in seeing how the whole mind of God the Father, governed everything. Another has said, "He did not ask His disciples to take the lowest place, because He had taken it Himself." You may go down after Him but He has gone before you. This was not abstract service, but perfect fellowship, with the Father's mind, which brought Him down, lower than any one else could go; but down to the very point where all the Father's counsels could find' their complete unhesitating expression, where it never could be said that God had not expressed fully His mind about Satan; about man's independency, it was all fully and perfectly declared in that cross, and we see how His fellowship with the Father's mind came out there.

Directly the seventeenth chapter doses, we see Him going out into the sorrow, the full cup of unmixed judgment deserved by us. He is about to take it. What is His thought? The Father's glory—what was His mind? He raises His eyes to heaven, sees the whole arch of God's counsels, all that was in the mind of God, all the germinating at that glory which would come out of His death, and 'in that quiet way, He could say, " Father, the hour is come." What complete clearness of all question about, self; we are unable to turn from one set of circumstances to another; we lose our temper, because we are subject to circumstances. He never was. He was always in that mind; that had no self to think of, no self to take care of. See also verse 5, and remark here what was the effect of walking in that mind! Alas! to have the mind, and to walk in it, are two very different things! Christ, having the mind, walked in it; there was no contrariety in Him to upset the perfect calmness of His soul. He could; say " Father, the hour is come," as reverently reminding Him knowing all that He had done, as carrying out the volume of S.S. treasures in His soul, and, as His eye glanced round on the cross, He sees one thing not fulfilled, and says, "I thirst." Oh! what an immeasurable thing that mind of the Lord Jesus Christ: no rolling back of the thoughts upon Himself. If He spoke to Peter or John, they would say, "What does that mean? " They could give no response to His thoughts, but this blessed outflow of thought to His Father there, was perfect response, full communion, and I do feel for ourselves that it is a very important question, whether really we have got that mind, and that only to form the power and expression of our whole walk down here.

If He has given us the mind, we have to walk before God in Him. God looks upon us, as not in the old Adam, but in the new. Was it bondage to Christ, to carry out His mind? Is it bondage to the child to walk like Him? It was no bondage to the Son.

If I have the mind of Christ, it is no bondage at all; if I have not, it is, most surely.

The Transforming Power of Seeing Christ Where He Is

Acts 7:54-60

BUT we must look at the other side. The second characteristic is—THE POWER OF CHRIST WHERE CHRIST IS NOT.

Stephen is not only associated by the Holy Ghost with Christ in glory; but by the Holy Ghost he has the power of Christ down here. The Holy Ghost is not only the bond of union with my representative up there; but He is in me, as the power to represent and reproduce Him down here. I have association with my Savior where my Savior is, and I have the power of my Savior where my Savior is not. What is the principle on which the efficiency of this power depends? How is it rendered operative? By looking. Nothing could be simpler. You get an illustration in the case of Elisha with Elijah (2 Kings 2). Elijah is ' about to be taken up, and Elisha asks for a double portion of his spirit. Elijah replied, " Thou halt asked a ' hard thing, nevertheless, if thou see me when I am taken from thee, it shall be so unto thee." The condition was, that he should see him taken, that he should fix his eye upon him as he went up. This is how the power is realized in us practically. The principle is, just open your eyes and look, dear friends. It is beautiful in its simplicity. You know that water always rises to its level. The same law holds good, here. Whatever you see of Christ you possess. The point at which you see Him is the point to which you are raised. If you are looking at Christ at God's right hand, that is the height of your elevation. He, from where you view Him, is the measure of your power. It transpired that Elisha did behold Elijah taken, and what happened? His mantle fell upon Elisha while witnessing the ascending Elijah; and what, let me ask, was the first thing he did on getting it? Some one will answer, Ike crossed the Jordan! No, that was the second thing. Read it more carefully. He laid hold of his own mantle, and rent it in two pieces. He does not want his old clothes; he can dispense with them, he has got something better. He is the possessor of Elijah's mantle, and in this new power he now walks. He can do what is supernatural: He crosses the river. How did he obtain it? Through simply looking at the taken Elijah. To make it still plainer, turn to Matt. 14:13-33. We have (1) the martyrdom of John the 'Baptist, and its bearing on the Lord. If they have dealt thus with His forerunner, what can the Lord Himself expect, but to share the same fate. If John has been put to death, what will they do to Jesus? He is apparently moved by it, and retires under the sense of anticipated rejection to a desert, where He (2) feeds the multitude. This is ministry; and I say we have this, and thank God for it. I was once at a reading where a certain clergyman read this chapter down to the end of verse 21st. It was evident what he read it for, because it referred to ministry. I said there is ministry, we are all thankful for it, divine ministry through instruments for the spiritual nourishment of the saints; but I said let us read the rest of the chapter, and we shall see another thing (3) the man of faith and power that leaves the ship to walk on the water. A path of pure faith and power, with no ship, no boat, nothing external or human. It is to this I invite your attention for a' little. But you may say, " You do not expect us to do such an extraordinary thing as to walk on water." I reply I do. I maintain it, and I hope to demonstrate it, that it is tl only kind of walk suitable to the new power, which characterizes Christianity. It is not some high attainment of a saintly few. Many would like that very well, because

they know, if they admit that this is the thing for a Christian as such, you have a pull on them if they do not exhibit it. This is all very fine you say; but if " I attempt to walk on 'water I will be sure to sink." Your flesh will, and a very good thing if it does; but I tell you this for your encouragement, there is one consolation, you never can be drowned. How do you make that out? Because your Head is above everything, and you never can perish with the power of Christ ever ready to support you. What do you mean? Where is your Head let me ask you? At the right hand of God. Do you think you would be afraid to take to the water now It is an immense thing, you see, to get hold of where your Head is, to begin with. Peter leaves the boat; and what is the boat? A boat is the natural contrivance of man to prevent him from sinking in a fluid element. The boat is sense and sight, not power and faith. Anyone could cross a lake in a boat. There is no power other than what is natural to any man, whether he' has faith or not, in doing that. Do you 'call that Christianity? Listen to our Lord, " Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thine enemy; hut say unto you love your enemies, bless them that curse you.... For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in. heaven is perfect." Christianity claims a great deal snore than the boat. Peter's epistle tells the same tale. I admit the difficulties, I do not ignore them; but what I find in Christianity is, neither the removal of the difficulties nor the resort to human expedients to shirk them; but power to surmount them when they are in full force. It is power to walk on water in short. I grant it is above nature and above sense; but I deny that it is contrary to either. It is certainly supernatural; but any man of sense, not to mention a man of faith, can, see that all that is required to enable a man to walk on water is power. He may not see where the power is to come from; but given the power, there is not much difficulty in conceiving the accomplishment. It simply resolves itself into the question, is there power? I affirm that there is, and I am going to prove it. Look at Peter, and observe as to the actual walking, it is a matter of personal, individual faith in the Lord Himself. "If it be Thou, bid me come unto thee on the water." If it is not the Lord, there is no use attempting it for no power but His can enable you to do it; but He can and does enable Peter to do it. He says, " Ha walked on the water to go to Jesus:" Do knot you say it is impossible, then. So long as he kept his 'eye on the Lord he walked 'as well as the Lord. Was that not power." the power of Christ? How could Peter walk on the water without the power of His Master?

You get, besides, the principle of its operation, how it is actually made good in you, as an efficient. Realized once, viz., by beholding an Object outside you: as we have remarked already, it is by looking. But remember, the moment the eye is off, the Lord, you are in no laceat all for man to walk. It cannot be done-in any over of man, only by the power of Christ. Peter began to sink. He looks at the difficulties, gets occupied with the surroundings, and while his eye is on them, it cannot be on the Lord, and immediately he feels himself going down. Peter could have no more walked, on a smooth sea than on a rough one without the power of Christ; and with that power he could walk on a rough sea as well as a smooth one. It was a question of faith and keeping his eye on the Lord, not of the sea whether boisterous or calm. Even though he was sinking he was a great deal better off than those who had never left the boat. He experienced the power of the Lord which enabled him to walk while he looked, and when sinking he knew what it was to feel that arm lifting him up, the blessed grace of the Lord giving timely help, as well as learning from, the rebuke, the secret of his failure.

Well, I see it is possible, says some one, to walk on water; but can it be done without sinking? I reply, of course it can. As long as Peter looked on the Lord there was not a symptom of sinking. Well but is it possible for any one on this earth to look so constantly as not to sink? I answer it is, and now I take you to Stephen to prove you that also. I am sure every one of us is conscious of how little he is up to it; but I will show you how it has been done; and moreover that it is characteristic of the Christian's walk now.. You cannot say Stephen was in smooth water anyhow, for perhaps never has it been the lot of man on earth to pass through a more tempestuous storm, where the waves seem as if they had been running mountains high, and dashing in fury over him; yet, he sinks not, for his eye is never for a moment off his Savior in glory. "He, being full of the Holy Ghost looked steadfastly up." This is the difference between him and Peter. No looking at the boisterous waves here. There is undivided occupation, with an Object in glory; a fixed, unvarying, unflinching gaze on Jesus at the right hand of God, and there is nothing he is not competent for. He possesses the very power of the One he is looking at, by the Holy Ghost, and he is not only superior to everything, but he is the practical exhibition of Christ Himself down here. See how wonderfully like his Master Stephen is when we take Psa. 22 and note how much of what the Lord went through there is confronted by Stephen. There, are seven things in that psalm the Lord met. The first is sin; as to suffering for this of course Christ stood alone. The forsaking of God none but Christ could endure. He exhausted the judgment, and for Stephen all is brightness Godward. He looks up and sees everything clear, without the shadow of a cloud. Sin is completely gone, and the One who bore it is seen at the right hand of God. The second thing is " the reproach of men," " despised of the people." Stephen was surrounded by his countrymen, the people among whom he had lived, the elders and scribes whom he had been accustomed to look up to and revere; can he stand to be reproached and despised by them? Can he face that wave? Yes, by the power of Christ he can rise above that. The third point is the " bulls." " Many bulls have compassed me." Those religious magnates, arrayed in council to judge him, and gnashing on him with their teeth. Is he equal to that wave? By the power of Christ he can walk on that wave, too. Bodily weakness is the fourth thing in the Psalm. Christ said, " I am poured out like water, all my bones are out of joint." As regards Stephen, what about his poor body? His body is battered with stones, but, by the power of Christ, he is superior to it all. Then we get the " dogs " as the fifth thing. They were the Gentiles. In Christ's case the Jews delivered Him to the Romans. In Stephen's case there were no Gentiles, and this does not apply. The sixth point is " the lion's mouth." Satan. All his power and wiles are brought to bear on Stephen to divert his eye from the Lord. He tempts him in this way and that to give it all up. By the power of Christ he fears neither man nor devil. Lastly, we get the " horns of the unicorn," supposed to represent the pains of death. What could be grander than the manner in which Stephen meets death.. A man on this earth, exposed to all the fury and rage of the multitude, gnashing on him with their teeth and knocking the very life out of his poor body with stones; yet borne, by the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, in the power of Christ, so astonishingly superior to everything and everybody, and so like his Savior that he actually spends his last breath in praying for the very people who are murdering him. So carried above all the abuse, shame, contempt, pain and suffering that man can heap upon him or inflict, that he forgets his suffering and pain, and even himself, to think of others. He knelt down and cried with „a loud voice, "Lord lay not, this sin to their charge. Having said this, he fell asleep." There is walking on water without sinking, because looking with a gaze that was unflinching on that blessed One in the glory of God, and filled with the Holy Ghost. I do not expect you all to be Stephens, God has not

called us all to pass through such circumstances or suffer martyrdom; but in all the trials you have in your daily life you want 'the power of Christ to walk above them. Be it the tempers of your children, or anything else, you are not to be overcome by evil, but to be superior to it, to rise above all trials by the power of Christ? Re it -evil attractions, afflictions, sufferings of any or every description, and in every situation, what Christianity presents is not the exercise of power to remove these things out of your way, but allowing them to come upon you with unmodified force, supplies a power, the power of Christ down here, with whom you are associated up there, which makes you superior to them all, while you look steadfastly up to that blessed Object in glory.

" a Little Longer."

A LITTLE longer yet, a little longer,
And He whose right it is to reign shall come,
The Savior, from our-crimson sins who washed us,
Will leave His Father's throne to take us home.
A little longer yet, a little longer,
To show His death—until that moment dear,
While hosts angelic raptly are regarding—
'Tis thus the " babes and sucklings " praise Him here.
A little longer yet, a little longer,
The place of weakness, in the outcast's name,
But oh, forever in His cross to glory
Whereby He put the world, and me, to shame.
A little longer yet, a little longer;
The Whole creation travails in her woes;
But Christ, the great Deliverer, is coming,
Earth, owning Him, shall blossom as the rose.
A little longer yet, a little longer,
And " Thou art worthy," shall be sounding free,
Oh, holy One I Oh, true One! Thou art worthy!
Through sorrow and' in joy we sing to Thee.
A little longer yet, a little longer,
Oppression, and the countless shapes of sin;
But wisdom's city stands, with open portal,
And He who builded all things dwells therein.

The Father's Sheep

" My Father... gave them me."John 10:29. ".. Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father... We have been planted together in the likeness of his death."-Romans. 6:4, 5.

Exodus. 3:1.

WHILE the outward fair creation

With its Maker's works doth shine,

We behold a garden planted,

Veiling mysteries divine:

Thus, that solitude in Midian,

Ere Jehovah's ways begin,

Shadows, too, a precious secret

To the heart that enters in:

Every shepherd superseded-

" One," the Shepherd only seen.

Far beyond the rule of Pharaoh,

Tasting Grace's soundless deep,

By the streams of purpose-blessing,

Jesus tends the Father's sheep.

In that desert of rejection,

Listening only to His voice,

Lying down amid His pastures,

In His presence they rejoice;

Knowing well the hand that blesses

The beloved ones of His choice.

Given to the Heir of counsel

Ere the course of time began,

Finding in' Himself their portion,

Buried from the world and man:
All the Father's love revealing
To the captives of His spoils,
All the Shepherd's joy expending
On the treasure of His toils;
Rescued from the great destroyer,
And the serpent's deadly coils.
In the rest the Father gave Him
Ere His outward fame doth swell,
Hidden from the scene external,
There He is " content to dwell."
Banished by " His own," He knows them
In that garden love hath framed,
Glory of the grace disclosing
Where one costly pearl He claimed,—
Waiting now, in hope, with Jesus—
Hope that maketh not ashamed.
There they fill His heart with gladness,
While His patience follows them,
Ere, in bright Jehovah-glory,
He receives that priceless gem.—(Ex. 18)
Meekness, gentleness, and mercy,
Are the desert walls that guard
In the reign of grace, well proving
Why " the breast " was His award; (Ex. 29:26.)
Power divine to life eternal
Their's—" through Jesus Christ our Lord."

The Three-Fold Position

Ephesians 1:3-12, 19-23; 2:4

WE have in this epistle the three-fold position of the believer. 1st, his individual position as belonging to the family of God (v. 5); 2nd, his corporate place as belonging to the Body of Christ (Eph. 1:19-23); and 3rd, as belonging to the house of God (Eph. 2:19-23). This is the only position the Church of God has, in reality before God the only ground there is to stand upon. The professing Church has departed from this ground. If there is a company in this town gathered to the name of Jesus Christ, this company has professed to return to this ground, from which the Church as a whole has fallen; but this is still the only ground to stand on, all else is sectarian. It is noticeable that in the preceding epistles death is written on every form of the flesh Man in the flesh has no place in Ephesians; the flesh is accounted a bygone thing. The death of Christ applies to everything, to every form of flesh; this we see in the Epistles to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians. But in Ephesians there is no thought of man in the flesh; nothing of man is seen there, except as a bygone thing; the epistle begins with Christ in glory. It is of the greatest importance to see that we must understand the cross before anything else. To understand the Church without the cross is Satan. This is shown in Matt. 16

Peter gets a revelation from God about the Church; then Christ gives to him the keys of the kingdom of heaven; but immediately after this Jesus forbids his disciples to say that He is the Christ, and talks to them of the cross. Peter rebukes Irma saying, " This shall in no wise be; " immediately the Lord says, " Get thee behind me, Satan" (verses, 21-23). Far and wide we see this acceptance of positive truth without the truth of the cross. Christians' talk of being in heavenly places, but when you press the cross as bringing in death to the world, the flesh, &c., they do not, like it. This is of Satan, and will be judged. We must hold the cross with the positive side of truth.

In Rom. 3:23-24, we see the first form of the cross: "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"—" being justified freely by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus," the cross meets us in our sins as guilty criminals. Christ laid down His life; His blood, was presented to God and became a mercy-seat, and through that God is just to forgive. We have the other side of the propitiatory sacrifice in Rom. 4:23-25, when the sinner comes to God and trusts in Jesus and His blood, he finds that the blessed Lord has been to the cross, and borne his sins, and has been raised again, and the believer finds himself as clear before God as Christ Himself; all sins put away, never imputed to him, never reckoned against him.

Rom. 1 and 2. give the condition of man; first, as the heathen judged by the light of creation and conscience, then as the Jew under law. The Gentile is proved lawless, and the Jew proved a law-breaker. In Rom. 5:10, man is seen to be the enemy of God. His enmity mounted to its height when Christ was crucified (see John 15:22-24). The Son of God spake words and did works which none other could do, and man rejected and hated Him. What a picture of man's enmity is that scene, where the soldier pierces with a sword the side of Christ, and from that side flows blood and water, the blood which meets the-question of our sins, and the water of the word of life which

purifies and regenerates the soul, and daily cleanses us from defilement. This is the ground of peace with God.

Thus the death of God's Son meets our state as enemies of God. Rom. 5:12; shows our state as born in sin. "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and thus death passed upon all men, for that all sinned." Verse 18 shows how the death of, Christ meets this state.... "Even so by one righteousness the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." God's righteousness condemned sin in the flesh. Thus, not only our sins and our enmity were met by the death of Christ, but also sin in the flesh. At the cross man's history closed, and we in Christ's death are dead to sin. Rom. 7 shows law as applying to man in the flesh, and it applies to the state of sin—the law gives knowledge of sin, and brings the sinner's conscience under condemnation when sin has been brought to light by it. Without the law sin was dead. Paul was alive without the law once, before his conversion, but when the law came sin revived, and he died. The law which was for life he found to be unto death. Therefore, we must have deliverance from law as well as from sin; in Rom. 7 there, is not yet knowledge of this deliverance. At the end of the chapter, it is a quickened soul, but not knowing deliverance from the law. In verse 14, reassuring himself by the law, he finds himself carnal, sold under sin. In verse 17 there is discovery of two natures; "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." In verse 18 is the discovery that even with the 'new nature there is no power over sin. First, is the discovery that he is carnal; there is no distinction between the natures; 2nd, that there is a new nature, distinct from sin in the flesh; 3rd, that there is no power; and 4th, he gives up and exclaims: "Oh, wretched man that I am," &c. (24 and 25 verses). Even with the new nature there is no power. Christ in glory is the source of power and strength; this is our new standing in Christ; not only all our sins are put away; and never can be brought up again, but the death of Christ gives deliverance from sin. And as to the law which could not give power to deliver or to serve God, he has died to it.

In 1 Corinthians and Galatians, there is the corporate form of evil. In Corinthians the world is seen in its wisdom and power. In Galatians in its religion (read 1 Cor. 1:17), "Not with wisdom, of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." (verse 19), "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise," &c. This is a prediction fulfilled at the cross; there, all wisdom and power is brought to naught. The Corinthian saints were copying the wisdom of the philosophers, the followers of Plato, &c.; and allowing the worldly element to creep in. This is the beginning of sects. The cross judges all the wisdom and power of the world. The Jews were looking for the power of a king, i.e., for Messiah to come as a great temporal prince. When Christ came as a humbled man He was rejected. The Greeks sought after wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified! It is important to learn that the beginning of sects was the human wisdom of the world. The saints were beginning to say, I am of Paul, I of Apollos, I of Cephas. What is the meaning of all these different sects in Christendom in the present day, and all these learned colleges, all turning out ministers of different schools of opinion. It is all human wisdom! Of course the man that says this is accounted a fool, but it is better to be a fool with Paul and Christ, than to be the most popular minister in the world. They were saying at Corinth, "I am of Paul." "No," says Paul, "Of God you are in Christ Jesus. Of God, that is your origin; in Christ Jesus, that is your position."

In the Epistle to the Galatians we have the religiousness of the world set before us, immediately after Paul, left. Judaizing teachers came down, speaking against Paul, and saying that besides believing in Christ the Galatians must be circumcised, and must keep the law.

Judaism had now become the world as much as the heathen, having crucified the Messiah; this was the religious side of the world. Law was being mixed. up with grace. Paul says in verse 8, that they were to receive no other gospel than that he had preached unto them, not even though he preached it himself, or an angel from heaven. In chapter 3. We have the gift of the Spirit given, justification and the position of sons, and in chapter v. the walk of believers all through to be on the principles of faith and grace and not on the principle of law. Law could not justify nor give life, it could only give the knowledge of sin. Our walk is by grace, by faith and in the Spirit, chapter 5. verses 5 and 6, and verses 16 and 17, and not by law. Only those who walk by faith, and in the Spirit fulfill the righteousness of the law. Look at the cross 6:12, 14, and we see the world crucified, Jesus said, "Now is the judgment of this world." We are delivered by death from these two sides, human religion and human wisdom. At the cross the believer had his end as man. Do not say, "There is no harm in this thing or that, if I have died and risen with Christ I am a heavenly person; how, then, can I be happy, mixed up with the world Can I be happy frolicking and dancing and skating 'with those who are going on the road to the lake of fire? The last thing they are thinking of is Christ. Christians mixed up with the world are the unhappy ones. What is the result? When they come into the company of spiritual Christians they make them sad; walking with God is true happiness. Let us see how the cross separates us from everything here, it is like the Bed Sea separating from Egypt. The cross of Christ saves us out of a judged thing. Have we learned to see the world in this light? Judgment is on all. "Now is the judgment of this world" (John 12:31). The Epistle to the Ephesians views the believer set down in heavenly places in Christ. His new history begins with Christ in glory. What a blessed place! The Spirit accounts us as holy children connected with Him who is holy. He is set apart, and we are also set apart in connection with Him—children by adoption. In the 19th and following verses of chapter 1. is the exceeding great proof of God's mighty power and love. Christ is taken from the dead and put "far above all principality"&c. above the highest archangel. Where were we as men? dead in trespasses and sins walking in the world fulfilling the lust of the mind; and God in His mercy raises us up out of this dark scene in the world, and the Church is seen in the Head, seated in heavenly places. The Church is related to Christ, we are all members of one family and one body, of which Christ is the Head. Eph. 1:19-23; 2:1-8.

In the 2. Chapter v. 19-23, the Holy Ghost is the builder and inhabiter of God's temple. We want to realize the exceeding greatness of the power and the love which has put Christ as Man above everything, and which has ' set the Church in union with Him. It is this same power and love that has brought back a few saints. Ibis Church ground. The only power by which this company can stand is that which is mentioned here. God has given man gifts of ministry in this day and we rejoice in them, but what we want particularly is to get back to the source of this power, to be dependent on the Head solely and wholly—the reality of the presence of the Holy Ghost in the house of God on earth. The 4. chapter appertains to the Christian's walk. He is to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith he is called.

Thus in. the epistles before the Ephesians we have seen Christ's death applied to every form of man in the flesh, in that to the Romans the blood of Christ is applied to the sins; the death of God's Son to our state of enmity this one act of accomplished righteousness to our condition as born in sin. We are also dead to the world by that same death which could only give the knowledge of sin, and bring in condemnation on the conscience of the convicted sinner. In the 1st of Corinthians the

human wisdom and power of the world is judged by that same cross, and in the Epistle to the Galatians its 'religiousness. We who believe by the cross are crucified to the world, and the world is crucified unto us. In the Epistle to the Ephesians, cleared from all this we have the positive three-fold position of the Christian looked at individually and corporately; 1st, in relation to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ. The Christian is thus a member of the family of God, and all God's purposes and counsels are unveiled to him. 2nd, he is related to Christ as head of this body, as a member of that body. 3rd, to the Holy Ghost came down the builder, and inhabiter of the House of God. May the Lord lead each one into the full apprehension of this blessed place, so that each one may walk worthy of such a calling.

Or course, Rom. 6 does not speak of resurrection, for the question there is about sin. Colossians speaks of resurrection, because there we have the world. We get free from the power of sin by death with Christ; and from the world by resurrection with Christ, which takes us into a new region.

Leviticus

NEXT in order in the word, and in harmony with the order of the moral teaching just noticed, we read of, defilement from the working in one way or other of nature in man. Thank God we look to be free from the body of sin, the flesh. We have, however, to learn what the flesh is in God's sight, and the working of it. What a humbling lesson for man is this! How the Israelitish man or woman must have felt it, when he or she was considered unclean from the action of nature within them, as set forth in chapters 12.-15; communicating, too, defilement to any places or things brought into contact with them (4:4-12). And we who never were of the seed of Abraham after the flesh, and were never placed under the law to prove the burdensome character of its ceremonial, we have each and all within us, and are to be aware of it, that hateful defiling thing called " the flesh," of which the, ceremonial purifications remind us. What came from an Israelite's flesh defiled that person. What comes from the heart of man, the working of the evil nature within him, defiles the man (Mark 7:21). The Israelite's nature did not defile him, but the outflow of it did. So the flesh within us does not defile us, though the actings of it does. And God is holy. Compromise therefore, on His part with uncleanness is impossible, hence provision to cleanse the defiled one is made the subject of divine revelation, and that in both Old and New Testaments.

In the cases of defilements treated of in chapter 11. no " sacrifice was required, 'only washing with water was enjoined. In cases, too, where a person unclean from the working of his nature, touched another, the one touched, though thereby defiled, needed only washing with water for himself or herself (15); but the person who communicated the defilement needed sacrifices to be offered up, before he could be clean. Nothing less than the death of Christ, as set forth in type, could avail, for such an one before God. What ruin has been caused by the fall, ruin irretrievable, unless God had interposed with the Lamb of His choice, His own well-beloved Son. Such, surely, must be the thought of anyone who ponders over these chapters in Leviticus on the one hand, and over the analogous New Testament teaching on the other. But viewing the provisions which God made in both Old and New Testaments for those who might be defiled, what harmony do we trace in His ways! By sacrifice and by washing with water was cleansing effected for the Israelites. To the teaching of 1 John 2:2, and of John 13:1-10, we turn for that which is needed for us, and learn of the untiring grace and service of the Lord, whilst in heaven, for, and to His people on earth. Light,

too, is cast upon the Old Testament, as the ceremonial observances of the law are seen to be figurative of that which is really requisite for the Christian, whether the flesh has been working in him, or he has, been defiled by contact with something unclean from without. We say for the Christian, because in these chapters under review (12.-15.) the children of Israel, God's recognized earthly people, are those for whom the revelations were vouchsafed.

With purification after childbirth, this series of laws. Commences (12). For seven days, if the mother had given birth to a son; for fourteen, if, she bore a daughter, she was unclean. For thirty-three days more, or for sixty-six, according to the sex of the child, the Israelitish mother continued in the blood of her purifying, until the end, of which period she could not eat of hallowed things, nor approach the sanctuary. Her child, if a son, was circumcised on the eighth day. She, at the expiration of forty or eighty days presented herself before the Lord with the offerings appointed by this law. A lamb of the first year for a burnt offering, and a young pigeon, or a turtle dove for a sin offering. But if too poor to provide a lamb, she might substitute a bird for the burnt offering. To bear children was woman's lot, yet that made her unclean, and she had to feel it and own it. She felt it, as she was debarred during the above-named days from partaking of the hallowed things, or of approaching the sanctuary. She owned it, as she drew 'near with the appointed sacrifices, which proclaimed her need of atonement and of a substitute to die for her. She who had brought a living creature into the world, had need of the death of the sacrifice on that account on her own behalf.

The spiritual 'teaching of this for us we have already referred to. But this chapter is especially important in these days, for it gives the lie to one of the latest authorized dogmas of the Church of Rome—the immaculate conception of the blessed Virgin Mary. Blessed she is, but immaculate was the, Virgin at no time of her life, and the ordinance appointed in this chapter (12), to which the Evangelist Luke tells us she conformed, plainly proves it. Unclean according to the law for seven days after the birth of her son, she came' the expiration of the appointed forty days with two birds, the one for a burnt-offering, and the other for a sin offering; and the priest, whoever he was, offered them to, make atonement for her. The offerings she brought — two birds—attested her poverty on the one hand, and her condition as a sinful creature on the other. The low estate of David's royal house, and direct line told a tale of the failure, great and grievous, of his offspring, who had once sat on his throne. Her burnt-offering and sin-offering spoke clearly of her condition as a child of Adam, but also of God's grace, which could meet it by sacrifice. Her immaculate conception! How would she have recoiled at the bare idea of it! Mercy, favor too, unsought and undreamt of, she frankly and fully owned. But to the figment of her conception without a stain her offerings unmistakably give the lie. What a position was hers that day. Her need of atonement by blood she confessed, as she stood before that altar and witnessed the death of the birds, but the occasion which thus called it forth was the birth of Him, by whom that atonement was to be really, fully, and finally accomplished. He was perfectly holy, and this law said nothing about the child. She was unclean as a mother, and nothing but blood-shedding could atone for her.

We now come to the law (13.-14.) relating to leprosy, which was stringent and precise. It was stringent, for the Lord would have the camps in the midst of which He dwelt cleared of every leper (Num. 5:1-4). It was precise in the directions for determining the presence of the disease, for a person's social position was affected, and his ecclesiastical privileges remained in abeyance all the time that he was afflicted with it. Animals, it would seem, were not subject to it. Only man, and what was immediately connected with him, as garments and houses, were liable to it. Now the

disease we learn was not unknown till after the Exodus (Ex. 4, 6, 30, 31). Nor was it peculiar to the Israelites, though to them only did God...give instruction about it. And never were they to forget those instructions, or to ignore them. In the wilderness, as we have seen, they were to put them in force. In the land, too, they were to observe them (Deut. 24:8). Those which regard man, and garments are recounted in chapter 13.; whilst the cleansing of the leper, and of the house is set forth in chapter 14.

The whole of chapter 13. forms but one revelation, and is addressed to both Moses and Aaron. In it the marks of leprosy are minutely detailed for the especial guidance of the priest, who was to examine the suspect person or garment, and judge, of the case; and from his decision there was no appeal. Momentous, indeed, were the consequences, for the garment might have to be destroyed, and the person shut out of the camp till the Lord, in his sovereign mercy healed him. Any mistake therefore in judgment would be fraught with most serious results. Hence the Lord gave those directions that no one should be put outside the camp, who ought to be in it, and that no one should remain Within, when it was clear that he ought to be out. In all this the priest had to act as guided of God. Suspicion would not be sufficient to brand the, person as a leper. Nor was the priest left to his own device to decide what constituted leprosy. The Lord revealed all that in His word, to it the priest was to be subject, and by it alone he was to be guided. Vesting the power of exclusion from the camp in the hands of the priest, a ailing sinful creature, it was of the utmost importance that it should not be abused; so Jehovah made known in his Word, which was within the reach of all, the arks by which the priest could discern whether the person, the, garment or the house was really smitten with this plague. .

As regards man this disease 'had its seat in the flesh below the skin. To a casual observer a disease in. the skin might be mistaken for that of leprosy, and at first sight the priest might have been uncertain about Care was needed, so the person might have to be shut up a week for the priest to pass judgment on the case. And, if need be, a second week might be required ere certainty could be arrived at (13:4-8; 21, 22; 26-28; 30-34). If at the expiration of that time the disease had not spread, the man was clean; if otherwise, he was unclean. So if there was raw flesh visible and, the hair had turned white, the person was a leper, and therefore unclean, for the virus was still actively at work. But if a leprosy had broken. out abroad in the skin, and the leprosy had covered all the skin of him that had the plague from the head even to the foot, wheresoever the, priest looked; then the priest was to consider, and. if the leprosy had covered all his flesh, he was to pronounce him clean, it had all turned white, he was clean (12, 13): Whilst, the disease was active the man was unclean; when it had ceased to work, and had all come out, he was clean. Anyone, at any time, as these. directions 'teach us, might become a leper. It might, be an old leprosy breaking out afresh (v. 11) or it might be a disease from which that person had hitherto been exempt; but whenever that plague attacked a person, and the priest had pronounced. him unclean, he had to leave his place in the camp, his tent, his social circle, and, everything he valued, and to be outside in the wilderness, with his upper lip covered, his clothes tent, his head bare, and crying, " Unclean, unclean!" dwelling outside and alone till Jehovah, in His mercy, should heal him.

(To be continued.)

The Opening of a New Economy

(JOHN 13:1-8.)

THIS is the beginning of an immense subject, never declared before, and which never will be again. It is in the central part of this gospel, a group of chapters is formed, which is peculiar and singular, as applying only to ourselves, as in Christ. The Lord (as about to depart out of this world) takes an entirely new position before God. So they speak to us of a rejected Christ on earth, and an accepted Christ in heaven; and therefore cannot belong to a previous people or time, or to a time and people yet to come. Jesus has been here, and is departed, and this gives things their present character to "His own," whom He has left behind in the world. We find in this group of chapters, therefore, a new economy—or, the formal "revelation of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost." No other Scripture so declares, and brings out the Trinity, in relation and operation to us, who are one with Christ-or, "our part with Jesus," where He is gone. The revelation " of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost " in this distinctiveness, is the groundwork of Christianity; and their order of development is the formation of a new economy; otherwise, what has just been stated of this group is not true; and it does not apply exclusively to us. Nevertheless, these chapters are formed on the fact, that Jesus goes to the Father, and further, He that is gone to the Father, is the Son, and He who is to come down from the Father, and the Son, is the Holy Spirit. These changes of place, and of Persons, were necessary for the carrying forth the purposes of the Godhead-glory, and for unfolding God's counsels with Christ. We are united "in grace," by God the Father, in these hidden purposes with Christ, where He is, and have thus a new calling, and portion with" the Son of his love."

Another thing is obvious, that this change of place, by the departure of the Son to the Father, as the appointed center and Head over all things, and being nevertheless the glorified Son of man, into whose hands the Father had given all things; that such relations as these, must necessitate a change of administration. There could be no new economy, except as springing out of the fact, of this divine revelation from heaven, and these new relations "with his own," who are not after the flesh. In the other gospels we find Jesus, as the son of Abraham and David; and introduced by genealogy. In this, we have the account of the Son coming out from God into the world, and of Jesus "knowing that his hour was come, that he should depart out of the world unto the Father," and of our having " part with him " there, as His own whom He leaves behind, with the assurance of His " love to the end." When He comes, we are to go out, and up with Him to the Father, and the Father's house! In this gospel "the Son" is presented in incarnation; and so we read "the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, &c." And further, "that grace, and truth, came by Jesus Christ." Up to John 12, He has presented Himself, and been denied in all His titles and rights, as the King of Israel. Yet, though rejected and refused then, He has overcome every adverse power, by His death and resurrection, which He could not overcome in His life. "The death he should die," is the one great object before Him in chapter 12., for as " the light and the life," He closes Himself up, and in verse 36, we are told, " Jesus hid himself from them." Israel, and the world, have lost Him, and "his own" have got Him, for observe in the first verse of chapter 13. we

have " the departed one," with the Father in heaven, as ours, and He owns this new company as his own," and as one with Him there.

Besides this new revelation, and these heavenly relations, in this new economy, the Holy Ghost comes down to us, and dwells in us, to maintain this fellowship with the Father, and the Son—and to be the constituent power in operation, through living and loving affections, as well as for devotedness, in all that flows out by act and deed. May He deepen in our souls these realities of grace, and gladden our hearts by the fact John is anointed to give us out these new unveilings from above, and declare to us this divine relationship "of Father." Christ departs out of this world, to the Father; otherwise this relationship would be limited to Himself, had we only the account of His incarnation and birth into the world, as given us in chapter 1., by which He stood alone, as " the only begotten of his Father:; But here the Son is divine, and made flesh; He is the Son, in the bosom of the Father. This precious revelation of the Father and the Son, and of the relations of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost,, are the forefront of John's gospel. God is the Father, and Christ is Son of the Father; and in ' chapter xiii., we are viewed as in this relation of sons-and are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus, and joint, heirs. It is not any longer a question of Israel and the Jews. After this anticipative departure, and His own exaltation, He puts us into this relationship, through death and resurrection. As He said to Mary in chapter 20., " Go tell my brethren, I ascend to my Father and your Father; to my God and your God." The Father is only revealed in this new economy. The Son has intercourse with the Father in chapter 17., outside, and beyond the world and its history, about the men whom the Father had given Him-" Thine they were, &c." With Him, in this gospel, there was no question of times or seasons. His times were according to the Father, who kept them in His own hands. It is otherwise with men who have twelve hours in the day, and who count their purposes and projects "under the sun," accordingly. Our Lord says to His brethren after the flesh, in chapter 7., " Your time is always ready; I go not up yet unto this feast." Beloved brethren, it is not merely that we are brought into relationship with the Father, but there is the truth peculiar to His own, that " we have part with Jesus," where He is gone! Christ departs as the Son, to the Father. " He came from God, and went to God." And I desire that this unexampled fact may take hold of our souls, for next to the mystery of His incarnation, comes this important and central truth of Christianity —and all else, which waited on this " departure of the Son." "If I go not away, the Comforter will not come, but if I depart I will send him." It is this mission of "the Holy Ghost, the Comforter," which is the crowning glory of this present dispensation, and he characteristic of the new creation, as distinguished from the old. God then "breathed into man's nostrils the breath of life," and he became a living soul. This was the order in the original, or Adam creation; but now He associates Himself with those on earth, by redemption, and the gift of eternal life in His Son, and the baptism of His holy Spirit. " The Comforter will not come, if I go not away; " and, moreover, " it is expedient for you that I depart." Besides this, when I ascend, it is "to my Father and your Father, my God and your God." He loved His own which were in the world, and He loved them unto the end.

There are two instances where He speaks of "His own" in this gospel, in the 1st chapter verse 11, we read" He came unto his own, and his own received him not." There, they were His own "after the flesh," His own nation, Jews. As the Messiah, He is seen in this prophetic character, and so in chapter 12., when He rides into Jerusalem, Jesus presents Himself as Christ, " the King of Israel." They were responsible to Jehovah, for owning their Messiah, the Son of David, "as his own

according to the flesh," and to such Jesus said," While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light." These words spake Jesus, and did hide Himself from them, " breaking asunder his staff, beauty, and bands," as the Shepherd of Israel, and refusing "to feed the flock of slaughter." As Jews (and as a nation) they have lost their Messiah; He has "hid himself from both the houses "of Israel. The veil is judicially " upon their hearts," and their sun has gone down, " till the morning without a cloud " shall arise, with healing in His beams—in their millennium days. But in chapter 13., we who are called out " to have part " with the departed One, discover our peculiarity of position, which is brought out to us, in and with the Son, who is gone to prepare a place for us, in the Father's house. He has put us into relationship with the Father, and having done so, He now departs and leaves us, as " His own " in the world, with the promise that He will come again and receive us to Himself, &c. He will likewise, assuredly come again to the Jews, His own " after the flesh," that they may have all their promised blessings upon the earth, and in Immanuel's land. We are heavenly, and we pass by a different calling, into the everlasting glory of Christ and of God.

He loved "His own which were in the world, and he loves them to the end." We are the objects of this new and peculiar love of Jesus. He opened the wellsprings, likewise to us of the Father's love, and shows His own delight in us, as the members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones; not as an earthly Messiah, but as the Son. He will come for us, "to present us in the presence of his Father, faultless, and with exceeding joy." But further, the Lord says to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou halt no part with me." Part in what? "All that the Father hath is mine, therefore said I "he ' the Spirit of truth ' shall take of mine, and show it unto you." The Father hath given him all things, and all is put into His hands, and it is in this we have "part with Him." No one is competent "as a witness," to descend from the Father, and the Son, to declare and to tell us this, but the Holy Ghost. There is thus in these chapters another revelation of God, in " the Son of His love," consisting in new relationships—a divine economy—and another ministry from the Father, through the Son, and by the Holy Ghost. The old-dispensation was through angels, at Mount Sinai, "the law was given by Moses," but since then, Christ's own ministration, is "grace and truth." Beyond this, Jesus enters upon a new and loving service, "that we may have part with Him," where He is. So He rises from the table, and girds Himself with a towel, and washes the disciples' feet, to keep them personally clean. Sometimes the question is asked whether this act is advocacy, or priesthood? Neither, strictly speaking, as I judge, for it is His own personal love to ourselves, though His personal glory and love are the basis of every office He sustains. We have advocacy, "if any man sin," in John's Epistle, and priesthood for infirmities, in the epistle to the Hebrews, but here it is unfailing, and personal love, "He loved them unto the end." This difference will be plain, if you take an earthly illustration, when the Royal family see the Queen in her state-robcs, which are suited to maintain Her Majesty and the dignity of the Throne, they, as her subjects, recognize her in that official character, and do her homage and reverence. But do you not think they like to be with her when, as their mother, she is at home with them, and all state is put off, and they enjoy her personal love? We cannot do without Christ in His official character, as both Advocate and Priest; but neither priesthood as such nor advocacy, come into this chapter. It is the personal love of Christ "to His own." It is consistent, too, with the one great object, viz. "that we may have part with Christ," for this is personal. Mark these verses: the 3rd shows the mind and heart of the Lord. "He knew his hour was come," that " God had put all things into his hand," and " that He came from God, and He went to God." Let us get these thoughts into our hearts, about His person and

Himself, fresh and full, from His own love, and we shall then be astonished at this wonderful Lord who calls us, keeps us clean, and blesses us in the full enjoyment of all His personal love. It takes our breath away, as we think of it, were it not that He draws us to His breast to learn it, in communion with Himself! It was Jesus knew what was needed, and rises from the table. His actions are equivalent to His words; He does not ask them, but this is what He does. We are outside this chapter, if we introduce sin, and guilt, or cleansing by blood. There is no question of sins, it is a question of ministry "by the word, and by the Spirit; "as represented by water, and the towel. He shows forth thus His personal love to His own. Beloved brethren, we have communion with, and participation in, all He has! He came from the Father, to reveal the Father, and He has gone back to the Father, because " He has accomplished the work that was given him to do."

The grave of Lazarus lay in the pathway of Jesus, as " the resurrection and the life," and this was a mighty triumph over death and corruption, as bringing to naught the power of Satan. So was "the transfiguration" on the mount, in the other gospels by Matthew, and Mark, and Luke; in manifestation of the righteousness of Him, who there and then, reached the highest place out of heaven, and was accredited by the voice from " the excellent glory." In John, our Lord is acting as " the word that was God," and in this title, as well as in others, " He gets glory for God," out of the vast ruin that lay around him, day by day, till at Bethany He reached the lowest place, where the enemy's power was at its worst in corruption. But only to say, "loose him, and let him go." Jesus showed " the glory of God," at the grave of Lazarus-if He had not done this, He would not have left us a proof, that He was personally above all the power of Satan, and higher than sin and death, and corruption. He says, " If ye believe, ye shall see the glory of God," and in His title of " the resurrection and the life," He could say to Lazarus, " Come forth." Christ in His power and love, is ever watchful over His own, and stands between them and the foe, at all times. The Devil has done his best, and his worst, to break asunder the relation of Adam with God, and the disciple with Christ. After the sop Satan entered into Judas at the supper table, he is always "the adversary." It was then Jesus washed His disciples' feet, and it was there Satan tempts Peter to say that the Lord "should never wash his feet." In the same way, he tempts people now, by saying they are too bad and sinful to have, and enjoy those things which Christ says are theirs. Satan puts it into the heart of Judas to betray the Lord, but eventually by this act, "the wise shall be taken in his own craftiness," through our Lord's triumphant resurrection. It was in this stronghold of death and corruption, God had been glorified down to the lowest, and the devil been defeated, at Lazarus's grave. This is why, in John's gospel we have no account given of the temptation in the wilderness; because His divine glory in righteousness, or in authority, are supreme everywhere, and in everything. Instead therefore of the transfiguration on the Holy Mount, where Jesus reached the highest place under heaven, as in the synoptic gospels: here we have the social circle of Bethany instead, and Lazarus one of those who sat at the table with Him. Mary and the box of ointment, "speak of His decease " as really as Moses and Elias did at the top of the Holy Mount; and they alike declare a divine secret, for His cross and death, which opened another, and a very different path, to " glory in the highest," by means of His baptism of blood. He is anointed "for his own burial," by her-and Judas was the tool of Satan! It required the wickedest man on earth to betray such an One as Jesus, and to betray Him with a kiss. Judas alone could take, and make the step which leads Christ to His highest glory. Man in himself was not wicked enough for this, without being filled with Satan. If grace, which hands the sop, does not break the flesh down, the disciple must become a traitor to Jesus, by means of the perfection of love. The devil became a usurper

against God, by the very goodness of God. If the sop when dipped, does not make sin terrible in our sight, and expel it, Satan will come in, and wickedness, superhuman and diabolical, will be done. Christ went to death, to overcome the flesh, the world, and the devil (as well as "to put away sin, by the sacrifice of Himself") and it is by means of the cross, that God has condemned sin in the flesh, and the flesh itself, by death, and raised us up together with Christ.

The 13th chapter opens out to us thus, the character of His ministry, as "the departed One" to the Father, and by the towel, the water, and the basin. We are kept morally for communion-in this "part with Him" by the word and the Spirit. The Spirit, from the Father and the Son, is the Holy Spirit, and witnesses to the delight of the Father and the Son, and their mutual love to us. In the presence of such marvelous grace, one asks, "Where, and what are we?" He never parts company with, or from, His own. What manner of love is this? These chapters are full of this grace, and they show the new relations and operations of the Holy Ghost too, by which this love is maintained in fellowship with us, and that "His own" are the objects whom Christ loves. Another thing in this group is this—that in no other gospel is there any mention made of "The Father's house." What new people is this, that the many mansions above are opened out to? What has He gone to do for us, that we should not be orphans? He has left us the assurance that He will come again, and receive us to Himself—that where He is, there we may be also. Besides this, there is the kingdom glory, for all Christ's rights and titles have been refused by the world. God will in righteousness, put all this right by judgment upon His enemies, when the Church is gone up. There are many mansions, for nothing under the sun could be either a home, or a rest for us, as "One with Christ." There is nothing good enough for "His own"—nothing, but our being caught up, to meet the Lord in the air, and our presentation by Him to the Father, and then our happy settlement in "The Father's house." He said, I will not leave you "orphans," I will come to you, for these disciples had preached "the kingdom as at hand," and expected it too. As yet, they had earthly hopes as Israelites; but a believer in a rejected Christ, in an ascended Lord, and the glorified Son of Man, has no expectations outside the "departed One" at His second coming, and is now an orphan." Looked at under "the light of the sun," his hopes are not in Israel's restoration; for the veil is upon their hearts, till they nationally turn to the Lord; and till that day comes, they must abide "without a king" in Jerusalem, and without seraphim and priest.

The climax of the world's history, which will be the worshipping of the beast, together with the acceptance of the antichrist, and the false prophet, must yet be manifested to reach the full-blown blasphemies "against God and His Christ," upon which the apocalyptic judgments will then be poured out, and which they will then set aside. In the meanwhile the Spirit in living power, has a dwelling-place in us, or we should be orphans, and "without hope," because our portion is with our risen Lord, and where He now is; our only home is there. The devil tries to eclipse this bright light of the Father's house and home, by making the present world attractive and ensnaring-or else by making persons skeptical. People pray for the Holy Ghost "to be poured out," as if this were the hope of the Church; but this should not be, for the Holy Ghost has come to prepare the heart of the Bride, for the shout of her Lord, and to enter upon those relations in heaven, which are formed by the Father, for "the many sons He is bringing to glory." Nevertheless, man and this creation have never been given up; only the scaffolding, as well as the various types and shadows, must give place, and come down, when "the building made without hands" is to appear. Heaven and earth "which are now," shall pass away, Peters says, that the elements shall dissolve with fervent heat.

Paul says all shall be shaken, but we "receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved," &c. My word shall remain, and "I will come and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. I will not leave you 'orphans,' for the Father's house belongs to the children of this economy." Thus we see these chapters of John cannot apply to the Old Testament saints, nor to the dispensation which preceded Christ; nor to the millennial kingdom and its throne of glory, which follows this; but they apply to a believer who owns a rejected Christ, and is come out to have part with Him, where He is. To all His saints who love this oneness there is a special circle of intimacy, and for the exercise of Christ's love (See John 14:19-23). There are two abodes—we "have part with Him" in the Father's abode, where He is—and to the man who keeps his words, "He and the Father will come, and make their abode" with him. "His own" have had to part with Him, for a time. Meanwhile, there are the operations of the Spirit, to make "this indwelling" vital to us; and these are wonderful links, which we must know and understand, in order to enjoy. He thus manifests Himself unto us, moreover, as He does not unto the world, for these are inward ties in life, with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ. The Holy Ghost, too, makes His abode with us, though not visibly; but it is real, vital, spiritual, and understood, and known to us. In chapter 16:9, there is another, and a very opposite relation, and effect of the Comforter seen, viz., "to convict the world" of sin, righteousness, and judgment to come. It is as Comforter to us, but as convicter of the world, and as a witness and evidence against it, that He appears below. The Lord gives us to see and feel His hand in grace (See chap. 16:12-15), so that we may be confident in His love and intimacy with us. He will keep my feet clean, and lay my head at rest on the unfathomable depths of His love—without a thought about security against judgment of sin—for we are redeemed by His precious blood for all that, and made whiter than snow. Finally, we must observe the energy and reciprocity of this sweet love; for John, the beloved disciple, who rested on the Lord's bosom, was swifter of foot, and "did outrun" all, when there was a question of the Lord's empty tomb by His resurrection. It is as beautiful as it is perfect, to see that the Lord on his part, commits to him His own mother.

Thus, the disciple brought up upon the breast, was the quickest of eye, likewise, for it was John who saw and recognized the Lord on the shore, at the sea of Tiberias, on the morning of that eventful fishing.

And now let us close these meditations by this, viz., that the confidence, and repose, and rest of love, are as precious between Jesus "and the beloved disciple," as were the energy and reciprocity by act and deed by John previously. What a proof of it was this: "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, Woman, behold thy son! Then saith he to the disciple, Behold thy mother! And from that hour, that disciple took her to his own home." It is thus, the wondrous circle of the mansions, and houses, and homes, and abodes of love, above and below, are made perfect in this blessed gospel; between the Father and his children, or Jesus and "His own," or the Lord and His disciples!

On the Remnant

ONE or two readers have failed to see the meaning of our little paper on this subject in our April number and lest there may be more we give the explanation, we wrote to one of our correspondents. It read thus: —

"I observe that you fail to perceive our meaning or to see the distinction between Christian doctrine and moral practice. I also observe that you take for your text a statement or sentiment, by way of, in the B. H. for April, 1880, which does not exist. We write about ' the Church:' you put it as if we had used the term `Christianity.' One could not work intelligently for the Lord who did not own that all professing Christians are not Christians in truth; and the closing paragraph of our article distinctly refers to that. A remnant of the Church is clearly a thought foreign to Scripture, as I wrote to you; for in one aspect of the Church, it is the body of Christ, and of that body there could be no remnant in the sense of which you write of one. You write about something of which our paper does not treat. As far as we are concerned, you are fighting a thing of your own making."

In the paper our correspondent sent to us he quotes " the language of a beloved brother," which we give to show that (whoever he is) he is not in opposition to us in what we have said either above, or in our pages: "there clearly is a remnant in Christendom, that is, all nominal Christians will not possess the privileges of true ones. And they are in this sense a remnant. But the results being different, it seems different, because the Jewish remnant remains on earth to become as such the nation, whereas true Christians going up to heaven, never appear as a distinct body in possession of their privileges, as all the dead saints will be raised up and go with them. But in the time of faith, the faithful will be just as much practically a remnant as the Jews will be. To deny the thing is to make me stay in the camp, and go on with all evil. To say there is not spiritually a remnant in the midst of Christianity is to give up life and spirituality as needed, and makes purifying one's self from vessels to dishonor wrong." We agree with the writer when he says: —" In the time of faith the faithful will be just as much practically a remnant as the Jews will be." But "practically a remnant " and " a remnant in Christendom" point to another thing than our article treats of. It says " turning our thoughts to the Church [not " Christendom "], it is manifest the term remnant would not apply for the assembly is viewed as existing as a whole on earth. Much instruction we may surely derive from the remnant of Haggai's days, but a remnant or the remnant, is a term one would not use with reference to the Church." But though this is so, one would not object to the use of it, by way of accommodation to faithful saints, in " Christendom " as when this writer says " There is a remnant in Christendom." Of the Church there can be no remnant. In Christendom there has always been what answers to one spiritually, and will always be: there have always been those the Lord owns and approves of in the midst of the great Christian profession, and those He disowns and disapproves of. We admit fully that there must be a company answering " spiritually to a remnant in the midst of Christianity" or else we and others gathered to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, have been acting without any Scripture warrant.

But the term remnant is not used of the Church of God, nor could it be used of that which in one aspect of it is the body of Christ. We have full Scripture warranty for part of any local assembly, or of the general assembly being viewed as the only faithful ones. See Rev. 2:24. But the special feature of a remnant, as set forth in the paper referred to, all we think must see, cannot be predicated of the Church of God.

"Christ Loved the Church."

" CHRIST loved the Church and gave himself for it " " nourisheth and cherisheth it even as Christ also doth the Church: for we are members of his body." The great thought of "the Church" is in our Lord's mind, and it is the Church he nourisheth and cherisheth, not a mere fragment of it, of which there is no word at all.

We should avoid getting occupied with a thought which is other than that of our Lord Jesus. The Church as a whole is his object of love and care as truly as when the saints were " all together," and our thoughts should expand so as, with him, to take in the Church in its totality, not only those we might deem the faithful, the spiritual or a more holy portion of the saints. Constant occupation with the idea of a remnant, and the thought that we only are it, tends to obliterate from our minds the Scripture thought of the Church, and to endanger our settling down with the sectarian idea that we are the only people Christ is caring for at the present hour; and, from this to our degenerating into a sect with fresh ideas and correct views is not a great step. We should have a care lest we hurt ourselves and mislead others, by cherishing unscriptural notions; and, certainly, if we do not have the whole Church of God on earth in our faith, mind, and heart, in our worship, teaching, testimony and discipline we shall not answer to Christ's mind regarding His saints. Let us beware of entertaining un-Christlike ideas and belittling the Church or Christianity, or Christ's love, care, and work for the whole body and every member °fit. It is to be feared that most saints never rise worthily in their thoughts so as to take in Christ's mind and heart for the Church, because of this constant occupation with themselves. The depreciating words which one sometimes hears as to the ungathered saints among the sects of Christendom as if they were not really the living members of Christ's body, and equally precious to Him as objects of his present love and ministry are very painful, as they indicate minds and hearts not in concert or sympathy with the Lord's thoughts. It is "THE CHURCH" Christ is to present to Himself, glorious, having neither spot nor wrinkle, nor any such thing; and there is no object so near His heart now as the Church, His body, and His Bride.

The Singers of Zion

" Now let me die." " And Jacob blessed Pharaoh." Heb. 11:21; Jer. 31:11, 12.

" The blood... wherewith he was sanctified... Ye are come to Mount Zion." Heb. 10, 12

YE singers of Zion, His goodness retrace,
And hide not His trophies of mercy and grace;
His " plenteous redemption " with fullness proclaim,
Forget not His " patience," deny not His " name."
Now join in the lays of the weak ones of old,
Whose hearts were too big for the law-loving fold;
Whose lips must confess, with rejoicing at length,
That they who have "stumbled are girded with strength.'
Say, who is this wanderer, homeless and lone,
Preparing a bed with its pillows of stone?
He dreams not of judgment, but heaven reveals
A pathway of favor—the Blesser that heals.
Where—where did he find out the oil that he poured,
Recording the grace he had learned in the Lord?
A bright Ebenezer he 'stablished at length,
Proclaiming, to us, who was girded with strength.
Then, tell of that wonder of power divine,
Who proved His compassions could sovereignly shine,
The one who beheld how He wrought at the Sea,
And set His redeemed in the wilderness free:
Yes, hide not the truth, how he shamelessly strayed,
And gathered the sheep round the idol he made;
Yet oh! as he bound on the ephod, at length
His lips could declare who was girded with strength.

And surely, we see, in this wonderful plan,
The priest could announce—" Never glory in man; "
The people had sinned: 'twas in vain they could boast,
So all must be debtors to Mercy at last.
Then pass on to Beer, when he at the rock
Had failed to show grace to the wandering flock:
" In them He is sanctified " richly, at length,
"The pole" is their banner, they're girded with strength.
And who is this marvel in Hannah's bright day,
Whose mouth can be filled with a similar lay—
The offspring of Korah—a debtor to grace,
Who surely would join you in gladness and praise?
Sing, sing, as ye see him uplifting the oil,
To pour it on him who gave Grace's full spoil;
Tis Rahab's great son he is blessing at length,
And David could tell who was girded with strength.
Of captives in Babylon, too, ye may sing,
And ope the resources that Mercy must bring;
The sword in their house, governmentally laid,
And yet what a witness their pathway displayed.
Ah! little the boaster to Babylon knew,
The wonderful blessing their God had in view;
That proved, in the end (to His glory and praise),
When deepest the ruin, the power of His grace.
But, pass on from singing in Zion of old,
And louder proclaim what your hearts must unfold;
Say, who are those gathered in weakness and fear—
Their souls little dreaming what blessing was near.
The last time they all were surrounding the Head,

They left Him alone: they " forsook Him and fled."
Then sing as He breathes on those outcasts at length,
That they who had "stumbled are girded with strength."
Are they a-preparing for Galilee's road,
To seek the rejected—to find His abode?
He comes to give energy ere they move on,
To meet where the weak ones had told He was gone.
A Peter—like Aaron—shall echo your strain,
To learn richer grace in that wonderful train;
Oh, could not that company glory at length,
And prove—that the stumbler is girded with strength.
The name of their Purchaser, who shall remove
From sheep that are branded from glory above?
Despite all their failure, before all the world,
]Their calling, their standard, may still be unfurled.
Yes, singers of Zion, now fully proclaim,
The weakest is heavenly—bearing that Name;
The height of that calling, the grace He can pour,
Unite—as ye laud loving kindness's store.
The proud may refuse, but "the humble shall hear,"
The wise shall " observe" why the needy have cheer:
If Hanun reject what a David doth send,
Let heads, which He blesses, adoringly bend.
" While kings with their armies are fleeing apace,"
We'll sing all the louder of glory and grace;
Just come to the end of the desert at length,
Why should we not tell of the girdle of strength.
Leviticus

If leprosy appeared in a garment, whether of woolen, or linen, or of skin, the priest was to shut it up seven days; if the plague had spread in the garment that garment was to be burnt. If the plague had not spread they were to wash the garment. Then, if the stain remained indelible, the garment had to be burnt. If, on the other hand, the plague was somewhat dark after the washing of it, that part was to be cut out. If, after that, it appeared still in the garment, there was nothing for it but its total destruction by fire. Such were the directions for the priests of the house of Aaron. In what light are we to view them?

Disease in the flesh of an Israelite might make him unclean. The working of the flesh in any Christian may render him unfit to be in the company of his brethren in the enjoyment of Christian privileges.

But every disease was not the dreaded infliction of leprosy, so every outbreak of the flesh in a Christian would not warrant his exclusion from fellowship at the table of the Lord. Care was to be exercised by the priest, who had divine directions for his guidance. Care must be exercised by the assembly, for which guidance is also provided in the Word. Further, since it might have been an old leprosy breaking out afresh (v. 11), and since also it involved exclusion from the camp, till the person was healed, we shall miss the instruction of these chapters if we view leprosy as here typical of man's condition by birth. It is not to one who has never been accredited as a Christian, to whom we are to apply it; for how put out a person who has never had a place in the camp? For us then, this portion treats of discipline towards a Christian, or one who has been reckoned as such, and not of the salvation of a sinner.

But if, on inspection by the priest, the leprosy had covered the man all over, and had all turned white, he was clean. For him in that state no exclusion was needful. He was clean, and no clean person was put outside the camp; only the unclean were thus dealt with. So there are occasions when, if the sin is really confessed, all being brought out, and no longer working in him, that man is to be reckoned clean, and for him in that state excommunication would not by God's Word be demanded. To this condition of the leper Matt. 18:17 may be analogous. If the offending brother leaves the church, the matter drops, and further proceedings are not called for. The leprosy in a garment may remind us of the circumstances, the surroundings, of a Christian, in which there is something clearly wrong. If that which is wrong can be cut off, well and good. If, on the other hand, that which is inconsistent with Christianity cannot be thus got rid of, the person must get out of the circumstances to rid himself of that which is wrong, as the Israelite had to lose his whole garment by fire, when it was found that nothing else would check the spread of the plague. Uncompromising was Jehovah, that Israel learned. But His ways of grace they had proved, and could speak well of. It might seem to some hard to repent outside the camp, for the working of that within them which they derived from natural descent. It might seem, too, a hard sacrifice to part with the garment without any equivalent in money to buy another. But the Israelite was part of Jehovah's redeemed people, and He was their God. What other nation was so favored? This might reconcile him to the loss of his garment, whilst the death of the bird and animals in sacrifice would show him at what cost, even the life of the substitute, the plague-stricken leper could be cleansed. Yet, till healed, his place was outside, to await the action of Jehovah in mercy and goodness to him.

God's holiness cared for by the exclusion of the leper from the camp, the Lord Jehovah again speaks, but this time only to Moses (14:1-32). Had the maintenance of this holiness been all that Jehovah was concerned with, the leper would have remained outside the camp in perpetual separation from the Tabernacle, and from social intercourse with God's people. But He cared for the leper, and provided for his reinstatement into a his privileges in the camp, if only he was first healed. Then the priest came forward to readmit the one whose exclusion at the outset, and the continuance of it till then, had resulted from his judgment of the case. Money, entreaties, promises, efforts, all would be of no avail. Jehovah Himself must, heal the man, or he never could be cleansed. Hence grace had scope to display itself, when the claims of divine holiness had been acknowledged.

But though the law provided for the leper's cleansing, and assumed the possibility of Jehovah's healing him, of which the law-giver himself had proof in his own' personal history (Ex. 4:6-7), we read not in the Old Testament of any one in Israel, smitten by God, being healed save Miriam the sister of Aaron. And one only from among the Gentiles stand, that we read of, in Jehovah's goodness in this respect during all that time, and that was Naaman the Syrian, healed in divine goodness, when the kingdom of Israel was in a state of apostasy from God. Yet the disease was clearly not so uncommon (Luke 4:27), though, from all that we know, recovery from it was rare, till He came, Jehovah Himself, who touched the leper, and by the fiat of His own will, being moved with compassion, healed him on the spot (Mark 1:41). Power, that leper owned, Christ had, but was He willing to heal him? That was the question in the poor outcast's mind. He was willing. He healed him. Then what had been unknown in the days of Elisha, was frequently experienced, and the priests had to acknowledge it. Lepers were healed (Matt. 11:5; Luke 7:22; 17:7), for Jehovah had visited His people in grace, after the ministry of John the Baptist had proclaimed their utter and hopeless failure under the law. Till then it may have been like that which went on at Bethesda; that healing was but sparingly known. The people's condition, however, manifested that God was free to act in the fullness of His grace.

But to return. The leper healed, he remained outside the camp, until visited by the priest, who certified of Jehovah's goodness, and in recognition of it took immediate steps for the person's readmission into the camp. So he commanded two birds alive and clean to be taken for the healed one, with cedar-wood, scarlet, and hyssop, the one bird to be killed in a vessel over running (i.e., not stagnant water), and the other to be dipped alive in the blood of its fellow. That done, the priestly work began by sprinkling him that was to be cleansed seven times, pronouncing him clean, and letting the living bird loose into the open field. Now the person could re-enter the camp, though as yet he could not go into his tent. Much more had to take place ere that could be allowed. But here let us pause for a moment.

What lessons have we before us? The outbreak of sin in a Christian may necessitate his exclusion from our midst. " Put away from among yourselves the wicked person " (1 Cor. 5:13), may be the direction I suited to the case. Then should grace work in that person, restoration would follow. Now living, as we do, in a day when no animal sacrifices are offered to God, we are in danger of forgetting, in a way an Israelite was not, the need of death and bloodshedding for restoration to Christian privileges. True, Christ lives to die no more; yet had He not died, and made propitiation by His blood, the offender could never be restored. Hence in thought we must go back to the Lord's death and resurrection, as often as restoration is required. This the two birds typified, as the

live one identified with the dead bird, by being dipped in its blood, winged its way into the air in all the freedom of life. For by His blood atonement is effected, and by His resurrection all who believe on Him are cleared from all charge of guilt that can be brought against them (Rom. 4:25).

Further, as the cedar-wood, scarlet, and hyssop were dipped in the blood of the bird that was slain, all that spoke of nature, the cedar, and the hyssop (the whole range of it as 1 Kings 4:33 views it), and what betokened the glory of the world, the scarlet, all were viewed through the medium of the death of the substitute. Has, nature, has the world been the occasion of a Christian's fall, in what a different light is he to view them, as he sees them in the light of the cross. How easy it is to man to sin, because we are sinful creatures, having a nature which is only evil. But how much is needed for restoration to be known. For besides the Lord's death and resurrection, which have taken place, the Holy Ghost must work on the conscience, and apply to it the knowledge of the efficacy of the blood of Christ. By the eternal Spirit He offered Himself without spot to God (Heb. 9:14); so the bird's blood fell into an earthen vessel of running water, the symbol of the Lord as man in whom the Holy Ghost was. And the blood and the water, it would appear, were both sprinkled on the one who was to be cleansed (v. 52), for it is only as the word is applied by the Spirit to the offender's conscience, that the efficacy of that precious blood in God's sight comes home to him. How much then is required. The true sacrifice had to be provided. The Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14). The Son by the eternal Spirit offered Himself to die. And the Holy Ghost has to bring home in power to the conscience the remembrance of the abiding value of the blood of Christ.

Foundation truth thus shadowed forth, viz., the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the efficacy of His precious blood (1 John 2:2), who, is the propitiation for our sins, the man found that he had something to do. As yet what had been done, had been done for the leper. Now he washed his clothes, shaved off all his hair, and washed himself in water. Then he was clean, and could come into the camp, though he could not even yet re-enter his tent. Cleansing one's self from old associations, putting away all appearance of natural strength, or of that in which one has prided one's self, and separating by the action of the word from all that makes one unclean, such is the teaching to us conveyed in the directions furnished to the leper.

Resting in the camp, but outside his tent, he washed his clothes, and his person, and shaved himself again on the seventh day. How complete was that work! The hair of his head, of his beard, and of his eyebrows was all shaved off, and he stood divested of, any appearance of natural strength or personal comeliness, to be restored on the eighth day to all the privileges of an Israelite, one of the redeemed people, but only after the appointed sacrifices should be offered up on his behalf. This time he brought his own offerings, a trespass-offering, a sin-offering, a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering mingled with oil, and one log of oil; for from out of the five offerings enumerated in Lev. 1-7, all typical of the Lord Jesus, were required for his full cleansing.

Nothing could be effected for the man apart from the death of Christ on the cross. But the special features of the eight days' ceremonies, were the trespass offering and the oil. All the other offerings were needed, though pre-eminence is given to the two just mentioned.

The trespass offering came first, and rightly so, for whatever Israel may have understood of the value and import of the different offerings, we can see that since the leper typifies one who had sinned inside the camp and so had to be excluded, the trespass offering, which had its special

place where God or man had been defrauded of their rights (Bible Herald, vol. 3., p. 242), would here naturally come first. " So the priest," we read, " shall take one he lamb, and offer him for a trespass offering, and the log of oil, and wave them for a wave offering before the Lord. And he shall slay the lamb in the place where he shall kill the sin offering," &c. (14:12, 13). The priest bringing the lamb to the altar, waving it, and then slaying it, was a course of procedure peculiar to this occasion; for the animal, be it remarked, was waved before death, the token that the man here on earth, should be for God, as He was in His life of whom that he lamb was the type. Now in this it was that the man, viewing this history in its typical light, had failed. The lamb waved, the trespass offering was killed, and some of its blood was put on the tip of the man's right ear, on the thumb of his right hand, and on the great toe of his right foot. After that the priest sprinkled of the oil before the Lord seven times. Next he put some on the healed one's person, where he had just put some of the blood, and after that poured the remnant of the oil that was in his hand on the person's head, who was to be cleansed, and made an atonement for him before the Lord, in token that he was to be, as it were, consecrated to God, and endued with power as such by the Holy Ghost. But for the atonement we cannot receive the Holy Ghost. Without the Spirit we have no power to serve God. Of these things the action of the priest here reminds us. But that action, though typical of these truths, must not be taken to teach the reception of the Spirit a second time. That cannot be any more than the Lord can die again. But the restored one surely has need to be reminded of that precious blood, and of the power in which alone he can walk, viz., that of the Holy Ghost.

(To be continued.)

The Lord's Supper

THE intention of our present writing is to consider carefully and closely what the Spirit, by the Apostle Paul, has given us regarding the Lord's Supper, in the second half of 1 Cor. 11 All that we shall do in this number, will be to consider the disorders connected with it, and the Apostle's censure of them.

"Now this I command [you], not praising you, that ye come together not for the better but for the worse."

The Apostle's praising (verse 2), and his not praising, are closely connected with the two parts into which the chapter is divided. (1) "Now I praise you that in all things ye are mindful of me; and, as I gave you them,' that ye hold fast the traditions." He would praise them for holding fast the instructions, or directions, he had given them. But grave disorders had broken out among them at the love-feast, and the Lord's Supper, and with regard to these he writes, " I praise you not" (or " not praising.") "Now this I enjoin (or command); " he does not say what, but goes into a detailed statement of the disorders he had heard of on their assembling together; and then, at verses 32, 33, he gives his injunction.

There are some who think that the words, "Now this I enjoin," refer to what goes before respecting the veiling of Christian women. This does not commend itself to us as correct. It refers most distinctly to what follows, for his whole writing to the end of the chapter has the effect of an authoritative apostolic injunction, laying down positive doctrine, and rectifying their disorders.

" That ye come together not for the better but for the worse." This appeared in their moral condition, and also in such things as are mentioned at verses 29, 30. There is no place where our state is more deteriorated by levity and irreverence of mind and act than at the Lord's table. But if we observe the Lord's Supper in a spiritual, devout, reverent frame of mind, really discerning the Lord's body, being in contact with Him in His death by a living faith, and worshipping the Father with praise-filled lips, our souls and hearts, touched afresh by the love of Christ, we shall be perceptibly " better," and our whole moral state shall be elevated, and our spiritual tone improved. But it is a very solemn thing that, if we come not together for the better, it must be for the worse, and may even be " to judgment " (verse 34). That ye come together not for the better, but for the worse, is what he cannot praise in the Corinthian Church. He then proceeds to point out their faults in detail.

" For, first, when ye come together in assembly, I hear that divisions exist among you, and I partly believe it." He had heard of their divided state of opinion (chap. 1:10), and had dealt with them regarding it, and their setting up of one leader against another; but here divisions had shown themselves in their Church meetings even when professedly come together to eat the ordinary love-feast, and partake of the Lord's Supper, which then went along with it. " In the church" does not mean "place of assembly," nor " congregationally," but "in a church-meeting" or "in assembly," as the words literally read.

"For first," de. Where is the second point? At verse 20? Not so, but at chap. 12:1; for Paul blames two evils in this assembly: (1) the degeneration of the love-feast (verses 8-34), and (2) the misapplication of the gifts of the Spirit (Chapter 12:1).

There were divisions among the believers at Corinth, but they had not separated from one another externally as Christians have done in our day. There was a divided state of mind, heart, and feeling, leading to selfish and disorderly action when gathered together; and this, in turn, to deterioration of their spiritual state; but there were no outward separations. They all came together in assembly. They had unhappily more light and gifts than love and conscience; but yet they continued to come together in a church-meeting as one assembly. If there were mutual separations, they were within the assembly. The divisions or schisms were only separations through social distinctions, or alienated feeling; saints ceased to cleave to one another through want of love, or differing thoughts, or position. But the saints thus divided in thought, feeling, or by social distinctions, were still the one "Church of God at Corinth." But when this negative process of not cleaving to one another in cordial Christian love and sympathy goes on for a time, the falling away assumes a more positive and antagonistic form in the reunion of the disunited into cliques and parties, in accordance with the law of sympathizing selection. This is a necessity, in the nature of things, arising from the operation of divided opinion and alienated feeling; and then we have what the apostle calls heresies in verse 19, as the evil result. Schism is the inner disunion in the Church, which shows itself outwardly in heresies or positive divisions and factions, which would naturally lead ultimately to a position outside.

"For there must be also sects among you, that they who are approved may become manifest among you (verse 19). " Heresies " here does not mean false doctrines, but false parties antagonistic to the assembly, or factious divisions in the Church. They separate themselves into factions, generally around some leader who has got some notion of his own outside of Scripture, which, if carried out to its logical issue, would lead him outside the Church on earth.

Writing to Titus St. Paul gives this injunction: "An heretical man after a first and second admonition have done with, knowing that such an one is subverted, and sins, being self-condemned." A heretic is a man that sets up his own opinions, and by that means forms a party in the church, and sins, and is self-condemned; for by making a party for his own opinions he is not satisfied with the truth as God has given it, nor with the church formed by it, but wants to have a truth of his own, and a party around himself, and his own notions. The apostle writes to the Corinthians, ' For it is necessary that there be also heresies among you in order that the approved may become manifest among you.' The Lord said in Matt. 18:7, " It must needs be that offenses come," &c.

The end to be reached by the presence of heresies among the saints at Corinth, was that the tried or approved ones among them might become manifest by their keeping clear of such factions. God permits such sects to appear in the church to test faith and fidelity; and how few stand such a test, and keep apart, especially when, as at Corinth, parties in the church are all but universal, and a saint is esteemed as of no account unless he be in connection with one or another of them! Yet says the apostle, by the Holy Ghost, the sects must be among them, that the approved—the persons who have stood the test and refused all these factions and parties—may become manifest. God's approved ones are such as stand by God's truth and God's church, and refuse to be carried away by party agitation, or to be ensnared by the most subtle and specious heresies.

The language here is believed by some to refer to the future and the coming of these "heresies," others, that the heresies were there. "There must also be heresies (as well as other evils) among you," and they are even now among you. But one would suppose from the "also" that there was also a stress to be laid upon the "heresies," as indicating something worse than schisms, and pointing to what would continue to happen in the future of the church. "For it is necessary that there must arise even heresies among you as an ordeal to test and make manifest those who are approved"—a truth which the whole history of the church has signally illustrated, and never more conspicuously than in our day.

"When ye come together therefore into the same place, there is no eating of the Lord's supper; for in eating each takes his own supper beforehand, and one as hungry, and another drinks to excess" (verses 20, 21). "Therefore" resumes, after the parenthesis, from verse 18; and the apostle now proceeds to the real object of his censure, "When ye come together" is followed by a phrase (*epi to auto*), which also signifies together, and never once means one place in Scripture: and this leads one to think that it must mean the same thing as, "When ye come together in assembly," inverse 18. For this was the sorrowful thing that, meeting ostensibly, in a body, professedly as the church, and as a whole (see Matt. 22:34; Luke 17:38; Acts 1:15; 2:1; 44:47; 4:26; 1 Cor. 7:5; 11:20; 23), there should be such a want of heart and conscience among the saints, and such a lack of order and waiting for one another that "there does not take place an eating of the Lord's Supper;" for after the custom of the men of their nation when they met at supper each of the better sort seemed to have brought bread and wine and meat, each for himself, which they did not set out for general use, as would have been done in a happier condition of things, but everyone generally ate his own, or that which he had brought. In this each one took his own supper as it suited him, not waiting for, or sharing his abundance with, others'; and so "one is hungry," the poorer saints, "and another is drunken," the better-off sort. Awful description! Dreadful state of things! And in this there was no eating of a Lord's Supper, which was a common eating of all, but of that which was each one's own supper, He therefore says, "It is impossible in these circumstances to eat Ethel Lord's Supper."

And not only was it impossible to eat a Lord's Supper in that way; but it was a selfish way of eating even the social meal that, at that time, accompanied the Lord's Supper, and which furnished the material elements for the latter, for the well-to-do took their own supper separately, even in the place of meeting, and left the poor in their hunger without any provisions. Love was gone from their hearts, and this allowed such ungracious conduct in their gatherings. How different this from the saints at Pentecost, when "all that believed were together, and had all things common;" and when they "broke bread at home," and at the same time "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God!" "And the Lord added together daily such as should be saved."

The apostle, then, brings home the disorder to the consciences of the Corinthian saints in a lively succession of questions, and shows them the awful character of such conduct in God's assembly.

"What, have ye not then houses for eating and drinking Or do ye despise the church of God, and put to shame them who have not? What can I say to you? Shall I praise you? In this I praise you not" (verse 22). As we have already seen, the early Christians celebrated the Lord's Supper at the same time that they ate the love-feast, so that the joint repast was one continuous feast after the pattern of the Lord's doing at the institution of the Lord's Supper, when He ate the Passover feast

with His disciples, at the same time that He gave them the Lord's Supper. Together, both love-feast and Lord's Supper, were regarded as one feast and called "the supper belonging to the Lord" (Kuriakon deipnon, the Dominical supper). All the saints of God in a city being one in Christ, and "all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus"—one family, one church, they ate together the supper given by the Lord in this twofold aspect of it, as witnessing their unity and union for time and for eternity. This combination, although forbidden by the apostle for the assembly henceforth, continued down to the end of the fourth century. But at Corinth, where the love of the saints had evaporated through their too exclusive occupation with gifts and their division and forming of parties around leaders, the Lord's Supper, which was to keep the Lord and His love freshly before their souls and hearts, thereby degenerated into a mere idion deipnon (one's own supper), and was thereby deprived of its peculiar meaning and significance, and was so utterly unlike what the Lord instituted, and that which St. Paul had delivered to them from the glorified Christ in heaven, that it had become a personal eating which might as well have been performed in their own homes, for its assembly character and their common partaking as one body, had disappeared; and it was no longer a bond of union and a remembrance of Christ into whom they were baptized as one body, but a symbol of discord and a scene of disorder, selfishness, and shame. Such are the baneful effects of Christians having divisions among themselves, which tend to the isolation of individuals, and the forming of parties in the church.

What! have ye not houses for eating and drinking?" If there is no higher Object than eating and drinking in solitary isolation, better far be in your own houses. If it is not an eating of the Lord's Supper as a common and united feast in remembrance of the Lord Himself in His death for God's glory and our redemption, the Lord's body not being discerned—it must be a coming together "not for the better but for the worse"—not for edification, but for judgment!

"Or despise ye the church of God?" of which the better part are the poor in this world, rich in faith (James 2:5). For it is not church-buildings, of which there were none (and better for the saints there had never been any), but the building of Christ and the living assembly, built of living stones on the living Stone, and partakers of all His preciousness by faith which is here called "the church of God."

"Despise ye the church of God? Christ loved the church and gave himself for it," and do ye despise that for which He shed His blood that you maintain your divisive isolation even at the Lord's table, that tells by its expressive emblems of that "Lord's death" which gave it birth? "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? Because, we, the many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread (1 Cor. 10:16, 17)." Here is complete identification with Christ in His body and blood at the Lord's table; and our unity is as complete as our identification, and we give expression to our being one body there (and nowhere else), in the very act of communicating, "for we all partake of that one bread." The saints being "one body" partake of the one bread, and drink of the one cup, and in doing this they manifest themselves as one body.

"Despise ye the church of God" by eating in isolation, and not in fellowship? This is done wherever there is divided feeling such as to produce individual instead of united eating and worship, or to gender that isolation that keeps saints apart, or makes them refuse to recognize one another after the supper in the cordial greetings of Christian brotherhood. For is not coming

together week after week for the breaking of bread, and yet refusing to shake hands with, or to speak to, each other at the close, in principle, a despising of "the church of God?" The assembly is God's, for He has both formed it, and dwells in it, and has purchased it with the blood of His own Son. What dignity attaches to it! It is God's new work in Christ, for which Christ died, rose, and went above, and the Holy Ghost came down to give it its existence and objective manifestation, and dwells in it to maintain it in divine power, in blessing and unity in Christ, that He may be glorified. Then, surely, wherever there is the slighting, or setting aside, of the poorest or weakest of Christ's members as not worthy of eating with us, or of being recognized by us on the common footing of being Christ's, there "the church of God" is despised. Any action of individuals of a slighting or isolating sort that offends against any of Christ's little ones, or disturbs the unity of the assembly, is a despising of the church of God. When one does that apart in the church which he might do at home—eat his own supper, or break bread with no solemn sense of its being the Lord's body—and eat in isolation without being cordial with all the saints, or in a real consciousness of "the unity of the Spirit" who gives us divine oneness in Christ, he despises the church of God.

Again the apostle asks: Are ye the persons who cause the poor to be put to shame? The body is one, and hath many members, and as the great majority are poor, to shame "them that have not," i.e., the poor, is to put to shame the great part of Christ's members.

The work of the Spirit of God in the church is so very fine in its texture that it is easily hurt. A wrong look, an unguarded word, a studied neglect, or setting aside, may deeply wound and shame poorer saints, and produce such dislocating feelings as may so dishearten, that at length Satan may obtain such advantage that those who have been thus put to shame—may, by-and-by, cease coming together with the saints to remember the Lord's death.

On the other hand, how delightful it is when saints are so full of Christ that self is gone, and they carry out such injunctions of the Spirit as these—"As to brotherly love, kindly affectioned towards one another; as to honor, each taking the lead in paying it to the other. Have the same respect one for another, not minding high things, but going along with the lowly. With all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, bearing with one another in love, using diligence to keep the unity of the Spirit in the uniting-bond of peace. Fulfill ye my joy that ye may think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking one thing: let nothing be done in the spirit of strife or vain-glory, but in lowliness of mind, each esteeming the other more excellent than themselves; regarding not each his own qualities, but each those of others also."

The very reverse of all this was practiced in the Corinthian church, and the apostle having brought home to them their sad conduct, ends by asking: "What shall I say to you? Shall I give you praise? On this point I praise not." On other points he had already praised them (verse 2), on this point he could not do so. The deliberate and ceremonious manner of the apostle shows that, though his language is moderate, he meant them to feel that they deserved the very reverse of praise—that, in fact, they were very much to be blamed. "On this point I praise not." The ground on which this is said is given in verse 23, &c., where he refers to his revelation from the Lord, regarding the Supper which he had delivered to them. "For I received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you," &c. This made their disorder the more inexcusable, as it was sinning on their part with the apostolic declaration before them. They knew the right, and they did the wrong. It was impossible he should praise them.

In a subsequent number, we hope to examine and state what we find in this peculiarly interesting communication of the glorified Lord to His holy apostle, in which we have at once the earliest recorded account of the institution of the Lord's Supper, and the earliest recorded speech of our Lord; and also the full doctrine of the Lord's Supper, as well as the final apostolic regulations regarding the due observance of the same. It is appropriate that our apostle who first saw the Lord in glory, and heard from His mouth of the oneness of Him and His saints, and received His gospel and commission from Him; and who was the minister of the church, should also be the one to receive and give from the Lord the doctrine of the Lord's Supper, the only ordinance which in its celebration gives a symbolic manifestation of the church in its unity as the body of Christ on earth (1 Cor. 10:16,17).

Leviticus

AFTER the trespass offering came the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the meat offering. Then the man was fully cleansed, and once more could enter his tent, from which, as from the camp, he had been banished for the time. How manifestly all was of grace, but how fully did divine grace provide all that was requisite. Jehovah healed when the case was otherwise hopeless! Jehovah prescribed under the law the requisite sacrifices; whilst in the Gospel we learn that He provided the true sacrifice; His own well-beloved Son. His Son's death we needed for our salvation. The efficacy of His precious blood, then shed is equally needed for our restoration: no salvation, no restoration, apart from that atoning death. Nothing more, however, is wanted than His death, resurrection, and precious blood, as seen and owned by God, for all these sacrifices spoke of One, the Lord Jesus Christ. All having been duly offered up, the leper at length fully cleansed could enjoy afresh every privilege of God's people, as much as if he had never been deprived of them. And surely it must have been with a chastened spirit and an overflowing heart that he found himself again in his tent in the camp, all trace, probably, of his leprosy removed from his person; for this could be the case, since (Naaman's, flesh came again as the flesh of a little child (2 Kings 5:14).

Witnessing, however, as the law did to God's grace, it could not furnish the man with the means to get the requisite sacrifices. Those he had to procure, as best he could, by the eighth day, for without them he could not get back into his tent. The Lord, therefore, made provision for those who could not procure all that had been prescribed (14:21-31). The offerings appointed for the first day, had to be brought for every healed leper alike. The offerings appointed for the eighth day were modified as, to their pecuniary value by this special provision to meet the necessity of the case.

Each one had to bring a lamb for the trespass offering and a log of oil, but the meat offering was reduced to one-tenth of an ephah; and for the sin offering and burnt offering birds could be substituted in the place of the animals. Thus God met the person according to his ability, though he could not dispense with one even of the offerings; for nothing less than the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ can enable God righteously to restore a soul to communion with Himself, and reinstate the person in his place in the company of God's saints. All the offerings, then, called for from the richest Israelite, had still to be brought by the poorest. A trespass offering, a sin offering, a burnt offering, a meat offering, each had to bring; but the man's pecuniary inability to bring the more costly ones was not to stand in the way of his coming with such as he was able to get. And all this took place on the eighth day, the commencement of a new period of time, from which the

one cleansed was to be really for God upon earth. That eighth day betokened from whence that life of consecration to God was to start afresh, but it spoke nothing of its ending. Such was not contemplated in the type, nor is it limited by anything short of the duration of life on earth in the doctrine and teaching of the New Testament.

We come now to a third revelation, given as the first was to both Moses and Aaron (14:33-57), and which treats of leprosy in a house in the land. Leprosy in a man, or in a garment could be known in the wilderness, that in the house could only be experienced in the land, and it was a direct infliction by the hand of God. " And I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession." The priest made acquainted with the occupant's suspicion about the house, for it was the duty of one in it to acquaint him with his fears respecting it; he was to order them to empty it, ere he entered therein, that all in the house should not be made unclean. Examining the walls, he judged if the marks were in sight lower than the wall, i.e., not mere superficial marks. If they were, he shut up the house for seven days, for it was the plague which had attacked it. Examining it again at the expiration of that time, if the marks had spread, the plague-stricken stones were to be taken out, the whole house scraped, new stones put in the place of the diseased ones, and the whole re-plastered, whilst the stones removed, and the scraping of the walls were all to be cast into an unclean place without the city. If the plague reappeared after that, there was nothing for it but the demolition of the whole building, and its stones, timber, and mortar, to be carried forth to an unclean place outside the city. Such a house was not to be suffered to remain in the land. What care was to be exercised, and what patience! The plague really there, as evidenced on the first inspection, the priest waited to see whether or not it would spread. If it did, he tried to save the house by the removal of the diseased stones. If, however, the leprosy still worked, unsparing was the treatment to be pursued. But should the removal of some stones be sufficient to eradicate the plague, the priest offered for the cleansing of the house the same offerings as were enjoined for the leper on the first day of his cleansing. Atonement thus made for it, the house was clean, because the plague was healed. These offerings, however, were to be offered only in the case of the plague having ceased to spread, after the stones had been taken out (14:48), and the house replastered. So it would appear that when the second examination of the house (i.e. that on the seventh day), showed that the plague had not spread since the priest had first seen it, no sacrifices were required. The house then was in a condition analogous to that of the man in whom the leprosy had all turned white (13:11). It was clean. Such was the law. To us this affords instruction in type, about an assembly in which evil has got a footing that requires to be dealt with. For the whole subject of leprosy in these two chapters provides us with principles applicable to the circumstances in which a Christian can be found. Is he himself leprous, the disease still at work in him? Then putting away from the fellowship of the saints is the proper Scriptural way of dealing with him, and the assembly, certified of his state, is responsible to act as the word directs. Are his surroundings such as God's word forbids? He must get out of them at all cost to himself. Is any local assembly known to harbor evil, and which ought to be put out? The state of that assembly should be the common concern of all saints. A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump " (1 Cor. 5:6). If it purges itself, so that the evil ceases to work, well and good. But should the disease still work, the authors of it, and those infected, by it, must be put away. If that does not arrest the spread of the plague, the assembly must be broken up, i.e., disowned as an assembly of God.

Do any ask for an example in Scripture of the assembly in general disowning any local assembly? We must answer at once that there is none, though we can point to Corinth as affording instruction about the whole case.

Evil, leaven was among them. The Apostle wrote to them about it. They dealt with it, and thus got clear of it (2 Cor. 7:11). The visit of Titus, and his report about them, evidenced that to the Apostle. So he proceeded no further. But was Paul unconcerned about it? No. Did he take the ground, that none could urge a local assembly to act? No. And we may be quite sure that the one who could write as he did in 1 Cor. 5:2, 7, 13, would not have tolerated the retention among them of the evil about which he wrote. "A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump," he writes, a very plain intimation of the character they would have borne if the evil had not been purged out; and if he insisted on their dealing with the offender, would he, could he, have held intercourse with them as an assembly of God, supposing they had refused to act? His language evidences in what light he would have viewed them.

The Corinthians dealt with the offender, as the priest did with the leper. But they did not do it, till Paul, who was not locally connected with them (his language proves that, 1 Cor. 5:7, 13), pressed on them the need of action, and pointed out what should be done; and waited, and how anxiously, to learn what they would do. In this he acted somewhat like the priest, who inspected the house, and then waited a week to see if the disease was still working. As an Apostle, he personally could do all this, and take such ground with them about the evil in question, for he was an Apostle of Christ, and apostolic power was no light thing (2 Cor. 10:1-11; 13:2-10; 1 Cor. 4:21; 1 Tim. 1:20; John 3:10).

(To be continued.)

A Fresh Action of God for the Blessing of His Saints

THE returned captives in Neh. 8 being assembled at Jerusalem on the first day of the seventh month desired to have the law publicly read to them. This was done by Ezra and others for two consecutive days, and when its requirements were heard and their great sins and transgressions were thereby exposed and condemned, they mourned and wept: and quite right they should have done so. But Nehemiah and the Levites stopped them from weeping by telling them that the day was holy to the Lord, a day of solemn gladness, and not of mourning.

It was the first day of the seventh month, the festal month of the year, and on the first day of it every seven years, it was ordained by the law, that the Scriptures should be publicly read to them. But the day being the first day of the feast of trumpets, the first day of the seventh ecclesiastical year, and the new year's day of the civil year, it was on that account held as " a great day."

It was the feast of trumpets which pointed onward to a fresh action on the part of God, and a new work of recalling His people to their own land in the future day which was symbolized by the feast of trumpets. The Lord, in symbol, coming in afresh to work a work of recalling which would bring back His people from all the lands whither they had been scattered, they were enjoined to be in keeping with the festal and joyous character of the day, and with the joy of heart of God who had made it; for it would be with joy of heart on God's part and with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, they would return when the day of divine recovery, to which the feast of trumpets pointed, had come; and they must be in keeping in their hearts and conduct with the character of the day.

" This day is holy unto the Lord your God; mourn not nor weep... Go your way, eat the fat and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy unto the Lord, neither be ye sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength. Hold your peace, for the day is holy; neither be ye grieved. And all the people went their way to eat and to drink, and to send portions, and to make great mirth, because they had understood the words that were declared unto them: " doubtless, about the day being holy to the Lord, which they were to keep as worshippers, and they were not to appear before Him as mourners. (None of His priests, who represented them, was allowed to put on the garments of mourning in His presence). The day, and not the law, was to form their hearts and minds, and control their doings.

And on the second day of this feast of trumpets, as the reading went on, they found that the feast of tabernacles was to be kept on the fifteenth day of the seventh month, and they made all due preparation for it, and kept it. This feast looked onward to the promised day of glory, when, with His returned people as a center and His Shepherd among them, He shall make a time of festal joy for the whole earth, during the period of a thousand years. When they had found the meaning of the feast of trumpets, they discovered also the feast of tabernacles that pointed onward to the period of predicted glory, and set about preparing for it; "and there was very great gladness." The few thousands of the returned exiles enjoying their feasts in the ancient capital of their kingdom gave presage of the coming glory when they shall be called the priests of the Lord, a center for the

blessing and joy of the whole world. A recalled people under a fresh action of God look on to glory. There weeping was true and right; for unless they had mourned and wept over their sins as the law exposed them, there had been no basis in a convicted conscience and an exercised heart for their being formed by the grace of the day and finding the joy of the Lord to be their strength. This is ever the way of God, to produce a truthful, moral condition of soul, and then answer to it in His grace.

Though there was no sin in Christ, in Psa. 22, yet in His experience when standing before the judgment of God for sin, the gloom came before the gladness, and the sorrow went before the joy. And this Psalm tells of the sure mercies of David, made good in resurrection and an assembling around God, acting in riches of grace in Christ, and circles of praise and blessing formed around Him and His redeemed people to the ends of the earth. The concluding portion of this Psalm refers to the time when the three feasts of the seventh month shall have their full realization.

On the day of Pentecost when, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, a fresh work of God was inaugurated and begun, the grief went before the gladness. Peter told of a rejected and crucified Christ whom they had slain, but whom God had raised from the dead, and exalted, to His own right hand in the heavens; and they were pricked to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, " Men and brethren, what shall we do? " The provisions of the day that God had made, in that He had seated His Son in the delighted joy of His heart with Himself in heaven, were more than enough to stop the weeping, and to fill the penitents with joy; for through a Christ seated in glory repentance and forgiveness were preached, and by Him the Holy Ghost was given, and three thousand believers witnessed to the power of God's joy in His glorified Son to tranquilize their consciences and fill them with divine joy and gladness. This was a fresh action and work of God, a recalling from moral captivity, and a setting of them in a new place around Himself in fullness of joy, for the day is holy to the Lord, and we read of the assembling of the saved ones around Himself. And this was as it always is for blessing and joy: so "they did eat their meat with gladness, aid singleness of heart, praising God." They were "filled with joy and with the Holy Ghost." This was in principle the action of the first day of the seventh month, the calling out, the commencement, forming and filling of the church of God, according to the riches of God's grace in Christ, and the joy of the Lord so possessing them that it was their strength.

And now that the fair fabric of the church as a public body on earth has been for long ages broken to pieces and marred, and the saints have been carried into a worse captivity than that of the Jews in Babylon, what has been taking place for many years has been a fresh action of God's Spirit, bringing the thought of the day of a glorified Christ and a present Spirit upon their souls. True, they have been passed, and rightly so, under deep exercise of conscience and heart, previous to their seeing by the divinely-anointed eye of faith God's resource for giving the strength of His own joy in His risen and exalted Son to the feeblest of His saints, who have sought to be right with God in mind and heart about His Christ, and to keep the unity of the Spirit, and walk worthy of the vocation, wherewith they are called.

Those saints who have thus departed from iniquity under the force of the word and Spirit of God have found themselves associated with God in His own delighted joy in Christ, as the heavenly center of worship and gathering. " Truly our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ," and our joy is full. TE e Lord's own word is—" For where two or three are gathered

together to my name, there am I in the midst of them." And where is there joy like that of being consciously in the enjoyment of Him "whose presence gladdens heaven?"

Even with regard to the gospel and our salvation we have an example of the action on the conscience in conviction going before the joy in such Scriptures as Luke 14 and 15. In chapter 14, the Lord passed through scene after scene and by His varied words and actions judged everything that came from man. The feast, the guests, the conversation in the Pharisee's house were all distasteful to Him, for they all savored of man in his selfishness: and on leaving the house when the great multitude were giving Him an ovation in the way, He spoke this testing word to them—"If any man come to me and shall not hate his own father and mother, and wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple, and whosoever does not carry his cross and come after me he cannot be my disciple... Thus then any one of you who forsakes not all that is his own cannot be my disciple. Salt, then, is good but if the salt also has become savorless wherewith shall it be seasoned. It is proper neither for land nor for dung; it is cast out. He that hath ears to hear let him hear."

When tested by the Son of man expressing and dispensing the grace of God, and laying the necessary condition of one who could be His disciple upon their consciences man is seen to be mere savorless salt—good for nothing but to be cast out! But His words were not without effect, for the publicans and sinner drew near to hear Him, for they knew that they at least were "savorless salt" and good for nothing. Then it was, when they were hearing-not giving, as the people were in the different scenes in chapter xiv., that the Lord "spoke to them this parable" of Luke 15 for it is one parable in a threefold aspect, giving the joy of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in saving and receiving the lost but returning sinner, who under God's own gracious action was summoned from the far country to the Father's house, to hear Him say, "Let us eat and be merry, for this my son was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found; and they began to be merry." "This parable" tells of Jesus as the Good Shepherd giving His life for the sheep and the joy with which He does it; the quickening and saving of those dead in trespasses and sins by the action of the word and Spirit of God, and the joy with which the Spirit does this gracious work; the Father's receiving of those whom the Son has redeemed and the Spirit quickened, and how the saved one is placed at the table as a son with the Father made meet for the Father's presence by that which was found in the house and not what he brought with him, or felt within him, and he is satiated with the joy of that festive scene; for the joy of the Lord is his strength.

And now for us, too, there is the strength and gladness of this divine joy, the joy of God in Christ; and there is no limit to what we may enjoy of the springs of divine refreshing in the Father and the Son, if we live in conscious enjoyment of the fellowship of the Father in His delight in His glorified Son, who, when on earth, maintained and retrieved His glory, who has entered His glory and joy in His presence in heaven, and who will, by-and-bye, make good His glory before the whole world; and that will be the day when the whole creation shall participate in the joy of God in His glorified Son.

The Springs of the New Creation in Christ

AT the opening of Ex. 12, we find, the beginning of the year changed. It is not said why this was to be, but simply, " This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year unto you." This was an intimation to the people of Israel, that they were to enter on some fresh connection with God, to take up some new character before Him, or to be recognized in some new relationship; and that this was necessary. " This month shall be unto you the beginning of months." And this was said to them while they were still in Egypt, the place of death and judgment, the place of nature or of the flesh.

The intimation thus given at the very outset, was very quickly explained. "God is His own interpreter " —for the very next moment the congregation are introduced to the Lamb of God, whose blood was to shelter them from the sword of the angel; that is, to be their full plea and answer to the throne of judgment where righteousness sits.

This is simple and clear and blessed. Israel are at once taught this—that the new character in which they were now to walk with God was that of a blood bought people, a redeemed, ransomed generation. This was the form which the new life, the new year, on which they were now entering, was to take. This was their new creation, their second birth. We are new creatures, being reconciled sinners.

This truth takes a New Testament form in 2 Cor. 5:16-19. The new creature is that sinner who walks with God in the faith and sense of reconciliation. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who path reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ." This is man beginning the new year, entering on a new life, being a new creature, as a sinner reconciled by the paschal blood of Jesus. So in 1 Peter 1:25, he is declared to have been born again by the word which the Gospel has preached to him; and that Gospel is the message of redemption through the blood of the Lamb. By this he becomes a kind of firstfruits of God's creatures (James 1)

The early intimation of new creature hood which we had here in this twelfth of Exodus, is thus soon interpreted—and the interpretation is confirmed by one and another scripture in the New Testament. But there is much more than this in analogies between these chapters and New Testament Scriptures.

At the close of chapter 12., we find Israel, now redeemed themselves, acting upon others. They are taught how to deal with " strangers." They were to tell them that they were as welcome to come into the regions of the new creation as they had been—that they might eat of the Passover with them, or celebrate redemption with them; only they were to be circumcised as they had been. Sinners must renounce themselves in the flesh, or in the old-creation condition, and then they may enter on the new year, the new life, the new creation of God in Christ Jesus. There must be no confidence in the flesh, but a rejoicing in Christ Jesus—this is the circumcision (Phil. 3:3).

The Acts of the Apostles in the New Testament, is the leading, formal witness and depository of this evangelic ministry of the redeemed. There the saints are seen addressing themselves to "strangers," and doing so in the simple style of this Scripture—13:43-49.

So that we are still breathing the atmosphere of the New Testament when we read these verses. We are in company with the Spirit which afterward animates the Book of the Acts. In the reconciliation of the paschal blood, the blood of the Lamb of God, we tell all around us, that the kingdom is theirs on their being born again, on their faith in the One who died for our sins, and was raised again for our justification. "We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us;" we still say to "strangers," "be ye reconciled to God." (See the chapter already quoted, 2 Cor. 5:20, 21.)

How sweet, how convincing, how precious it is, thus to find ourselves in the mind and with the principles of the New Testament, as we read these very early oracles of the Old!—But there is more of this.

The saint is to take heed to himself, as well as to address himself to "strangers." And to take heed to himself, order his ways, and nourish his soul, in the peculiarities of the calling of God, and after the mind of the Spirit. This we next find in chapter 13.; and this we also find, formally and characteristically, in the Epistles of the New Testament.

In chapter 13., we see the Israelite of God, now redeemed by blood, and thus set in God's presence and fellowship, carrying himself according to this his place and calling. He finds his springs in God, his motives and sanctions, and secret effectual virtues in that which God has done for him. He purifies himself—keeping the feast of unleavened bread; he devotes and dedicates himself—rendering up his first-born and his firstling to the Lord; and if he be inquired of, why all this cleansing of himself, why all this devotedness? He simply pleads what the Lord hath done for him, when he was in Egypt, a bondsman there in the place of death and judgment. This is all he has to say, though he be challenged again and again. His springs of moral life are known to rise in the salvation of God.

This is truly blessed. This says to the living God, "All my springs are in Thee." And this is the language of the new creature in Christ Jesus, as we see him in the Epistles of the New Testament. So that in this thirteenth chapter, we are still, as I have said, in New Testament atmosphere. For there it is the we have received, the promises which have been made to us, the grace which has brought salvation, the fact that we are bought with a price, the great Gospel mystery that we are washed from our sins, a sprinkled, redeemed, sanctified people, which are recognized as the springs of all moral behavior and personal devotedness—of course to have their efficacy in us by the presence of the Holy Ghost.

PROVERBS. 8:22-31.

JEHOVAH possessed me the beginning of His way before His works of old.

From eternity was I anointed, from the beginning, before the earth.

When there were no depths I was brought forth, when there were no fountain, heavy with water.

Before mountains were fastened (or fixed).

Before hills was I brought forth.

When He had not made earth, and fields (or uninhabited country), and the top (or head) of the dusts of the habitable world.

When He prepared (the) heavens, there I was, When He decreed a circle on the face of the deep, When He made fast clouds above, When the fountains of the deep became strong, When He set for the sea His decree, That (the) waters should transgress not His mouth, When He decreed the foundations of earth; Then I was near Him, an artificer,

And I was (His) delights day by day;

Rejoicing before Him continually,

Rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth,

And my delights with the sons of men.

The Wrath of God Is Revealed From Heaven

IN such a place as Rom. 1 you have the gospel of God —the revelation of God's way of saving believers; but in connection with this is revealed this other thing, the wrath of God against all unrighteousness of men. The gospel is power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth. For the righteousness of God in it is revealed from faith to faith. For revealed is the wrath of God from heaven upon all impiety and unrighteousness (verse 19), because verse 21, and on to chap. 2:5-8: clearly the revelation of wrath is in antithesis to the bestowal of salvation. The gospel is God's power unto salvation, because in it is the righteousness of God revealed on the principle of faith —whoever believes enjoys it. We are saved in righteousness on God's part, on faith on ours. Righteousness is revealed from heaven in the gospel of God saving every believer, but the righteousness of God without faith is condemnation to endure the wrath of God. It is now revealed from heaven, and existing, and about to be revealed in the future against sin, contemplates a specific class or classes we might say, those who had light and refused it; and very specially is it upon the "children of (the) disobedience " (John 3:19, 21, 36; Rom. 1:18; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6). In Rom. 9:22 vessels of wrath fitted to destruction (1 Thess. 5:9; see also 1:10), wrath to come (Matt. 3:7; Luke 3:7; 1 Thess. 1:10); the day of wrath (Rom. 5; Eph. 5:6; Col. 2:6). It is always (when looked at in antithesis to salvation) spoken of, you see, as in the future. Rom. 1:18 by no means links wrath with the cross, as if it were revealed and visited on Christ there and then; though, until then, there had not been the revelation with clearness and sharpness of definite outline of the wrath of God from heaven, which shall come on all the sons of disobedience. Salvation is shared by all who are the sons of obedience; destruction comes on all others; and the revelation of God's righteousness in the gospel has set the other in sun-light clearness. "We shall be saved from wrath through him." Rom. 9:22 shows that wrath belongs to the end of the dispensation of grace (see also Rev. 11:18). In 1 Thess. 2:16 we have an instance not only of the revelation of wrath, but of its coming on the Jews in temporal judgment, which is to; the uttermost. Such as should be saved (see Acts 2) were taken out of the doomed nation, and added together—to be in this higher preservation, when wrath was on this people (Luke 21:23). That is a temporal instance and illustration, for had the nation repented when Peter urged them to it, the Savior and salvation would have come, and not wrath to the uttermost; and so (he that believeth not shall be damned) wrath, though revealed now, comes in the future, after the present day of grace is over; then Rev. 6-19 and 2 Thess. 1-2. will come and be fulfilled. Wrath is the active outgo of the inner affection (thumos) of righteous indignation, in inflicting punishment on such as have proved disobedient, and refused light, and truth, and grace.

But what revelation of divine wrath is meant? Romanists and Rationalists of a past day said it was that which is made in the gospel, and that " therein" should be again supplied from verse 17. It is decisive against this view that "from heaven," just because it is parallel to therein, lays down a mode of manifestation quite different from therein. If the latter had been in Paul's mind, he would have repeated it with emphasis as he has done the word revealed.

One critic refers the revelation of wrath to be explained by verses 24, &c., in which is described what God in His sufficiently well-grounded (verses 19-23) wrath did (paredoken autous) gave them up. God's wrath, therefore, is revealed from heaven in this way, (he says) that those who are the objects of it are given up by God to terrible retribution "in unchastity and all vice." But this hardly will do (not to say that these latter would still deserve wrath), for revealed is generally used of a supernatural revelation, and not of a revelation in fact in that to which our attention had not been previously called. Others think it an inward revelation of divine wrath given by means of reason and conscience, in support of which view they appeal to verse 19. But on the contrary, the word from heaven, requires us to understand a revelation cognizable by the senses; and verse 19 contains not the mode of the manifestation of wrath, but its moving cause (dioti). Others hold that the revealing of wrath here meant will be at the future judgment. But though the present tense might be used vividly to express the future, yet it would require (en auto) in it to be mentally supplied. But in verse 17, revealed is purely present, and so in 5:18. How, or by what means, then, is wrath revealed, if not in the gospel, which is a revelation of God's righteousness. If saving men by faith in Jesus Christ by the gospel, wherein is God's righteousness revealed, there is a plain declaration in connection with this, that wrath must have its way on all who refuse to yield the obedience of faith. In the New Testament revelation we have the double revelation of righteousness and wrath, and whereas God saves now in righteousness, the wrath is executed only after men have perversely refused to bow to the righteousness of God. The whole visible procedure of God in His moral government by which He displays and reveals His divine opposition and hatred of sin, may be said to be the revelation of wrath which would take in the impossibility of escape if we bow not to the gospel.

It is either righteousness for our saving, or wrath for the punishment and destruction of the ungodly and unrighteous who hold the truth in unrighteousness. God's dealing with sin in Christ leaves it not any longer doubtful what will become of sinners who refuse the gospel. But all this hardly accounts for the expression, from heaven. This is the connection: "is revealed from heaven," not "wrath... from heaven," nor "wrath of God from heaven," but "wrath is REVEALED FROM HEAVEN." It is the making known now what was not known before; and which otherwise could not be known, for it is "from heaven:" hence entirely supernatural. That all men are sinners the apostle proves (ch. 1:18 to ch. 3:20), consequently the sole means of salvation is faith in the gospel of God (3:21-31). No salvation to Jew or Greek but by faith! He proves this as to the Gentile world (ch. 1:18, &c); then of the Jews (ch. 2., 3) Jews and Greeks are all under sin (ch. 3:9). This being so, all exposed to wrath when it comes! This is a plain revelation, of wrath as the portion of all who are not saved by manifestation of God's righteousness by faith in Jesus Christ. God's nature having been revealed in Christ and His cross, the issues of faith and unbelief are clearly revealed. The revelation of wrath will take place in its manifestation, as ch. 1:5 proves, "in the day of wrath and revelation of (the) righteous-judgment of God." The man who is now justified by faith in the dikaiosunee, or righteousness of God, shall not come under the dikaiokrisia, or righteous judgment of God in the day of wrath: but if the believer alone is saved, it is clear as the light from heaven that all others shall be lost, being the subjects of the righteous judgment of God. The dikaiokrisia, or righteous-judgment of God, the believer can look back and see executed at the cross on Christ, his substitute, and though the day of wrath is clearly revealed as coming with its "righteous-judgment" of God, he is in a state of peace with God, being justified by faith in Christ, giving him salvation in God's righteousness, on the principle of pure faith. "Much more, then,

having now been justified by his blood, we shall be saved by Him from the wrath " (i.e., revealed from heaven) (Rom. 5:9). I cannot but think that we forget that the time we live in is not an ordered dispensation at all, but only a period of divine forbearance, ere the execution of threatened and revealed wrath take place. What was first revealed from heaven to the Jews on the day of Pentecost but the certainty of the coming of the wrath of God, that so seized their guilty souls that they were on the very verge of despair, when they were pricked in the heart and cried out in anguish, " Men and brethren, what shall we do ?" It was akin to what the men under the opening of the sixth seal will have enstamped on their consciences. " From the wrath of the Lamb, for the great day of his wrath is come, and who shall be able to stand?" The alarmed Jews at Pentecost had nothing but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries until Peter preached repentance, forgiveness, and the gift of the Holy Ghost. God's throne is set for judgment; nothing but judgment for man as man the cross has shown, and the coming of the Spirit proved. His presence on earth proves the case against the world as to sin, righteousness, and judgment. But grace now reigns through righteousness unto eternal life.

But judgment is still the world's sentence. The revelation of the wrath of God from heaven comes in with a "for " Rom. 1:18, showing that this was the grand revelation as to man in his sin (God having been manifested in His nature), for Christ was shown Lord and Christ in heaven by Peter: seated with a view to God's dealings with his enemies by Paul (Heb. 10): then this is a period of suspended " judgment " into which the Spirit with the gospel enters as Aaron with his censer between the dead and the living, that the plague might be stayed. The gospel message is only provisional: the wrath is the permanent revelation, and is revealed from heaven; and is only held back by God's " long suffering," while sending forth a proposal of pardon to those on whom the wrath of God abides (John 3:36) and will, otherwise, eventually fall. The great thing, certainly, God is now doing is saving and gathering to his Son in heaven. Neither grace nor wrath were fully revealed from heaven until there was a glorified man at the throne of God. While Christ's attitude to His enemies is that of judgment, " Sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool; believers by the grace of God see Him in quite a different attitude and character-as the purger of sins their Savior, intercessor, advocate, &c., (see Heb. 1., 5., 7., &c., 1 John 2:2.). The solemn characteristic of the period, is that of the revelation of wrath from heaven a time of respite merely, and long suffering into which God sends His great message of reconciliation founded on the death of Christ (2 Cor. 5). I speak in this as to the world; the purpose and counsels of God for the glory of His Son, are being worked into effectuation by the Holy Ghost come down: and, looking from the side of God in connection with the evolution of "His purpose and grace," a grander revelation is now being unfolded to the divinely-anointed eye-the children of God are gathered, the body of Christ formed, the Bride of the Lamb about to be presented to Himself in all her purity when he comes to receive us to Himself. There is thus by grace a little hidden company in the very world that is in open rebellion against God, and that has cast out and killed His Son, and refused to have Him back. What a scene we live in! A doomed world, over which the sword of judgment is hanging-on which the revealed wrath is about to be openly poured in awful manifestation. We now are in no darkness as to this (1 Thess. 5), for wrath is revealed (2 Thess. 1:2.), and it will be on the persons who hold the truth in unrighteousness as well as on the openly profane and immoral (2 Thess. 2:10-12). That the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all impiety of men and immorality, we have only to open and read the Revelation to be convinced of it. In the Apocalypse of St. John it is fully revealed, and revealed from heaven (Rev. 4:1); for a door

was opened in heaven, and a voice said to the prophet, " Come up hither "; and the revelation is said to be that of the Christ after He had ascended to heaven (Rev. 1:1). "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him to show unto his servants," &c.

This whole interval between the seating and rising up of Christ is a period of forbearance and longsuffering; but "wrath of God is revealed from heaven," and that is the crisis, until which Christ is to sit on the right hand of God, and also the only thing the world has to look for. Christ " our deliverer from the wrath to come " is the one believers look for. But the impious and lawless world will feel His wrath " the wrath of God and of the Lamb."

To give an idea of how I regard this present interval, I think of it as of the gracious moment that will be used between the opening of the sixth and seventh seals to seal the 144,000 of Israel. The four angels of destruction were to hurt nothing until the servants of God were sealed in their foreheads. So " the day of wrath," when that which has been revealed will be inflicted, is kept in abeyance, and the wrath revealed kept from falling on " the children of wrath " by the saving of believers in Christ; but when the last member of Christ's body is gathered out of the doomed world, like Lot out of the wrath-marked city of Sodom, then the time of grace will have ended, and the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men shall have come; and it will go on until the Lord shall be in peaceful possession of His kingdom under the whole heaven. (See Note, p. 224.)

Monumental Aspect of the Lord's Supper

THE Lord's supper was instituted by the Lord Himself to keep Him in His death before the hearts of His own; and to be, in its public celebration, a publication of His death.

The members of Christ's body are on earth. The world rejected Him: they have owned him by faith God-ward for their personal forgiveness, redemption, and salvation, and have individually repudiated the counsel and deed of them who rejected and crucified Him by identifying themselves with the assembly of God, gathered out of the world by the action of the word carried home to the soul by the Spirit of God; but when the whole assembly comes together in a general meeting on the Lord's day, and eats the Lord's supper, they own Him publicly in the world, for by their assembling to His name, and common participation in the celebration of that Christian ordinance which sets forth His death, they there and then, and in that celebration, become a public monument before a Christ-rejecting world, by keeping alive the remembrance of the Lord Jesus Christ, whom they, in their enmity and lawlessness, rejected and crucified.

The world would willingly forget its guile in refusing and slaying Him, but this perpetuation of the memory of the Lord's death, and this public symbolic proclamation of it, by the church's continued celebration of the Lord's supper, when as a united body they publicly announce His death, the world is compelled to have their sin brought vividly before their very eyes in the silent act of the Lord's followers in symbolically representing it in their solemn periodical exhibition of the fact in their joint-participation of the Lord's supper.

What the saints feel, think, have, and do in the supper is peculiar to themselves; but the public celebration of the Lord's supper has the aspect of a public proclamation of the Lord's death in the world. The love of Christ's own draws them around Himself, to think of Him in His person, love and death; and they get such views of Christ their Savior there, as they get nowhere else; and they lift up their hearts in praise and thanksgiving, their eye affecting their heart and inflaming their love as they think of such a word as this: " Christ also hath loved us and given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice unto God for a sweet-smelling savor; " but as the world looks on, the fact and act of celebration become a standing publication of the Lord's death—a death which tells its twofold tale of forgiveness through Christ's blood to every penitent believer, and of certain perdition to all unbelievers " who count it as a common thing."

The very word " show forth" signifies, literally, to bring word down upon any one, that is, to bring it home to him. The celebration of the Lord's supper is what the Lord has left as the public announcement of his death, as at once brought home for richest blessing and joy to the hearts of his friends, and the greatest terror and condemnation to His enemies; for if His blood be not on us for forgiveness, it lies against us for condemnation.

Let us look a little more closely at the words of the Lord Jesus, that we may see how fully they go to establish what we have advanced as to one chief object in the Lord's supper being the public announcing of the Lord's death as well as the keeping the memory of the Lord Jesus alive and

fresh in the saints' hearts by the continued institutional and symbolical representation of His death in the Lord's supper.

The Lord Jesus' words are these:—" This is my body which is for you: this do in remembrance of me. This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as often as ye drink, in remembrance of me" 1 Cor. 11:24, 25).

The apostle explains the meaning of the Lord's repeated injunction—" this do in remembrance of me"— by referring the Corinthian assembly to their own actual practice, which confirmed it: —

" For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come" (verse 26).

The Lord's death was a public event, His coming again to the earth will be a public event, and the Lord's supper which fills up the period between these two extremes is a public celebration. The church, which is not known by the world but rejected by it, as was her Lord, comes forth periodically and gives a proclamation of His death in its celebration of the supper, and thus it is a remembrance of Him. Whatever blessing, or joy, or effect on the spirit, soul, and heart the saints may have, and do have, in their eating together the Lord's supper, yet the supper, in its nature, material representation, object, and end is not only for the believer's private enjoyment, but also for the public proclamation of the Lord's death as being a perpetual monument or keeping of that which partakes of the nature of an anniversary feast commemorative of the death of Him whom they slew and hanged on a tree. The words "to my remembrance" show that this is so? And, when we ask how we are to understand this, we have it explained to us by the apostle, "Ye announce the Lord's death." To whom? To one another? To principalities and powers in the heavenlies? Or is it a public announcement on the earth where he was slain? We, of course, observe the Lord's supper without any such thought, for our renewed minds are in full contemplation of the Lord Himself, the purged conscience is witness to the efficacy of His blood to atone for our sins and cleanse from every sin, and the renewed and satisfied affections witness to the perfect adequacy of Christ Himself to win our love by giving us to know in that which the bread and wine in the Lord's supper represent—the depth, fullness, and perfection of His own; but eating the Lord's supper on the ground of resurrection knowing the new place and relationship into which we are brought by Christ's death and the power of the Holy Ghost, giving us the consciousness of the cutting of every cord that bound us to self or Satan's world by this death of the Lord, we having the Lord's supper that tells of His finished work and accomplished redemption as our rallying ground and common center: when we gather to His name and eat it together we give a public witness, or, we should rather say, one result of our being gathered for such a purpose is that the Christ who was slain is publicly kept in remembrance; and our having withdrawn from the world in realization of our new relations to Christ, risen and seated in heaven as members of His body, and our new relation to the Father as His children—and our being the flock of God—all on the ground of Christ's death by proclaiming the Lord's death in partaking together of the Lord's supper—we announce that every link with this world is broken for Him, as for us, by this death, and that Christ is alive and glorified at God's right hand. When He comes again it will be to take vengeance on them that know not God, and on them that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The object of the public celebration of the Lord's supper is the remembrance of the Lord in His death. But our Lord is not dead, but is " alive for evermore," and all our relationships, privileges,

and prospects are connected with Him where He is, in the Father's presence, though we own that we owe all to His death, and participate with all believers in that supper that tells so impressively and solemnly of His death, and of this alone.

Some Points As to the Offerings

SOME points as to the offerings in Leviticus having been lately cleared up to me, and brought home to my 'heart, I trust I may say, in a way I had not known them before, I would simply name them, with references to the passages by which they are illustrated or proved. To many readers these remarks may suggest nothing that is new; but to some they may not have occurred; and even where they have, the mention of them may stir up to renewed consideration of the subject, and thus promote growth in the truth. How happy to be fellow-learners in the school of our Divine instructor!

First.—The Lord's part in the peace (or prosperity) offerings being the fat of the inwards, and this being consumed on the burnt-offering (see Lev. 3:5), and with the meat-offering (see chap. 7:12), the participation in the other parts of the peace-offering of the priest that offered, the priests at large, and the worshipper, really brought them, into communion with God's own joy and delight, not only in the peace-offering, but also in the burnt and meat offerings, of which the fat of the peace-offering was " the food."

Secondly.—The fat of all the sin-offerings (except the red heifer in Num. 19) was consumed on the altar of burnt-offerings (see Lev. 4:10, 19, 26, 31, 35; 7:5; 16:25, &c., &c.) Thus we see, that even in that view of Christ's work, in which he was most actually and absolutely made sin for us, His own inward devotion to God, in which He was willing to be thus made sin, was infinitely pleasant and acceptable to God, forming thus a link between the sin-offering and all the rest.

How precious, that at the very time when Jesus was really bearing the judgment of God for our sins; when it was impossible that God could manifest His favor to Him; when, in consequence, He had to cry, " My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? At this very time the link with God on 'His (Christ's) part was still, as always, unbroken! Indeed, in what one scene do we so see His complete devotion to the Father's glory, as that in which He bows to His Father's will that He should be made sin and suffer without the gate? And even when forsaken, and asking " why," He calls Him " My God! "

Thirdly.—The case of the priest (see chap. iv.) whose sin interrupted the communion of the whole congregation, or the similar case of the sin of the whole congregation, is what cannot now occur. The instruction, therefore, as often in Hebrews, is by contrast not comparison. Our Priest cannot fail; and all the sins, yea, the sin of the whole congregation has once for all, and forever, been so expiated, that nothing now can disqualify the whole Church as such for communion and worship.

Fourthly.—As to the diverse force and meaning of the laying on of hands on the victim. In the one case, that of the sin and trespass offerings, a person came as a sinner, and placing his hands on the victim's head, confessed his sins, and transferred, as it were, the load of sin to the victim that suffered in his stead., In the other case, a person came as a worshipper, and placed his hands on the head of the animal, in token of being himself identified with the acceptableness of the offering.

How gracious of our God to condescend to teach us thus! May our poor hearts profit by these typical instructions, knowing, as we surely do, something of their import from the full revelation in the New Testament of the great and blessed Anti-type!

Leviticus

BUT what, some may ask, is to be done now, seeing there are no Apostles? John 20:21-23 supplies us with the answer. The disciples breathed on by the Lord Jesus, receiving from Him the Holy Ghost, were thereby authorized to act on earth for Him. That authority remains, and that is enough. The assembly viewed in its general character, has power to act for Christ, to care for His glory as much as the assembly, viewed in its local character. In both aspects it is the body of Christ (Eph. 4; 1 Cor. 12), and in both it is regarded, as having all its members, and therefore it is competent to act. God's word gives no sanction to the thought, that whilst the local assembly must keep itself clear, the assembly in its general character has (no power to deal with evil. It is surely responsible to cleanse itself as the house of God, and has authority to act for the Lord Jesus Christ.

We should also bear in mind the revelation of Leviticus 14:46, 47, which tells us in what light those were regarded who went into a house after it had been shut up by the priest. They were by entrance into it made unclean, and had to wash their clothes in order to be cleansed. Would it, then, be fitting for any one, not locally connected with it, to have personal fellowship with an assembly in a state analogous to that of the house? We can all answer such a question. But we must remember that, till the priest examined the house and found it unclean, it was not shut up. So, surely, there should be an investigation into an assembly's condition corresponding to that of the examination by the priest, ere so serious a charge as that of leprosy within it could be held to be proved.

The subject of chapter 15 has been already briefly referred to (p. 135). The reader here need only be reminded, of the different ways of cleansing, appointed for those from whom the defilement came, from that prescribed for such as were made unclean only by contact. For the former washing was enjoined, and sacrifices as well, a sin offering, and a burnt offering; the sin offering here taking precedence of the burnt-, offering, because the outbreak of the flesh called for the sacrifices. In the latter only the washing with water was prescribed. Thus God maintained His own holiness, whatever might be the cause of the Israelites' uncleanness, and however urgent may have been the call for an act on his part which rendered him unclean.

But, though caring for His own holiness, the gracious Lord made full provision for His defiled creatures, that they might in righteousness enjoy afresh communion with Him.

The sinner's conscience set at rest by the knowledge of forgiveness assured to him on the grounds of sacrifice, and on the authority of the divine word, cleansing, too, from defilement, whether derived from his own person, or from contact with that which was unclean, having been also treated of in the written word; we are next taught of that which was requisite for the people, redeemed out of Egypt, to stand in acceptance before Jehovah's throne. Now this involved propitiation by blood, without which there could be neither forgiveness nor cleansing (Lev. 16:16). Viewed, then, in relation to God's nature, propitiation is the groundwork of all the rest. But providing, as the Lord was, in the law for the guilty and the unclean, that which met such in their

condition was first set forth, and afterward atonement in its fullness, as far as the Old Testament could treat of it, was made the subject of a special revelation. For under the term atonement there is comprised in this chapter the dealing with the blood of the bullock and of the goat in the sanctuary, as the Lord commanded Moses (16, 17); the dealing with the scapegoat (10), and the offering up of the burnt offering (24) as well.

Light, and the Effect of Light

John 8:1-13; 9:34, 10:4-19, 17:9-25

I READ these Scriptures in order to bring before you what is most interesting for every one of us, a subject which no one can over-estimate in the history of the soul. It is most important for us at this moment, for though we must be zealous of ecclesiastical things, yet, supposing we had the most correct thoughts about ecclesiastical things, of what value is that, unless the soul is in a state to take them up?

We are apt to approach things from the outside. God would have us approach things from the inside, not from without. That which we most need is a better acquaintance with Himself. What are we left in this world for? Is it not to be simply for Christ?

A correct ecclesiastical state may be reached without the corresponding state of heart which Christ looks for. The soul must first personally have to do with Christ, that is the beginning, the commencement. I mean, the soul must have the distinct sense of a dealing with a person, and not merely something about that person. Let us ask ourselves the question, How much do we know of that blessed One personally? How much have our souls passed from the mere outside knowledge which is open to every one, to that more wonderful acquaintance with the Lord Jesus Christ personally, so that we could say that we know Him better than we know any one in this world. We consider that perhaps a wonderful thing to say, and so it is, but is it not because we have dropped down to be satisfied with merely knowing things about Christ. The test of what you know about Christ is the expression you give of Christ. We just express what we know of Christ, and no more!

I see in the 8th, 9th, and 10th of John, the subject is "light." It is light in the 8th, and light in the 9th, and the effect of light in the 10th.

In the 8th of John it is the picture of the way in which a poor sinner comes in contact with Christ who is the Light. It is not that there is some radiancy of Christ shining into the heart, but here is a poor creature who has come personally into contact with Himself. She has nothing to say for herself, and everything and every one is against her, and she comes personally in contact with Him when everything was against her, and she was obliged even to witness against herself. She had never found one before who had absolute grace in His heart and goodness in His nature till her soul had reached Him.

Have you ever traveled into a moment when there was not a solitary witness for you on this earth, when you stood alone before the Light of the World. That is the start. The 8th of John does not go beyond God's government of this world. I cite it now in illustration of the way in which a soul comes personally in contact with the only One who is competent to execute the sentence of judgment upon it, but who would not! And I ask you, have you ever been in that moment? People say, "I can tell you when I was converted." I say, blessed be God for that; but have you ever had to do with Christ personally? While you know facts and truths about Him, have you personally touched the One who gave those facts power to your soul? Facts and truths must be about some one and

something-and who is that One? The Son of God who traveled from the glory of God into a world of sorrow that we might have a Friend when no one else would stand for us in this world.

You cannot make way against the ordinary sorrows and trials of this world unless you know Christ personally. I want Christ for my cares as much as I want Him for my sins; I want Him for my sorrows every day as much as I wanted Him for my guilt at first. That is what I mean by personally having to do with Him.

If you do not know Christ personally, you are not satisfied in heart. What can you do in your sorrows and your cares if you do not know Christ personally? I know Christ makes all well every day, and the soul that makes this acquaintance with Him starts from a spot that leaves a stamp upon him.

The 9th of John is the case of a person who not only has light for the eyes, but who is the subject of light.

Here is a man, and he is the subject of the power of Christ, but besides that power that Christ exercised on his body he becomes the vessel of light in his soul. He gets his light as to his body, but Christ equally made him in his soul the vessel of that light of which He Himself was the source in this world. Then what comes out? The moment he becomes the subject of this light, there is not a single person for him in this world. If he had merely received benefit from this wonderful Savior, it would not have offended people, they would not have been hurt by it. The world and professing Christendom have no question about taking all the good they can out of Christ. If you go abroad and preach only salvation from hell through the blood of Christ you would find no one against you, but if you go out and press the claims of Christ on people, you have every one against you. People have no objection to accept the mercies of God, but they will not have Christ.

This comes out in the 9th chapter. This poor creature is deserted by every one, even by his own parents. He pursues the light, goes on in his soul after that blessed One till he comes to say, I claim every one for Him!

There is a great difference between saying, I have the most wonderful blessing God in heaven could bestow, and I claim every one of you for this rejected Christ-" Will ye also be his disciples?" What was the consequence of this? They excommunicated him, i.e. they put him out of the circle of approved respectability! And what followed? Jesus found him! He pursued the light till man put him outside, and when man had cast him out, Jesus found him! Have you ever been thus found by Jesus? Jesus found him, that is the effect. Now you have an advance upon John 8 You have these two alone, and Jesus making a revelation to him. Do you not think this was a wonderful moment for this poor healed man when he had this revelation made to him? You are never in the place for a revelation to be made to you, until you have followed faithfully the light God gives you. The principle is, " To him that hath shall be given, and from him that hath not shall be taken away, even that which he seemeth to have."

Men's hearts think they can take God's things and make any use of them they please, turn them to any purpose without any reference to, or sense of responsibility to the One who has given them to us. Let us ask ourselves solemnly, have we fixed purpose of heart practically to carry out the truth we know? People say, " It is beautiful!" I do not question it is beautiful, but who will deny its intense solemnity?

If I see a sword before me that is unsparing, shall I say, that sword is beautiful? I do not question its grandeur, do not question its beauty, but that is not the point when it pierces me through and through. Oh, do let us be solemnized about these things, do not separate the light from the effect of it, do not separate the salvation from the Savior. "The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Surely that is a perfect day when we get into isolation with the Son of God to worship Him. This poor man worships Him, and is retained. You will never be retained till you reach a spot where there is no one but Jesus.

In our meetings, how is it there is so little worship? At times a little prayer, but so little praise. I feel we need to know the difference between ministry and worship. I may read a portion of Scripture and it may be very blessed, but that is not worship. What I long for is, not that we should have less Scripture, but more worship, like this man whose eyes were opened, when he gets the revelation of the Son of God to his soul, he worships.

The 10th chapter points out our security, the 8th and 9th point out our separation, to Christ. There is our separation to Christ, this is the first thing in the history of the soul; and then in chapter 10 it is our security, for if I am separated from everything, a person may say, how am I to be secured?

There was once a fold in Judaism which suited man in the flesh; there is no fold now, but there is a flock. How am I to know, then, that I am secure if I am thus outside all folds? Can you stand alone, apart from everything—alone with God?

I ask you affectionately, could you stand alone with Christ and say, Yes, I know Him in all His blessed sufficiency, and though I am isolated, I am isolated with Him.

What is our security? He says my sheep are in my hand, and if my person isolates them, my hand guards them. If my person separates you from everything in this world, you are in the sacred enclosure of my hand, "Neither shall any pluck them out of my hand." And He blessedly adds, "My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand." This is not only the poor sinner's security in the face of hell, but the sheep's security in the face of the wolf.

I refer you now to John 17, for this reason; not merely is there separation or isolation in the history of the soul, but there is sanctification, and sanctification has this end, in order that we may be true representatives of Christ, for you cannot represent Christ rightly on this earth if you are not sanctified.

It is a most solemn thing to be conscious that we are left here to represent Christ, and how can we represent a person if we do not know him? You may act for a person, serve a person, without knowing or representing that person. You may not be called to any public work for Christ, may not be called to preach or to teach, but there is not a saint of God who is not left on this earth to be a representative of Christ, and to be left on this earth to represent this glorified Man is more than any amount of gifted service we could render Him.

We cannot represent Him without knowing Him, and we cannot represent Him without being sanctified people. There are two ways of being sanctified. First He says, "Sanctify them through thy truth." Specially this was the truth about the Father, and I ask you, is not this a sanctifying thing—the blessedness of the knowledge of the Father's love? If we know the Father's love in our

hearts, we do not need to turn to and seek our rights from the world? I ask, Have we the sense of the Father's love in our hearts so that it separates us from the world? Do you walk about the world with the sense of this, my Father in heaven is thinking about me, watching me, cares for me. Yes, my Father is so thinking about me, so caring for me, that there is not one bit of comfort, not one bit of down, as it were, wanting, to make me sensible of how my Father's love is concerned.

If I have the sense of my Father's love in my soul, it separates me from all the discontent, or murmurings, or repinings at my lot, or desire to change it. Have you ever had any doubt of your Father's love? Have you ever thought him hard? Have you ever thought He might have dealt more leniently with you—might have removed the pressure? This truth about the Father, the knowledge of the Father's love, is moral sanctification; the second is positional sanctification, "For their sakes I sanctify myself that they also might be sanctified through the truth." Christ leaves the world that there may not be any object in it when He has left it, to detain our affections. Have we traveled with Him to that place where He is? He says, "I have left this world," and can we say, "We retire from it, too."

If that person who alone can attract my heart, is in heaven, I walk through this earth, and things in it are distanced because He is not here. I believe the visible is the thing at this moment that is waging the deepest war with the saints of God. You indulge in it, and you find that something or other robs you of your power, you have been drinking the old wine, the old wine is nature, and your taste is vitiated, you do not straightway desire the new. May we cultivate the spiritual unseen where He is, and thus be of those who walk on this earth for Christ's glory, and who seek to meet the desires of His heart.

The Lord give us to know this journey of the soul of which we have been speaking, to know it for ourselves, and to know our true satisfaction in this world is this, that the knowledge of His mind places us in circumstances in which His heart would have us for Himself the little while we wait for Him.

W. T. T.

Gathering for Worship and the Breaking of Bread

WE meet to worship God as redeemed by the blood of Christ, born of God, indwelt by the Holy Ghost, and as members of the body of Christ, and members one of another, and professedly in subjection to the Holy Ghost, and in obedience to the Word of God. At the Lord's table, then, none have really a place who are not converted. for how could any one be there who has not communion with the blood and with the body of Christ (1 Cor. 10:16)? How could any eat of that supper, showing thereby the Lord's death, who has no part in redemption by His blood (1 Cor. 11:24-26)? How could unsaved ones remember Him in this His own appointed way?

Again by partaking of the one loaf we own that we, with all Christians, are one body, and thus show it (1 Cor. 10:27). And the aspect in which the body of Christ is here viewed is the general, not the local, aspect of it. When writing of the latter to the Corinthians, the Apostle said, "Ye are the body of Christ " (1 Cor. 12:27). Here he says, " We being many are one body, one loaf, for we are all partakers of that one loaf." In no other way, then, can we fitly and fully show that all Christians are one body, for in accordance with the truth of 1 Cor. 11 there is but one Lord's table on earth, however many may be the places in which Christians are gathered together around it. We worship, too, by the Spirit of God (Phil. 3:3) I as the Apostle, we believe, really wrote; consequently, the Holy Ghost must have room to act as He will, and subjection to His guidance should characterize those gathered together unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Further, the written word teaches us the character of the service at the table (1 Cor. 11:24, 25), that it is eucharistic, and how Christians should conduct themselves when come together in assembly, or worship (1 Cor. 14), as well as the purpose for which we meet on the Lord's day (1 Cor. 10;11, Acts 20:7).

Fellowship, then, at the table with those who would allow the privileges of the body of Christ to such as have given no sign of being really Christians would be utterly wrong. Hence Christians should not, and if in subjection to God, would not, have fellowship with those who would allow it. Fellowship, too, with such as meet on denominational ground would be, on our part, a practical denial of the truth of the one body. How could we on such ground endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit at all (Eph. 4:3). Again, fellowship with any who do not professedly submit to the guidance of the Spirit when assembled, or who do not own His personal presence in the Church of God (John 14:17, 1 Cor. 3:16, 2 Cor. 6:16, Eph. 2:22) would be incongruous for those who profess to own both. And fellowship with those who are not really acting in obedience to the Word by allowing in themselves or others that which the Lord Jesus declares disqualifies the offender for the enjoyment of the privileges of His table, whether it be a question of doctrine or of practice, would be direct disobedience to Him whose children we are, and by whose word we profess to be guided.

Redemption

REDEMPTION, as one has said, was no afterthought with our God; it was His purpose from the beginning. By the work of redemption He prepares the richest glory for His own blessed name, and the fullest joy for His creatures. "The morning stars sang together," it is true," and all the sons of God shouted for joy," when the foundations of the earth were laid; but the shoutings of grace when the new creation is finished by the bringing forth of the Head Stone, will be louder still. Never were such music and dancing in the house before, as when the poor prodigal had returned, and been received as one alive from the dead. Never had such affections been awakened within him before. Never had the father's treasures been brought forth till then: till then the fatted calf, the ring, and the best robe had been laid up; and never had the father himself so full a joy in his child as when he fell on his neck and kissed him. And so is it in the wondrous ways of our God. Creation brought forth the resources of His love, and wisdom, and power, and heaven on high was glad through all its order, and earth smiled beneath, the fair witness of His handy-work; but redemption has drawn forth still richer treasures that were lying hid in God—has awakened still more adoring joy and praise "in the presence of the angels," and has given new and diviner affections to the children of men.

Everything is to stand in grace. Love was of old, because God is love, and love was therefore made known in the work of creation, and that by communicating goodness and blessing. But love has found a fuller scope for expressing itself in the work of redemption, in bringing grace and showing mercy: and this is its new character (see 1 John 2:8). Grace, the source and power of redemption, is "the glory that excelleth"—the light that shined from heaven in converting grace and power round Saul of Tarsus, was "above the brightness of the sun at mid-day." Grace is the fullest, and indeed the only worthy expression of the unsearchable riches of divine love. The heavens will rejoice in grace (Rev. 5:11, 12); and Israel, as representing the joy of the earth, will, in the end, triumph in it also (Isa. 40:1; 61:10; Zeph. 3:14, 15). J. G. B.

Dies Irae

THE world is in dread of this dies irae; the terror of it pervades even the hymns of the period, as well as those of bygone days. Bernard sung: —

"Hora novissima, tempora pessima sunt; vigilemus!

Ecce minaciter, immanent arbiter, ille supremus!"

another:

" That day of wrath, that dreadful day, When heaven and earth shall pass away!

What power shall be the sinner's stay?

How shall he meet that dreadful day?

Oh, on that day, that wrathful day,

When man to judgment wakes from clay,

Be thou the trembling sinner's stay,

The' heaven and earth shall pass away."

again:

"Day of wrath, oh, day of mourning,

See fulfilled the prophet's warning

Heaven and earth in ashes burning.

Oh, what fear man's bosom rendeth,

When from heaven the judge descendeth,

On whose sentence all dependeth."

(See 1 John 4:9-19.

How different the Christian state and hope! The reader is invited to turn up the following Scriptures and to mark this difference: Phil. 3:20, 21; Titus 2:13,14; Heb. 9:27,28; John 14:2, 3; 1 Cor. 15:51-57; 2 Cor. 5:1-8; 1 Thess. 4:13-18; 2 Tim. 4:8; 1 Peter 1:3-9; 1 John 3:1-40.

(Note to p. 204.)

Leviticus

IN the mind of the sinner, when first convicted, his thought is naturally about himself: "What must I do to be saved?" But there is another, and in one sense a more momentous question: "How can

God, consistently with His righteousness and holiness, accept, before Him one who has sinned?" It is of 'this that Levin. 16. treats, as it details the special service appointed for the day of atonement. We say special service, because there were ether sacrifices also appointed for that day, the same in number and character as those for the first day of the seventh month (Num. 29:1-11). Of this special service, the first feature in the day's ceremonial was propitiation by blood, and for it not merely a priest, but the high priest, was required. This service he alone could discharge, though not when he pleased, nor as he pleased, for both the time and the manner of his work were prescribed by the Lord.

Brought out of Egypt by the arm of divine power, God was leading His people to Canaan, the land of 1 their inheritance. By power brought out, by power were they to get possession of the land, when the Lord their God should drive out its old inhabitants before them. The Red Sea, at God's command, had opened to make a way for them. Jordan, too, would be driven back for the people to pass over dryshod. No enemy should stand before them in the land. Victories, crushing and decisive, over the confederacies in the south and in the north awaited them. Neither the Amorites in the mountains, nor the Canaanites with their chariots of iron in the plain should withstand them. Now what more could be wanted, some might have said, "Why not be contented with national existence, freedom, and the inheritance?" To man, nothing more might seem wanting. Such thoughts, however, shut out God, and ignore the creature's condition, the consequence of the fall. God cannot change His nature, yet He desires to have His people, sinful creatures in themselves, at home in His presence; and to be able righteously to bless them. For this something very different from any display of power is requisite. Blood alone will meet the case. So this question is taken up now, and settled typically for all Israel, and by its teaching instructs us.

Aaron, forbidden after the death of his two sons to enter the holiest at all times, was now instructed to enter within the veil annually on the tenth day of the seventh month. His entrance proclaimed that God would accept sinful people in the person of their representative, and on the ground of propitiation by blood. But his entrance each year proved that the real work of atonement was not yet accomplished, nor could it be whilst the first tabernacle had its standing; for during that time, the way into the holiest was not made manifest (Heb. 9:8).

Commanded to enter the holiest, he is told in what garments to present himself. In holy garments was he to draw nigh, but not in those of glory and beauty, in which he had been, and in which his successors were to be consecrated for their service. On this day he wore white linen garments, and clothed in them, having first washed himself with water, he was ready spotless his special work. His garments betokened the spotless purity of the Lord Jesus Christ. His washing himself with water previous to his putting them on, denoted that he was only a type of Him that was to come, who would need no washing to fit Himself to enter the holiest. But Aaron, unable to enter at all times, because the Lord would appear in the cloud of glory on the mercy seat, could not even, when washed and clothed, appear before God until he had killed the bullock for the sin offering. For guilty creatures there could be no access to the holiest, had not the death of the victim first taken place. In type we learn that here. In truth we see it established by the cross.

And now another thing comes out, which no one, we may boldly say, who was then alive, could have foreseen: viz., that ere Israel, God's chosen earthly people, should be brought into full blessing, consequent on propitiation for their sins having been made, others, not of the race of

Israel after the flesh, should know what it was to have a perfect standing before the throne. So the Lord on that day made a difference between the offerings for Aaron and his house, and the offerings for Israel. Aaron brought a bullock for a sin offering, for himself and his house, and a ram for a burnt offering; and took of the children of Israel two goats for a sin offering, and one ram for a burnt offering, to be dealt with on their behalf. The two goats formed in reality but one sin offering (verse 5), and all these sacrifices were types of but one victim, the Lord Jesus Christ. Of these goats one was to be slain, and the other was to be sent away alive; so it was called Azazel, the scapegoat, i.e., goat of departure. But in this matter also the Lord directed; for Aaron decided by casting lots, which goat was to be offered on the altar as the Lord's lot, and which was to be sent away. All duly prepared, Aaron next slew the bullock in the accustomed place, and proceeded with its blood inside the sanctuary. Here lost to view, as he passed within the curtains of blue, purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, which hung before its entrance, and with no one inside this outer chamber of the sanctuary, he prepared to do his work, first taking a censer full of live coals from off the altar with a handful of sweet incense beaten small, and entering within the veil with the fire on which he put the incense before the Lord, that the cloud of incense covering the mercy seat, he might not die. Then taking the blood of the bullock, he sprinkled of it on the mercy seat eastward, and seven times before it. After that he killed the sin offering for all Israel, and dealt with its blood, as he had dealt with that of the bullock for himself and his house, making atonement for the holy place, because of the uncleanness of the children of Israel, and because of their transgressions in all their sins; and so for the tabernacle of the congregation that remained among them in the midst of their uncleanness. Besides this, he made an atonement for the altar that was before the Lord, that is, the golden altar, situated in the outer chamber of the sanctuary, according to the provision of the law in Exodus 30:10.

Such was the work in the sanctuary, every act of the high priest therein witnessing of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of His death. Nothing could meet the requirements of God, short of that death, if grace-wks to flow out in righteousness to sinners. The incense indeed, betokened the sweet savor of the merits of Christ, but which was only given forth in its full fragrance, when kindled by the live coals taken from the altar, which spoke of Him as enduring the fire of divine judgment. Death, however, without the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy seat would not have sufficed, though nothing more than the due dealing with the blood was needful to make propitiation for the sins of the people. It was a service, then, on that day inside the veil peculiar to itself. No prayer was uttered, no supplications were poured forth, no thanksgiving, nor any tone of melody was heard. It was a service carried on in silence, yet one most expressive to Him in whose presence it took place. It was short, and yet sufficient. The blood sprinkled once on the mercy seat, and seven times before it, was all that the Lord required. Once on the mercy seat, not twice, was Aaron commanded to sprinkle it. The Lord knew of what that blood was a type. No repetition of it could enhance its value. No effort on man's part, by sprinkling it again, could make propitiation more effectual. The whole value of the service consisted in God's estimate of that blood, which in type was brought into His presence, in anticipation of the day when the great high priest should enter in by His own blood. (Heb. 9:12). Once sprinkled on the mercy seat, it was never wiped off, and the cherubim, whose faces were turned downwards, continually gazed on it as it were, so that the action of the throne, which must otherwise have been only in judgment, because the people had sinned, was arrested, and the people for whom propitiation was made, were accepted before it. So the blood was next sprinkled seven times before the mercy seat; betokening, indeed, the only

ground on which those who had sinned could be there, but also telling of a perfect standing assured to them by it.

That done, Aaron came out from the holiest, and after making atonement for the tabernacle of the congregation, and the altar, he reappeared in the court, visible once more to the congregation, and now as the accepted representative on behalf of the people of Israel. He had gone in with the blood of the bullock for himself and his house. He had reappeared at the brazen altar to kill the goat for the people (verse 15). Now his reappearance, after all that had to be done in the sanctuary was completed, showed that he was accepted before God for the people, and that their standing before the throne was assured to them.

But all was not finished for Israel. So Aaron took the live goat, and confessed over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions in all their sins, putting them on its head, and then sending it away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness. The service within the sanctuary had been a silent one. The blood spoke to God as Aaron sprinkled it on the mercy seat and before it. Now in the court of the tabernacle with the live goat before him Aaron, it would appear, had to speak, but not in either prayer or worship. He opened his mouth in confession, and charged the goat with the sins of the congregation, to be borne away before the eyes of all into a land of forgetfulness.

That goat went away never to return. Their sins were carried away on it never to come back. All could see the goat going away all would know that it did not come back. For Aaron and his house there was no scapegoat provided. The reason of this is apparent to us. Israel will only know that their sins have been taken away, borne by the substitute when they see the Lord Jesus. To this Isa. 53 and Zech. 12 refer. The former portion tells what they will then learn about it, the latter what they will feel about it. How mistaken have been their thoughts about the Lord, they will then acknowledge. How grievous have been their sins, they will only understand when they look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn. But we know now that our sins are put away, as Heb. 9-10 distinctly teaches. Learning then, as we do, full forgiveness, and the imputation of guilt to those who believe on the Lord Jesus whilst He is still in the heavenly sanctuary, we see the reason of God's order in that day's service, that the scapegoat was provided for the people and not for the priests. With us Christians who are a holy priesthood, the putting away of sins is a question of faith, with Israel it will be a question of sight.

Aaron after this re-entered the tabernacle, washed himself, changed his garments, and then reappeared at the brazen altar to offer the burnt offerings, and the appointed parts of the sin offerings. Then his special work in making atonement was over. Death, propitiation, substitution, and bearing the judgment of God, all these had been delineated in type, for all these are needful for atonement to be effected. Further we have set forth the defiling nature of sin, in that the man who led away the goat, and the one who burned the sin offerings, their skin, their flesh, and their dung, had each to wash their clothes, and to bathe their flesh in water, before they could come back into the camp. And what they ought to feel about their sins on whose behalf atonement is made, is also shown us, in that the people, who could take no active part in putting them away, had to abstain from all work on that day, as much as if it had been the weekly Sabbath. It is a great relief to learn that all has been effected by the death of the true sacrifice. What, however, necessitated the death of the Son of God should not be lightly regarded by us, as surely it is not by

God, nor by Him who suffered once, the Just for the unjust. In the work, then, of putting away their sins they could take no part, but to the heinousness of their guilt, and a true sense of what sin is, they were to be alive, and to show it. How fully will this be the case, when they shall look on Him whom they have pierced and mourn. "And the land shall mourn, every family apart... All the families that remain, every family apart, and their wives apart " (Zech. 12:10-14).

What Redemption Involves

God dwells with men only in consequence of redemption. He did not dwell with Adam in his innocence, nor with Abraham, walking by faith, and called of God; but so soon as Israel was redeemed out of Egypt we learn (Ex. 29; that He brought them up out of the land of Egypt that He might dwell among them. And He did so, sitting between the cherubim.

When eternal redemption was accomplished, the same blessed result took place, as a present characteristic of it, by the coming of the Holy Ghost; nor will it be lost in eternal ages, but fulfilled in a more glorious and everlasting manner.

Redemption involves two things, perfect glory to God in all that He is, and clearing our sins away according to that glory, so as to bring us out of the condition in which we lay far from God, and with a nature contrary to and at enmity with His, into His own presence, to enjoy it in a nature morally speaking like His, partakers of the divine nature, holy and without blame before Him in love.

But it did more, for the Word having been made flesh, man was in the place of Son, with God; and we are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Hence, when redemption was accomplished, the risen Lord sends word by Mary Magdalene to the apostles, "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." The work on which redemption was founded was complete, its results of course as yet not all produced, but every question as to good and evil brought to an issue and solved; every truth as to them proved and made good; man's absolute enmity against God manifested in goodness; Satan's complete power over man; in Christ, man's perfect obedience, and love to His Father; God's holy righteousness against sin in the highest way, and love to sinners. Here, and here only, could God's righteousness as against sin and love to sinners coincide and meet, His majesty be glorified (Heb. 2:10), His truth vindicated.

The double question of life given and secured to man, and responsibility, had been raised from man's creation, but never solved till now. The tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and the tree of life in the midst of the garden, involved the two points; and all depended on man's obedience. He fell, and was shut out from the tree of life; he was not to fill this world with undying sinful men. It would have been horrible. The sentence of human death was not to be reversed; judgment would come after. The law raised the same question with men in the flesh, only accomplishment of responsibility came first: "Do this and live." It dealt with man's responsibility as a still open question, testing man with what was a perfect rule for a child of Adam; but he was a sinner and transgressed the law. The coming of Christ not only proved lawlessness and law-breaking; but when these were already there, enmity against God manifested in goodness where they were. Promises without were rejected as well as law broken.

But then God's blessed work in grace came out in the very act that proved this enmity. Christ on the cross not only (and that in the very place of sin, where it was needed for that glory) glorified God in all that He was, but He met our failure in responsibility, bearing our sins, and became the

life of them that believe in Him. His death had a double character. He appeared once in the consummation of ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and " as it is appointed unto man once to die and after this the judgment, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many." The work on which the eternal state was founded, God being perfectly glorified, was accomplished, and the sins of those that believed in Him put away so that they were gone forever. This is a work in which responsibility was met, and in a work whose unchangeable value in the nature of things could not alter, the sure basis of eternal blessedness according to the nature of God.

But there is something more, the purpose of God. Christ by His sacrifice obtained for us, according to God's purpose, that we should be with Himself and in the same glory, though He be the firstborn; that which God ordained before the world for our glory.

If we look at ourselves an inconceivable wonder, but intelligible when we read that in the ages to come He should show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness towards us in Christ Jesus: the wonderful but blessed mystery, that He that sanctifieth, and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause He is not ashamed to call us brethren.

Let us see, then, where we stand now, how far the fruit of this great work which stands alone in the history of eternity, and fills it in its counsels, and its knits, is accomplished. The work is done, finished completely, and once for all. But more, it is accepted of God as adequate to His glory, as perfectly glorifying Him, (John 13:31, 32; 17:4, 5), and Jesus the Christ has been raised from the dead, and set as man at the right hand of God in the glory He had with the Father before the world was. Man in righteousness at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens, sits there till His enemies are made His footstool; has overcome and is set down as Son on His Father's throne. Now first this meets perfectly the guilt of him that believes. Christ has borne his sins in His own body on the tree. They that are such are washed from their sins in His blood. All their responsibility as children of Adam—I do not speak of their responsibility to glorify the Lord as saints—but their guilt has been met. "When he had by himself purged our sins he sat down at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens;" "delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification." And we, justified by faith, have peace with God. The work that clears us as children of Adam is finished; believing, we are forgiven our sins purged; our conscience purged; we are, as regards our conscience and standing before God, perfect forever by that one offering, and God will remember our sins and iniquities no more. The believer, as man connected with the first Adam, has by the work of Christ on the cross the whole question of his responsibility (that is, of his guilt) settled, through faith, forever. He is justified and knows it, has peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ "who has made peace by the blood of his cross!" God has dealt with his sins there, and never fails to own the work of His Son who appears in the presence of God for us. Christ has said, "Thy sins are forgiven thee," " Thy faith hath saved thee, go in peace." The believer is perfectly clear before God.

But all this refers to his place as a responsible man, a sinner before God. But much more is involved in it. First, God's infinite love. "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son." And " hereby know we love, that he laid down his life for us." But more, He has obtained glory for us, is entered as our forerunner. The glory which the Father has given Him as man, He has given us. We are to be conformed to His image; we have borne the image of the heavenly,

and while we are before God even our Father as sons, shall reign, as joint-heirs with Christ of all that He has created, and inherits as man, with Him whom God has appointed heir of all things.

Of this double character of blessing we have testimony in Luke's gospel. In the transfiguration, Moses and Elias were on earth in the same glory as, and with, Christ, and there was the cloud whence the Father's voice came, the excellent glory into which they entered also. So in Luke 12, there is the table spread in heaven for these who had watched for His coming, and rule over all for those who had served Him according to His will while away. But this is not fulfilled. In 1 Peter 1:11, 13, we get the order of these things at least as far as their development of this world goes. The Spirit of Christ in the prophets testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glories which should follow. They found it was not for their day; then the things are reported, not brought in, by those who had preached the gospel with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and Christians have to be sober and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought to them at the revelation of Jesus Christ. The prophetic dealings of God before the sufferings and glories; the gospel, when the sufferings were complete, and Christ glorified on high, though the results were not yet produced, but reported, leading to sober hoping to the end for what was to be brought at the revelation of Jesus Christ. It is true this does not present to us our portion within the cloud—the Father's house—still it gives us very definitely the progress and order of God's ways; the time of the gospel being the time of the Holy Ghost being sent down from heaven, and the appearing of Jesus Christ being the time locked forward to in hope.

Nothing can be more definite, and the prophecy in which holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, distinguished as quite another epoch from the Holy Ghost being sent down from heaven; they have learned in their study of their own inspired prophecies, that they did not minister what they prophesied of for their own time. We get then, now, the sufferings accomplished and over, the glories which should follow not yet manifested, but the Holy Ghost sent down meanwhile, teaching us to wait for these glories, for the revelation of Jesus Christ. Nothing can be clearer or more definite. The coming of the Holy Ghost already fulfilled, and His abiding presence, and the waiting for the revelation of Jesus Christ, constitute and characterize the Christian position. One, the fact which has taken place, the other, what we are exhorted to expect and wait for, while they throw back the strongest light on the efficacy of the sufferings.

After, as we have seen, God had tried in every way the first man, and his responsibility had been fully put to the proof; first as innocent, then by all the means which God could use for his recovery, and, failure in man having resulted in manifested enmity, God did His work through the man of His purpose and counsels, fully tested indeed, but by it His perfectness proved, the work of redemption, in which God was perfectly glorified, and what we needed according to that glory perfectly accomplished, and man, according to the value of that work, raised by God, sat down in glory at the right hand of the majesty in the heavens; the blessed and eternal proof of the value of the work which He had wrought. A new estate to which the Lord often refers, man raised from the dead after the question of sin had been settled, death brought in by it overcome and left behind, Satan's power annulled, a state founded on God's righteousness, now fully revealed. Not a state of happiness dependent on man's not failing, but a state of glory according to the whole nature and character of God who had been glorified in that nature and character, and that in the very place of sin (Christ made sin for us). Nothing remained to be done as to this; God put His seal of acceptance of the work in raising Christ, and showed the effect of it to faith in setting Him who had

done it in His own glory, entered into the glory as our forerunner; the whole basis of eternal glory according to God's purpose in man, and of the new heavens and the new earth, laid, and God Himself glorified and known as revealed in redemption and love.

What Scripture Says About the Coming of the Holy Ghost

CONSEQUENT upon the accomplishment of redemption, the Holy Ghost comes down, given to those who believe in Christ, and have part in this glorious work. Let us see the definite statements of Scripture as to this; the coming and presence of the Holy Ghost, not sent to the world which had rejected Christ, but to believers. Our theme is the presence of the Holy Ghost as now come, consequent on the exaltation of Christ as man to the right hand of God. Not as a Spirit moving the prophets or others, but come now, as the Son had come in the incarnation, another Comforter to take His place, when He was gone, with the disciples.

In the Old Testament this was a prophetic promise; God would pour out His Spirit on all flesh in the last days; a promise, the fulfillment of which waited, in the wisdom of God who knows all things, the accomplishment of redemption. Christ, in John 7, at the feast of tabernacles, the antitype of which in the rest of God's people is not yet come, on the last, the great day of the feast which He could not keep, nor show Himself to the world, declares that whosoever should come to Him and drink as a thirsty one, out of his belly should flow rivers of living water. "But this spake he of the Spirit, which they which believed on him should receive, for the Holy Ghost was not yet, because Jesus was not yet glorified." What was called the Holy Ghost as known in the church was not yet. Every orthodox Jew knew there was a Holy Ghost who inspired the prophets and came on many of their judges, and Saul, and mop ei upon the face of the waters. But the Holy Ghost as sent down from heaven on believers here, was not yet, and could not be, because Jesus was not yet glorified. So as Jesus was "the Lamb of God who takes away the sin [not sins] of the world," so His other great work was baptizing with the Holy Ghost (John 1:33). And this character of Christ's work was the more remarkable because it is connected with the Holy Ghost descending and abiding on Him as man. It sealed and anointed Him on the part of God and the Father. He was sealed by reason of His own perfectness. We could not be till redemption was accomplished, when we are sealed as believers and anointed. "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone." So in the Old Testament the leper was washed with water, then sprinkled with blood, then anointed with oil. And the like essentially was the case in consecrating the priests. Aaron by himself was anointed without blood; when he and his sons were brought, for they could not be dissociated from him, blood sprinkling was employed.

But more: the Lord tells them in Acts 1, that they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days after. Accordingly, the day of Pentecost, the second great feast of gathering, connected with Christ's resurrection (the first of the first-fruits), but withal a distinct feast, but first-fruits still—the Holy Ghost came down from heaven. But with this another revelation came by the mouth of Peter. Christ had received it to this end afresh, consequent on His exaltation to the right hand of God. "Being," it is written in Acts 2:33, "by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Spirit, he hath shed forth this which ye see and hear." It was not simply God, who put His Spirit into the prophets and others, but man exalted to glory, who received it to give it to others. Hence, in Psa. 68 it is said, "Received in or respect of man," as it is interpreted in Acts" for men; "but He received it as man for them.

So, though the prophets and righteous men were in an inferior position to the apostles who had actually Christ with them, yet so great a thing was the coming of the Holy Ghost, that it was expedient for them that He should leave them; " For," He says, " If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go away, I will send him unto you." His coming was the testimony that man was at the right hand of God, redemption being accomplished, the world judged, and lying in sin, and Satan its prince, as having rejected the Son; but God's righteousness revealed, as the portion of believers, manifested in the Father setting the Christ in the divine glory at His right hand (John 16:10). Of this the Holy Spirit's presence was the witness. This was not for the world. Christ had come as its Savior, and they would not have Him; the Holy Ghost was for believers only; not as one working in them to make them believe, though that were true in its time, but because they did believe. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts." He guided them into all the truth: He made them know they were in Christ, and Christ in them; shed the love of God abroad in their hearts for a witness with their spirit that they were sons. They were in the Spirit, as there stated, if so be the Spirit of God dwelt in them. If any man had not the Spirit of Christ, he was none of His (Rom. 8). Christianity was the ministration of the Spirit as of righteousness (2 Cor. 3). Paul (Acts 19), seeing something defective in some disciples, asks, "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? "For after believing men were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. It was a true real presence of the Holy Ghost dwelling in the saints. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost? "says the apostle. "How," he says to the Galatians, "did ye receive the Spirit?" Of that there was no question or doubt, bad as was their state. Fruits in grace were fruits of the Spirit; sanctification was sanctification by the Spirit. If convicted of sin, men asked what they were to do. "Repent, and be baptized," is the answer, " to the forgiveness of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost," anointed, sealed with the Holy Ghost by God, as Christ Himself had been. The Spirit was the earnest of their inheritance, revealed Christ to them, and helped their infirmities. That which had been prophesied of in the Old Testament as to the outpouring of the Spirit, was accomplished in the New. The Christians as such were after the Spirit and minded the things of the Spirit. They lived after it, were led by it, were sent out and guided by it in their service. The flesh lusted against it. He made intercession for them in their hearts, with groanings which could not be uttered. The whole Christian life and state is characterized by His presence and activity in them. They were not to grieve Him in their walk, nor quench Him in His gifts. The Spirit searcheth all things; the spiritual man discerns all things. It is "an unction from the Holy One," by which we know all things. Christ is graven in the heart by the Spirit of the living God; they were changed into the same image by it. Love is "love in the Spirit; "fellowship was "fellowship in the Spirit." Their walk was to be a walk in the Spirit; by one Spirit Jew and Gentile had access to the Father through Christ. This presence of the Holy Ghost clearly and dogmatically taught as coming consequent on Christ's exaltation as man, and not possible till then, 'characterizes in every detail the Christian life. His presence constitutes Christianity individually for a man; he is born of the Spirit; it is a well of water in him, and flows as a river from him, gives him the consciousness of his divine relationship and unites him to Christ: for " he that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit." Collectively, also, they are builded together as a habitation of God through the Spirit, are thereby the temple of God collectively (1 Cor. 3); as individually (Chapter 6).

I have not spoken of gifts, because there it is not denied that they were manifestations of the Spirit. Christianity is constituted and characterized by the presence of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven, consequent on the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ there. The consequence for the

Christian was that he knew his relationship to the Father, and knew Him; knew he was in Christ, and Christ in him; was united to Him, the exalted Head in heaven: yea, knew he was in God, and God in him. If he sinned even in thought, he grieved the Holy Ghost; if he committed fornication, he defiled the temple of the Holy Ghost, and made the members of Christ the members of a harlot (Compare 1 Thess. 4:8, as to sinning against a brother in this respect). On the other hand, it was by the Spirit he mortified the deeds of the body and lived. Life, knowledge, spirituality, and power all depended on the presence of the Spirit who dwelt in him; with Him they were to be filled. I do not speak of gifts: these were confessedly the operation of the Holy Ghost.

Such was then the present life and power of the Christian while Christ was sitting on the Father's throne. The Jew must wait till Christ comes out to see and own and know Him! The Christian not, because the Holy Ghost is come out, and has associated him with Christ while he is within. When He comes out and appears we shall appear with Him. What then is his hope if this be the Christian's present life and power? What is that in which he abounds in hope by the power of the Holy Ghost? The coming of the Bridegroom, when he will be conformed to the image of God's Son, be with Him forever, and like Him. When and how shall this effect which is before his heart be realized? When Christ comes. The coming of the Lord. This is the object, and with it, the state to which the Holy Ghost directs his mind in hope; to see Christ as He is, to be with Him, to be with Him, to be like Him, and this is at His coming. He is always confident meanwhile (2 Cor. v. 6), he knows that Christ being his life, if he dies before He comes, he will, absent from the body, be present with the Lord; but his desire is not to be unclothed, though in itself it be far better, but to be clothed upon, like Christ in glory. To see Christ who has so loved him, as He is, to be perfectly like Him, so that Christ shall see of the fruit of the travail of His soul and be satisfied.

This fills his soul with hope, and he knows that all the raised saints (or changed, for we shall not all die,) will be glorified with Him, yea, He glorified in them, and His heart, and surely ours, satisfied.

" I Wait—I Wait for Thee."

I AM waiting in the midnight,
In the storm and on the wave,
Not for light, nor calm, nor haven,
Though the winds and waters rave:
'Tis for Thee I wait, Lord Jesus!
Light and port art Thou to me;
Thou wondrous Sun of Glory!
I wait—I wait for Thee.
From the center of God's glory,
Shot forth a living ray,
Piercing this heart's mean dwelling,
His riches to display;
"WAIT—I WAIT FOR THEE."
Charged with the revelation
Of Thee, His Son, in me;
And there, His own creation,
Forming, to wait for Thee.
Oh what a tale of wonder,
Oh what a wealth of grace,
That ray disclosed!—revealing
God's glory in Thy face
Telling, how His dread judgments
Were spent upon Thy head,
And how His glory seal'd Thee,
"The righteous," from the dead.
Telling of sin's full wages

All borne by Thee, who gave
Thy life; then rose triumphant
From judgment and the grave.
Head of a new creation,
Where "all things are of God,"
And Death's dark reign supplanted
By Thee—life giving Lord!
Showing, that realm of glory
My birth-place home to be;
For thence, from Thee—its fountain,
Life issues unto me.
And there, e'en now, in spirit,
Thy glory I can see;
While, (mighty, gracious Savior!)
On earth, I wait for Thee.
O holy, quickening Spirit,
What wonders hast Thou done!—
To me Thou hast imparted
Life—union with God's Son,
For Him the Father deems me
Fit company to be;
Thou " fullness of the Godhead!
I wait—I wait for Thee.
So I'm waiting in the midnight,
But my heart is in the light,
Until faith's wondrous secret
Be unfolded into sight.
What more? Thyself, forever,
This heart's repose to be!

My Lord—my God—my Savior!

I wait—I wait for Thee.

The Triumph of Weakness

DOES not Esther and her " seven maidens " excel all the remnant activity in time of old? Her heart went out after all the people of God in those days. And she was the means of saving all. If Biblical chronology is to be trusted, she was received into the royal house of Artaxerxes just after Ezra and his band started for Jerusalem. (Compare Ezra 7:8, with Esther 2:16). If this be so, little did Ezra and his company know that the intercessions of weakness were going on, not alone for him and his band, but for all the people of the Jews. The flesh, set at work by Satan, through Haman, scorned to do only a small work of malice (Esther 3:6); so all the people of Jehovah must be aimed at—destroyed by him. Perhaps Ezra knew nothing of this terrible intention. However this may be, weakness learned the secret from Mordecai. Death was hanging over Ezra and all his and Esther's people. Is it fighting and military prowess that is to triumph? No; " she that tarried at home " will gain a wondrous victory. Is not Esther beyond a Deborah?

Then notice the place into which she goes. Haman may enter " the outward court." He is covered with outward glory, too—like the coming apostate (Esther 6:4). But Esther enters "the inner court of the king's house." (See Esther 5:1, and Psa. 45-upon Shoshannim, verse 13). It was death or full blessing to go thither (Esther 4:11). If the king "delighted" still in her (see Esther 2:14; Psa. 37:1-7), what wondrous grace (truly sovereign) would be shown her, and how widespread the blessing that should follow. She is too weak (Ruth-like—Hannah-like) to fight; but she is not too weak to reach the heart of the monarch of unlimited power. To " touch the golden scepter "-that would do all. That could only be done by entering his presence in the inner court.

Remark, too, the greatness of her faith in her lord. She prepares a banquet for him; and does so before she presents her wondrous request. She let him see she expected him to come. Was this a trespass on his grace? Nay, it was a trial of his love to her; and all must share the blessing or none. It was either utter destruction or magnificent deliverance in royal bounty. Haman is to triumph supremely, or utter weakness bring in sovereign grace, joy and gladness, to all the people of God.

Notice, too, how Haman is allowed to go on to a moment in which he is just about to place the crown, as it were, on his own head. But, like "the chief baker," in Gen. 40, he is hanged. Such will be the end of "that wicked " by-and-bye. But I am only illustrating the way flesh boasting at any time may come down in a moment. What a trial for faith to both Esther within and Mordecai in sackcloth without. She feasts within as he fasts without; for she must come as becomes the Queen of Ahasuerus when she enters there (see also Ruth 3:1-3).

Ah! this place of utter weakness is a blessed one. If we feel we do not "delight in war," we may, surely, delight ourselves in Him who is "the Faithful and True Witness." Here is the golden scepter as it were, for us to touch. Really, all depends on Him now. But we must let our thoughts go out to all the people of God if we are coming towards " the inner court" in the time of the flesh's boastfulness and pride. If the flesh can boast of its success (as Haman will manifestly do by-and-bye when the church is caught up (see Esther 5:2; Psa. 17:14,) still the moral truth of Psa.

17:15. is there for us now. The "As for me," there is the expression of weakness amid many foes around. May it be ours. Divine righteousness, can do wonders in the face of the enemy. " Grace reigns through righteousness" now.

Ant remark, it was not only the valiant ones—the mighty men—who got the joy and gladness and feasting then. All got it—the deserveless, the weak, the outcasts, all in " the kindness of God." I think we see this largeness of blessing in Rev. 22:17. So "If any hear my voice," in 3:20. Jacob got this sovereign bounty shown him when he was carried on the wagons of Joseph's providing to feast on the corn in Egypt; while all Egypt felt the fullness of the savior of the world then. Oh! this glory of grace. When all is in utter failure—death suspended over all, as far as our responsibility is concerned—what a moment for "rebels" to be gathered round " the well of Beer," that God may be sanctified in them, sanctified in the sight of His own enemies. (see Num. 21:13; Ezek. 20:41.) " Gather the people together and I will GIVE." Thus the Holy One of Jacob beholds those that erred in spirit coming to understanding, and those that murmured learning doctrine (Isa. 29) This is deliverance and blessing according to His righteousness worthy of the Holy and the True, and "the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

Learning in Exercises of Heart to Know Christ Himself

IN the Song of Songs there is no question of the purification of the conscience. But it speaks of those affections of heart which cannot be too ardent when the Lord is their object. Consequently the faults that manifest forgetfulness of Him and of His grace, serve only to produce such exercises of heart with respect to Him as recall all the attractions of His person, and the consciousness of belonging entirely to Him— exercises that form the heart to a much deeper appreciation of Himself, because guilt before a judge is not the question, but a fault of the heart towards a friend —a fault which meeting with a love too strong to be turned away from its object only deepens her own affection, and infinitely exalts, in her eyes, the affection of her Beloved (thus forming her heart, by inward exercise, to the appreciation of His love, and to the capability of loving and estimating all that He is). It is all-important to form our heart in this portion of the Christian life. It is thus that Christ is truly known, for with respect to divine persons, he who loves not knows not. The heart indeed is imperfect; it cannot love as it ought, and therefore all these exercises are necessary.

We have the full knowledge of accomplished redemption, we know that we are sitting in the heavenly places in Christ. Our conscience is forever purged. God will remember our sins and our iniquities no more.

But the effect of this work is that we are entirely His according to the love that is shown in the sacrifice that accomplished it. Morally, therefore, Christ is the all of our souls. It is evident that, if He loved us, if He gave Himself for us, when in us there was no good thing, it is in having absolutely done with ourselves that we have life, happiness, and the knowledge of God. It is on Him alone we find the source, the strength, and the perfection of this. Now as to justification, this truth makes our position perfect. In us there is no good thing. We are accepted in the Beloved, perfectly accepted in His acceptance, our sins being entirely put away by His death. But, then as to life, Jesus becomes the one object, the all in all of our souls. In Him alone the heart finds that which can be its object—in Him who has so loved us and given Himself for us—in Him who is entire perfection for the heart. As to conscience, the question is settled in peace through His blood; we are righteous in Him before God while exercised daily on that ground. But the heart needs to love such an object, and in principle will have none but Him in whom all grace, devotedness to us, and every grace, according to God's own heart, is found.

The assembly—loved, redeemed, and belonging to Him—having, by the Spirit, understood His perfections, having known Him in the work of His love, does not yet possess Him as she knows Him. She sighs for the day when she will see Him as He is. Meanwhile He manifests Himself to her, awakens her affections, and seeks to possess her love by testifying His delight in her. She learns also that which she is in herself—that slothfulness of heart which loses opportunities of communion with Him. But this teaches her to judge all that in herself which weakens the effect on her heart of the perfections of her Beloved. Thus she is morally prepared, and has capacity for the full enjoyment of communion with Him when she shall see Him as He is, she will be like Him. It is

not the effort to obtain Him, but we seek to apprehend that for which we have been apprehended by Christ. We have an object that we do not yet fully possess, which alone can satisfy all our desires—an object whose affection we need to realize in our hearts—an end which He in grace pursues by the testimony of His perfect love towards us, thereby cultivating our love to Him, comforting us even by the sense of our weakness, and by the revelation of His own perfection, and thus showing us all in our own hearts that prevents our enjoying it. He delivers us from it, in that we discover it in the presence of His love.

It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of cultivating these holy affections which attach us to Christ, and cause us to know His love and to know Himself.

Only remark with what earnestness, with what tenderness He tells His loved one of all her preciousness in His sight, and of the perfection which He beholds in her! If Jesus sees perfection in us, we need nothing more.

Now this love of Christ's in its superiority to evil—a superiority that proves it divine—reproduces itself, as a new creation, in the heart of every one who receives its testimony, uniting him to the Lord who has so loved him. Is the Lord anything else than this for us? No, my brethren, we learn His love; we learn in these exercises of heart to know Him, Himself.

Communion With God in His Own Joy

THE threefold parable in Luke 15 gives the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost in their various actings in redemption, quickening and salvation. The Lord says " this parable; " He does not call them three disjointed parables, but they are three in one. They tell of the Good Shepherd giving His life for the sheep, going as far as the cross that He might find us. Then the woman lighting a candle and sweeping the house, and searching for the lost piece of silver, represents the action of the Spirit by the Word in the quickening of the redeemed and believing soul, and thus he who was dead is made alive again, the lost i found. The father receiving the penitent, quickened, returning prodigal is God, the Father's gracious reception to his embrace and favor, to make happy with Himself those for whom the Son has laid down His life in redemption, and whom the Holy Spirit, through means of the Word, has quickened and "found." The joy of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in saving lost sinners and receiving them to divine fellowship as worshippers, is vividly set forth in this great parable, and we lose sight of the happy son in our admiration of the merciful Father; and so we are left "giving thanks unto the Father who hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins " (Col. 1:14). But the father said to the servants, " Bring ant the best robe and clothe him in it, and put a ring on his hand, and sandals on his feet; and bring the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and be merry: for this my son was dead and has come to life, was lost and has been found, and they began to make merry.". The father said this to "the servants." Who are they? The house-servants, or teachers in the house of God? How very few are equal to this service, for how few present Christ for clothing and ornament to the repentant sinner, and have him suitably arrayed by that which. is found in the Father's presence, for being happily with him at his table, lost in adoration of Him whose grace has covered him with kisses on the unwashed cheek, and provided for his being in His house, so free from any thought of self as to be able to feast in fellowship with the father on the fatted calf. For if He says, " Let us be merry," what is it but the Father's joy in having the once-lost sinner with him as a worshipper, through what Christ is and has accomplished when " He, by the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God "—" loved us and delivered himself up for us, an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."

We read of Israel keeping the Passover after they had crossed the Jordan, and were in the land. With what a different set of feelings would they keep it there from those with which they observed it in Egypt, before they, by divine redemption, were delivered from Pharaoh's territory and his tyrant power! But even this falls short of feasting with the Father in his own presence, where it is God the Father's love in rejoicing in His love in Christ Jesus over the lost one found, and feasted with Himself. It is most blessed, as it is most scriptural, to see how fully the work of Christ has answered for me before God as a judge, so that with a perfect conscience and a true heart, I may enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus—by the new and living way—through the veil, that is to say his flesh, and having a high priest over the house of God.

The approach to God, as in Hebrews, is a grand reality; the provisions for it are all of God and divinely perfect. That which fits us for going into God's presence, and for being in the holiest with God, has come forth from God's presence. God has had no pleasure in all the sacrifices offered by the law, which could never make the worshippers perfect as pertaining to the conscience. The Son is sent a propitiation for sins. He also comes in devotedness to God's glory, as well as for the sinner's redemption and cleansing. "Wherefore when he cometh into the world he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me. In burnt offerings and offerings for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me) to do thy will, O God '... by the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once for all." The will of God having been accomplished by the work of Christ, and the witness of the Holy Ghost being to the perfection of Christ's one offering once offered, giving a perfect conscience to "them that are sanctified," there is " boldness " or liberty of conscience to enter in the holiest, and the exhortation of the Word is—" Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, [having been] sprinkled as to hearts from an evil conscience, and [having been] washed as to the body with pure water." There is nothing wanting of all that the brazen altar demanded to keep me at a distance; and seeing that Christ has glorified God in His nature and character in the place of sin; offering Himself without spot to God, and perfectly glorifying Him in His nature, while accomplishing all His will for our redemption, remission, and access into His presence in the holiest as worshippers, we are also privileged to have fellowship with the Father in His own delight in His beloved Son, whose devotedness to Him has been proved and manifested even in death, and is ever rising as a sweet savor before His face in the glorious home above, to the perfect joy of which we hope ere long to be removed, when the Lord's promise to His own has been fulfilled —" I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." The communion with the rejoicing Father in His joy in saving and feasting with Himself when the fatted calf is slain, is beyond the joy the sinner finds in the divine provisions for placing him before himself with. a. perfect conscience, through the perfect sacrifice of Christ accomplishing his will and eternal redemption.

When heaven is opened in Rev. 5 (though the scene is different), the first object seen is " a lamb standing, as slain: "and the worship of heaven proceeds on the ground of this. " And they sing a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book and to open its seals, because Thou has been slain, and past bought to God by Thy blood." But this, as I have said, is not at the level of the Father's house, and the slain "fatted calf" there. The discerning heart feels what is meant by this, and feels such delight that it would rather enjoy than try to express in words its deep, calm, heart-satisfying, and worshipping joy. "For through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father " (Eph. 3:18).

The New Creation

“ BUT God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision availeth anything but a new creature ” (Gal. 6:14, 15).

The terms of this Scripture are very distinct and clear. I mention this because it is constantly quoted for another purpose than the apostle's, and applied to the question of our sins. There is not a word about sins in the passage. It is perfectly true that the question of one's sins is the first thing to be settled. Indeed, until it is, there can nothing further be enjoyed or entered into. There must be relief before I get anything beyond it, and previous to relief there must have been pressure, the sense of our sins, and then the knowledge of their removal. There are just two true states of soul—fear, and love. We find them in 1 John 4 " There is no fear in love, but perfect love casteth out fear, because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."

1st. There is the state of fear which hath torment.

2nd. That of the consciousness of perfect love which casteth out fear.

If I meet a man and he tells me he has not feared, then I say, "You cannot have a true state of soul. If you have not feared, you have no true state, and you don't know the perfect love that casts out fear."

Freed from my sins, then, I must be. As Scripture puts it, "The worshipper once purged has no more conscience of sin," which I do not want to weaken in the least. But this passage does not speak of that at all. It treats of something further. It tells of what you are made by God when everything is removed. It is what takes place when the question of your sins has been thoroughly dealt with, and every opposing and contrary element swept clean out of the way.

I get this beautifully exemplified in the case of the prodigal, in Luke 15 In that chapter we find Father, Son, and Holy Ghost engaged in the salvation of a sinner. I get the Son in the shepherd seeking the lost sheep. The Holy Ghost in the woman lighting the candle, and seeking for the lost piece of silver, and the Father receiving and welcoming the lost prodigal. Then I find the whole fulfilled in the thief on the cross. The Son dies for him to put away his sins, the Spirit works and operates in his soul, and the Father rends the veil to tell him to come inside. Look around on Christendom, and what do you find? You will find it never gets beyond absolution. I may as well make this plain statement at once. Absolution I get in Scripture, " Your sins and your iniquities will I remember no more." But that is the state you were in. It is all negative. What, let me ask, is your state now? This is what I wish to insist on your state now, and to make it clear. To explain it simply, let me give you an illustration. Look at a caterpillar. It lives a crawling life. That was your state. It becomes a butterfly. That is a new, entirely new state, a different state. It crawled on a cabbage-leaf before. It now flies and dances in the sunlight. That is your state now, the new creation state. Now what I cannot understand is how people, after having emerged from the caterpillar state into the butterfly state, can go on or want to go on, as if they were in the caterpillar

state. Yet so it is. People suppose that having come out of the old state into the new, they can still go on with the old. Scripture says, " No, you must walk in newness of life. "

This passage, then, speaks of the new state, the butterfly state, if I may keep up the illustration I have used. " Neither circumcision " that is, self improved religiously, as in the Jew, " nor uncircumcision " that is, self whether civilized, polished philosophically, as in the Greek, or savage, as in the heathen, " availeth anything but a new creature." Sins are gone, then, completely gone, first. God could not have kissed me unless. God sent His own beloved Son who endured the judgment for me, bore my sins in His own body on the tree, and so completely satisfied—yea, more than satisfied—glorified God about my sins that not only can I go in to God. But God can come out to me and kiss me. The Father saw the prodigal a great way off, and went out to him. This is the sinner's first actual contact with God, though grace had previously wrought in him, and what is it? The Father's kiss. In John we also find that the characteristic of the babe is, he knows the Father. There is no difficulty about this. It is absolution, no further, and beyond which Christendom never gets. Consult all the books that are called orthodox, and you will get nothing beyond this. Absolution, absolution, a fresh recurrence to the blood, but not a step in advance of it. It is blessed, beloved friends, to see how God, having cleared away everything that was contrary to Himself, can come out, and the very first impression one gets of having to do with Him is a kiss. In this kiss He imparts the consciousness that there is love in His heart towards me. A kiss is the intimation, the expression of affection, on the part of him who gives it. But that is not all. There is more. Though the Father, having first cleared away everything that was contrary to Himself, came out and kissed the prodigal, still there was the sense that he was not fit for the Father's presence. "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." Therefore it is we get a further thing. We get a nature suited to God. "Bring forth the best robe and put it on him." Observe, the moment he got on the new clothes, he was in the house. Mark this carefully. "He was a great way off," when the Father ran to meet him, kissed him, and brought the robe to him, but as soon as it was on, he was in the Father's house. This robe is what fits one to enter the house. It is the new nature. The moment you have the nature you are qualified to go in. Morally, as soon as the prodigal got the new clothes which fitted him for the Father's presence, he was in His presence. Note, the word is, ".Bring forth the best robe." When you are inside a house you do not say bring forth a thing. You must be outside if it is to be brought forth to you. But the moment it is on, he is inside, and being inside, the word is, "Bring hither the fatted calf." Thus we get three things about him. He is first kissed, next robed, and then feasted. 'What is it that puts people into the 7. of Romans? The consciousness that they are not fit for God. What I want, therefore, to show you is, that not only is all cleared and removed out of the way, but that you get the new creation, you are fit for God, you pass from the caterpillar state into the butterfly state.

1st. What is the new creation?

2nd. How is the old creation done with?

What is the new creation? I wish to insist on this, because where not seen, even a worship meeting is spoiled by having recourse to sins. It is going back to the caterpillar state. This new creation is from God entirely. There is no such thing, as brushing up the old clothes to make me fit for God. But the fact is, God clothes me. God robes me, and then I am suited for His presence. The clothes come from God, and can be worn nowhere but with Him. Let us now look at the

passage carefully. "God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, in whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." We find two things crucified that is judged by God. (1) The world is crucified unto me. (2) I am crucified unto the world. What, then, one might ask, is left? Why, you have nothing left but the new creation. What a blessed thing it is, as we see in Paul's conversion, to stand out and see nothing but Christ. "Who art thou, Lord," asks Saul. The Lord says "I am Jesus." Just as if He had said, "I have done with man entirely, there is now no other man but myself." The same God who brought me into birth in connection with the old creation now brings me into the new creation where man is nothing, and Christ everything. In this same epistle Paul says, "I am crucified with Christ; nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ, liveth in me, and the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me." What matter, then, though things go here. Suppose everything went. What would be left? The new creation. It is a wonderful thing to be occupied with the development of the new creation. In this I get God's thoughts and feelings about me which are a great deal better than my own. He says, "That which is born of God sinneth not." We are a new creation, having eternal life in Christ who is our life. Are you as much occupied with developing the new as you are in getting rid of the old.

Let us see, then, what this new creation is. Turn for a moment to John 3 You will tell me that is new birth; every believer owns that. I know it, but there is more. Look at verse 12th: "If I have told you earthly things and ye believe not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things." He speaks here of a heavenly order of things-a new creation-but you could not have a new creation till you had the beginning. Christ is the beginning of the creation of God. There must be a new life for this, a new character of life, and Christ shows how it is to come about. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have eternal life." Christ dies for the caterpillar state, all that I was as connected with the first man and communicates eternal life, bringing me into a new condition, His own condition. I will trouble you to turn to another passage, John 10:10. "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Note here life more abundantly. I will refer to it presently. Read with me now John 12:24. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone, but if it die it bringeth forth much fruit." It is not that He saves which is the thought here, though He does save, but that the corn of wheat shall have many grains. Christ while on earth was unique, alone, separate from all, but by dying He was to have, like the corn of wheat, many grains like Himself. Look now at John 20 where the Lord can speak of it, verse 17. He says "Go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." He had gone down under the judgment, and having now come' out of it He becomes as risen from the dead the Head of a new order and for the first time can call these disciples "brethren." Heb. 2, "He is not ashamed to call them brethren." He can speak of us now as of the same material as Himself, of the same stock and lineage. I am now to enjoy the same kind of life as Christ risen. Mark how in this chapter, three times over, Christ says, "Peace be unto you" verses 19, 21, and 26. And in verse 22nd, "He breathed on them and saith unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost."

Here the Lord unfolds what He imparts to us as risen from the dead. He had not imparted this to any before. He is inaugurating the new condition. He is introducing them into the new ground. This is a new day, the dawn of the new creation, and He puts them upon a new platform. What, let me

ask, has the risen Christ imparted to these disciples? Remember they were already converted. What is the meaning of His action here? He is bringing them into the consciousness of the new creation. This is life more abundantly. I ask the youngest amongst us to ponder what we have here. Think what Christ imparted to the disciples in that scene. What did He impart? Two things. Peace and life. Observe John always reverses Paul's statements, always gives truth in the inverse order from Paul. This I throw out for students of their Bibles. The characteristics of the new creation into which we are here introduced are Peace, and Life.

Everything cleared out of the way. Not a cloud to be seen. Peace above, peace below; and life, life more abundantly. They were already converted, mark; and note, too, that He only gives this once. He does not impart it twice. "But," says some one, "I have known a person lose his peace." Granted. I might lose my watch. But when I get it again it is the same watch. "God forbid," then, "that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." The world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world, disposed of judicially by God, and I am now brought into this unparalleled condition—peace up, peace down, and a new life. There is a further Scripture as to this which will help to make it clear, Rom. 8:6. "For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace; or, as it should be, the carnal mind is death, but the spiritual mind is life and peace." Thus we find that the spiritual mind is made up of two qualities—life and peace. The very smallest atom of the spiritual mind has these two qualities. Take a fourpenny loaf. It is made of flour and water. Give me, then, the smallest crumb of that loaf, and it has both these—flour and water. If you have got a particle of the spiritual mind, you must have life and peace. There are two natures, certainly there are, and I find people admit two natures, but they are always occupied with the bad one. I turn you back for a moment to chapter 7:22. "I delight in the law of the Lord after the inward man;" 24th, "O wretched man that I am! Who shall deliver me?" There is a moment in the history of the soul when it says, "I cannot tolerate the flesh, when Ishmael is cast out. It was not that Abraham did not feel it, but there is the superiority of Christ; I don't mean to say he may not come in again. "Ishmael " knows the house well, and if you put him out by the door, he may come in by the window. But there is a moment when the soul will not tolerate the flesh, what I call non-toleration. Then when a person has got this new nature it will come out. Tribulation and circumstances bring it out, 2 Cor. 4:16. "For which cause we faint not, but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Whatever else is ill I have a nature that is not a bit ill. I may not be able to sing, speak, or read, but I have got a nature that is always well. The body, too, is the Lord's, and if it is well it is a servant; if it is sick, it is a patient; and if it does not do its duty it is a deserter.

The Spirit of God unites me to the glorified One in heaven, but I am of the same nature as the One to whom I am united. As is the heavenly, such are they that are heavenly." Have you any conception of what sort a Being Christ is? We are, as new creatures, of the same order. But how is this new creation to be developed? By being occupied with the Head of it, of course. Where is it to be developed? Just down here in the surroundings, circumstances and relationships of the old creation. It is to be brought out in all these, and there is nothing to hinder but the will. For remember the same One who is Head of the new creation is the Lord of the old, and in the circumstances or relationships in which I am placed, is the new creation to be developed. Nowhere can it be better brought out. If I am a husband, I must be the best husband; or a wife, the best wife; or a child, the best child. I am to take all these up in a new way, and they become the fittest

spheres for the bringing out of the new life.

But I have dwelt long enough on this.

What is the old creation? It is made up of weakness and defects. I will take two of its defects—temper and intemperance—they will serve my purpose. I am a new creature in Christ, but as to fact I am here in the old creation, full of defects. I don't speak of the weaknesses, because they are not removed. Paul prayed for the removal of the thorn, but God did not remove it. He makes you superior to the weaknesses, and uses them for bringing into relief the new thing. He does, however, remove the defects. There are two ways of dealing with the defects of the old creation. Self-culture, the human way; the Spirit's discipline, the divine way. The principle of the self-culture method is to bring the force of the will to bear on the defect. Take temper; a man may bring the force of will to bear here, and by self-culture make himself exceedingly agreeable, exhibit a beautiful, bland manner towards others, and say the most smooth things, while underneath all he may be in a rage—the nature is the same. He may make himself agreeable to his neighbors by this, but not to God. By the force of will a man might say, "I will not drink a drop." Many a one has done so for a wager. But does this give him a taste for sobriety? The Spirit of God would give him a taste for sobriety. He not only represses the defect, but He mortifies it. The Spirit gives the new wine and the new bottle, but how am I to manage the old bottle? Self-culture won't do. I must have the Spirit's discipline. The way He does is to bring out the nature of Christ. "I beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ." My nature is not improved, but the Spirit brings out Christ's nature. Self-culture cannot create a virtue, the utmost it can do is to repress a vice. The Spirit brings out a virtue. There is not one who is walking with God who does not know his besetting sin from the way the Lord deals with him—by the word, circumstances, trial, and other things. There is a defect in that child of God, the Spirit says, "I can't have that," "I won't allow that," "I will bring out a virtue instead of it." Turn to 1 Peter 4:1, and see how the Spirit brings in Christ to repress sin. "Forasmuch, then, as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind, for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin." There is a child. It sees a lump of sugar and there being no one in the room, walks off with it, and thinks no one sees it. The child gets converted, enters the room again. Sees the lump of sugar. The temptation is presented, a struggle goes on in the child's mind, it resists, and won't touch it. The child has suffered in the flesh and ceases from sin. "Arm yourselves likewise with the same mind" as Christ: He is brought in. Again in Eph. 4:28, I get a further thing. It is wonderful how the Spirit of God can so deal with a defect as to make it the safest bit about you. There is a boat with a hole in it. Before you go to sea you put a plug in the hole and keep your eye on the spot all the way. It is then the safest bit of the boat. How remarkably, too, the Spirit applies the word. I have known of a woman change her place four times at a meeting because she thought the speaker was talking to her. No one can apply the word. It is a mistake to think that we can. The Spirit alone can do that. Let us read this verse, "Let him that stole steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth." This is a very remarkable case. "Let him that stole, steal no more." Here is where most people stop. This is only the law. I think he is a very poor Christian if he can't get higher than the law. The Spirit says, "I repress the vice, I make him honest, but is that all? Further, I make him industrious, so that he does not need to take from anybody. But is that all? No, I will bring out a virtue where the vice was, I will actually make him generous, that he may have to give to him that needeth." "Instead of putting forth his hands and taking from other

people, these very hands are working to give to others. The man that was a taker of what was not his own, I will make by his own labor a donor. I will remove the defect and bring out a virtue to adorn the spot where it was.

One other Scripture as to how this life is to be manifested and I have done: 2 Cor. 4:10, "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body." We manifest the life of Jesus by bearing about the dying of Jesus. The Lord lead our hearts in what this new creation is-what it reaches up to. I am more distinctly by divine power in the new creation than I am in the old. A new and more wonderful creation has been wrought in me than has been in making this world. I was a brother to the dying man, but I am a brother to the risen Man, the glorified Christ, and now I must walk like Christ down here.

Leviticus

WITH chapter 17 commences the third great division of this book, which terminates with chapter 23; and consists of laws concerning the worship, and daily life of the people when in the wilderness, and subsequently when in the land, with the calendar of their festivals to be observed, when they should have entered on their inheritance. Thus, throughout the wilderness journey, their inheriting the land was ever kept before them, and though utterly undeserving of it, as they proved themselves to be, yet the Lord having bound Himself by a covenant to bring them into the land in which Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had dwelt as strangers (Ex. 34), would surely fulfill it. Thus a hope was set before them throughout their wanderings—to the fulfillment of which they were constantly to look forward, just as we Christians are saved in hope (Rom. 8:24),

Israel were God's creatures and Jehovah's people, for He was their God. His rights as Creator were, therefore, to be acknowledged, as well as His claims as Jehovah. As Jehovah, the self-existing one, as the word means, He is the true, the living God. Plurality of gods there cannot be, though there are plurality of persons in the Godhead. One self-existing Being who is at the same time Almighty there is, but two there could not be. As the Almighty, He had made Himself known to their fathers, when sojourners amongst the nations of the land (Gen. 17:1; 35:11; 48:3). As Jehovah, He revealed Himself to Israel (Ex. 6:3), though Abraham knew He was Jehovah (Gen. 22:14), and the patriarchs spoke of Him as Jehovah; but God revealed Himself to the pilgrims and strangers as the Almighty One, whereas to Israel when the controversy about idolatry was to be decided, and they were called to maintain the unity of God, against the polytheistic notions of the heathen around them, the Lord made known to them that He, Jehovah, was their God (Psa. 33:12), and committed to Israel the responsibility of maintaining the truth of the unity of God (Deut. 6:4). Consequently, idolatry was a denial of this fundamental truth. For those who practiced it, whatever they thought, did not worship the one living and true God. The heathen had many gods; Israel were to own, worship, and serve only the true God, and to be a witness for Him, and conservators of this truth amidst the darkness and degradation of the rest of the nations on earth.

Previous, however, to being called out to maintain this, they had been accustomed in Egypt to witness idolatry, and had fallen into it themselves (Ezek. 20:7), from which in the wilderness they had not got free, as the chapter of Leviticus now before us (17:7), indicates, and the prophet Amos centuries afterward declared (v. 25-27). Fundamental truth, with reference to God is therefore taken up in this chapter, in four proclamations contained in it, the two first having reference to His

claims as Jehovah (2-7, 8, 9), and the two last (10-12; 13, 14), to His rights as Creator. For if they had nationally a standing in His presence, as Lev. 16 teaches us, it became them to remember whose people they were, and that the Creator Himself was their God.

In the first of these proclamations, addressed to Israel (2-7), the Lord would guard them from all inducement to idolatry in the days of their festivities whilst they were in the wilderness. Flesh they might eat when so minded, and of those animals, too, from among which sacrifices could be brought to God's altar. But if they killed any of these—as an ox, or sheep, or a goat, whether in the camp or outside of it—that made no difference, its blood was to be brought to the priest to be sprinkled round about on the altar, and its fat was to be burnt upon the altar, an offering being thus brought for a peace offering, unto Jehovah. Thus God would guard His people from any approach to idolatry on festive occasions, and would connect such directly with the remembrance of Himself (5-7). Now this was not a permissive decree to which they might conform, but an imperative one, which they were bound to keep, on pain of death, as the penalty for their disobedience. Free to kill what they chose for food, those animals really belonged to God; so the people, when in the wilderness, were only to partake of them on terms laid down by God—the man who should refuse compliance with this command being reckoned as a shedder of blood, and liable to be dealt with accordingly, for God would impute to him blood. This law, the reader will remember, concerned the killing of clean animals for food, of which offerings could also be offered in sacrifice on the altar.

The next proclamation concerned the stranger who sojourned in the midst of Israel (8, 9), as well as the Israelite, and treated of burnt offerings and peace offerings, which in the wilderness were only to be offered up on God's altar, thus guarding them most effectually against idolatrous altars, as they journeyed from place to place. In the wilderness, gathered round the tabernacle, these laws could be carried out by all the congregation. In the land some modification was allowed with reference to the first of these (Deut. 12:21-25), else it would have been practically a prohibition against partaking of their flocks or herds, except for the favored few in whose vicinity was the tabernacle or the temple.

As regards the second proclamation, the reader must remember that it did not cancel the law of Ex. 20:25, which permitted the erection of altars, that might be built for the offering up of certain sacrifices on special occasions. Ex. 20 clearly provided for the erection of such altars; Lev. 17:8, 9, only forbade such whilst they were in the wilderness. Now, coming across at times, as they must have done, the nomad population of the desert (Deut. 10:6), they were reminded by God, that no altar was it permitted them to use but the brazen altar in the camp; though, after they had entered the land, saints, as Samuel, David, and Elijah, acted when needed, on the permission granted to Israel in Exodus.

Following close on the permission to eat flesh, comes the prohibition to eat blood (10-12). Not that this was anything new, for the Lord, who had given a full grant to Noah and to his sons, of all flesh for their food, withheld from them the blood. Now this is binding on all their descendants, even the whole race of man (Acts 15:20). In Genesis, however (9:4), no penalty was attached to the breaking of that command, a reason for it only was assigned, viz., that in it is the life of the flesh, so to eat of it would be virtually assuming that life belonged to the creature, whereas it belongs to God. In Leviticus a penalty is annexed to the infraction of the law by those who were therein commanded not to eat of it, and that penalty was death. "Whosoever there be of the house of

Israel, or of the strangers that sojourn among you, that eateth any manner of blood, I will even set my face against that soul that eateth blood, and will cut him off from among his people." In Deut. 12:25, the Lord reminds Israel of it afresh. The prohibition given in Genesis, the penalty announced in Leviticus, the blessing, if obedient to the command, is set before Israel in Deuteronomy: "That it may be well with thee, and with thy children after thee." Thus a prohibition to the whole race of man, was made a penal enactment only when given afresh to Israel. Truly, to be under law was no light matter. Yet there were advantages which, if obedient, Israel could enjoy, above any which Gentiles could expect.

But another reason is given to Israel why they should not eat blood. "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, no soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood " (Lev. 17:11, 12). It is interesting to observe the divine wisdom in choosing the time to make revelations of God's mind. The real atonement was just as much an event of the future, when Moses communicated this additional reason to Israel, as when the Lord spake to Noah and to his sons. But Noah and his sons could not have understood what then had not been demonstrated-the full need of atonement. Israel, however, with the laws concerning sacrifices before them, and the ordinance for the day of atonement fresh in their remembrance, could understand something of what atonement implied.

So this additional reason given them for not eating blood comes in in its right order just after the directions for the day of atonement.

Life belongs to God, so no one of the human race was to eat blood. The sinner, too, has forfeited his life, and can only live before God on the ground of the death of a sacrifice as a substitute. This Israel were ever to remember. But if forbidden the blood, they were reminded how that could speak to God on their behalf. The blood maketh an atonement for the soul. The blood shed, the life is given up to God, and that is precious to Him. No wonder, then, that bloodshed-ding formed such an essential part of the Mosaic ritual, for it spoke to God of the life of the Lord Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, given up to Him on the cross. Do any object to the truth of atonement by blood, as painting the God who teaches us of it in hideous colors, as they would term it? We would ask, if they have ever given to this chapter of Leviticus the attention which it deserves? For when we learn what blood is in God's eyes, that in which is the life of the flesh, we see why He could delight in the blood of His Son, the witness of that self surrender, even to death, which must be so precious to Him. Of three important truths, then, the prohibition to eat blood reminds us. We are creatures, and must remember it. We were by nature sinners, and are to acknowledge it. We are indebted wholly to God for atonement by blood, and are ever to own it. Hence it is all of grace that atonement could be, and has been, effected. For the words of Jehovah are these, "I have given it (the blood) to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls." The One to whom life belongs has given it to be poured out for our everlasting blessing.

From Jordan, Through Shiloh, to Mount Zion

IF the line of Joshua and the sword (as in the book of Joshua) be insisted on without being accompanied with the line of the Ark, with its "cherubim of glory" and Eleazar, all must end in failure.

Indeed, we see in the history of the route of the Ark—as in Jordan, to Shiloh; then, when Shiloh was forsaken by Jehovah (1 Sam. 4; Psa. 78:60-72; Jer. 26:6), carded to Zion (2 Sam. 6; Heb. 12), where full and completely unlooked-for grace shone forth, when "worm Jacob" was wholly ruined; we see, I say, this remarkable feature in the Ark's history—it always brings out the glory of grace. On it moves, after its construction by Bezabel and Aholiab, until it frees Rahab (see Acts 15:11; Rom. 15:15, 16; Col. 2:6, &c.); passing onwards, as it then vanishes in the book of Joshua, till Rahab's son David (through Ruth the Moabitess and Boaz) dances before it; not with "those who delight in war," but with the harp, and timbrel, and trumpets. Such is sovereign grace on the basis of divine righteousness. Korah's son (Num. 26:11; 1 Chron. 6:33-37; Rom. 11:5, 6) anoints Rahab's son with the crown of "oil," and the God who dwells between the cherubim (Psa. 80:1,2) leads him on till he lays the Ark in its tabernacle on the height of Zion." "The sons of Korah ' had songs " inspired for them also (Psa. 42 &c. &c.).

Now, it seems to me, that, in Acts, we have the two lines divided—the line of Joshua and the sword, and the Ark and its "cherubim of glory" and Eleazar. This being so, Jerusalem becomes an earthly religious center; Paul is even snared thereby, and the apostle of the circumcision, Peter, is well nigh the ruin of Antioch (see Gal. 2); the assembly which gives us the line of the Ark and Eleazar, through Shiloh to Zion.

Reuben, and all "the mighty men of war," had to move on before the Ark as it silently went round Jericho, and learn that they were not needed as warriors there. The shout when it did arise there, was the result of victory won—the Lord had given Israel the city. Rahab saw even more, as actually accomplished (Josh. 2:9). In 1 Sam. 4 we see an attempt made to have the shout first and fighting afterward, Reubenite fighting too (contrast 1 Sam. 4:5 and Josh. 6:10). The Ark in all its solitary power must do all, and hence the grace following must be magnificent. Rahab and her whole household come forth, and "the scarlet sign" has its wondrous effect. "In the midst of Israel" does she "dwell." Achan had, as it were, ruined the responsible camp—he who was the son of him (Zerah) who had the scarlet thread bound on his hand. Thus Rahab follows the line of the Ark; the power of grace and glory now on the basis of the silence of the cross. Such, I believe, is Antioch in Acts.

Stephen sees the heaven opened; there "the glory of God and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" is displayed. In silence the weakness of the cross and the power of resurrection shall move on; the energy to pull down, nay, which ken pulled down Satan's fortress, Jericho, is in glory (see 1 Cor. 15:57; 1 John 5:4; 4:4). Hence, as we follow Acts 8:4, then 11:19-26, we see the outcasts moving on, till the man of goodness and full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, comes, and with gladness sees "the grace which (evidently) was of God." Barnabas carried away in the Jerusalem

stream with Mark; we find a Silas and Timothy lei on in the blessed line of full grace and the energy of "the Spirit of Jesus." For, we are warned in Acts 1, that Theophilus was instructed in all that HE, "Jesus began both to do and teach" (Isa. 42:1, 2). Even " the apostles " then were painfully imbued with the desire for outward manifestation of things on earth; they said, " Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? " "Jesus" is the name to follow in Acts, if we want the line of heavenly blessing and grace. Stephen saw "Jesus " in glory, and "the Spirit of Jesus " led Paul to Philippi.

There we see the apostle among a few women—all weakness on man's side. Down comes Jericho's strength, and out comes the freed Gentile, too, as praises of triumph arise from Paul and Silas. They celebrate the victory of the Ark (utter weakness on the human side, full power on the divine side), and pass on.

But, on the other hand, the history of Jerusalem in Acts is solemn. It is evident that " they who seemed to be somewhat " welt not warring (for men of war were needed in Joshua, if Shiloh and Eleazar and the Ark were fully owned), as coming out from the One " who dwelled' between the cherubims "-HEAVEN being the place where the Ark rested—" the height of Zion " for us now (Jer. 31 Heb. 12). They sought to make Jerusalem a sort of metropolitan assembly. They slave to Peter and his line. Of course he had "the keys of the kingdom of the heavens" given him; and very beautiful Acts 2. comes in in its place.

But Rahab must be acknowledged, too, and Achan is there (Acts 5). Did not the apostles own Antioch? Yes.

But we find Peter not acting as Barnabas and Silas did in Acts 11 How solemn. He was the first apostle; and he is carried away by ordinances and the outward; so that Paul has to " withstand him to the face." The earthly swayed him; he overlooked the Ark on " the height of Zion." The heavenly was fully owned at Antioch, and the earthly too (Acts 11:29; 15:28-31).

But even Shiloh was forsaken by Jehovah, and He "refused the tabernacle of Joseph." Yet the features of an Antioch can still be revived—like the remnant in Thyatira. Zion arose when Shiloh was forsaken. For, "ye are come "—beyond Shiloh—" unto Mount Zion, and the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem." Rahab's son arose then. Richer blessing than ever sprang up then. A Hannah triumphs and gives the shout because she rejoices in the Lord's salvation (1 Sam. 2:1). Is not this Rahab once more? Is not Samuel, the praying (not, as Samson, the slaying) Nazarite, the one of silent power? All was in ruin then, the outward crushing and warring, but not in the line of the Ark. The sword was owned, indeed, but—though ostensibly in Jehovah's battles—it availed not. They had only an Ai in Judges (20).

Hannah fought not with that line of things. Nay, she says and sings, "The bows of the mighty men are broken, and they that stumbled are girded with strength." The Lord does all for her; He kills, and makes alive; He takes up the poor and the beggar. "By strength shall no man prevail."

The principle and grace of Antioch never can fail us. The crowd that believed there, clave unto the Lord, they had neither a Peter nor Paul there then. To " cleave unto the Lord" (it is the same form of expression as we find in Matt. 15:32), gets wondrous blessing. He may try our faith, as we " continue with (or cleave unto) Him the three days,' and seem to get nothing."

But Antioch got good food at last, even Paul was brought to them to aid.

But what if we cannot have the line of the sword and the mighty men of war, as in Joshua's days?

What, if a Saul, as in Samuel's days, monopolize it?

What if a Joab take Jerusalem (1 Chron. 11:6)? We can own the silent power of "the ark" still. Thus, "while kings with their armies flee apace, she that tarries at home" may have "spoil" to divide. The Ark is the theme of Psa. 68 A man—" the man Christ Jesus," was " crucified in weakness." Now, "He lives by the power of God." Weakness and need follows that line.

This is the Antioch-lime. At first "those who were scattered abroad " (too weak to remain at Jerusalem), feared because of " the Jews " (compare Acts 11:19, and Rev. 3:9). Then "some of them" took courage (having, perhaps, no characters to sustain), and preached to any of the Rahab family they found. " The hand of the Lord was with them," and a blessed result followed. Jerusalem, it is true, gets uneasy; but sovereign grace conquers.

Thank God we need own no Jerusalem now-a-days, even though a would-be Jerusalem arise. We have no apostles on earth who might act as Peter did then. Now their writings will not make us err, but we may profit by their failures, while grace would make us hide them. May we be warned by all that Luke wrote in Acts. He told Theophilus of " Jesus," and all He began to do, and teach; while he dwelt not on the failures—leaving silent spiritually to see them. Was it not as much as saying—" Even if thou findest Peter or a Paul, in my second treatise, wavering or going wrong, or forming any Jerusalem on earth, be warned. Go on with what " Jesus began." He is to lead on. I brought you to the rent wail in Luke 24—displayed the ark and Eleazar, there, and " the chariot of the cherubim" too. Follow whither He leads, though in God's rest there (Read Psa. 132:7-18), let thy Gilgal be a result be a relationship which the ark maintains whence He rests."

David took Zion, Joab took " the Jerusalem which now is," " Shoshannim-Eduth " conquers in the end. He who uses either a Saul's (1 Sam. 17:39) or a Joab's (2 Sam. 20:8) armor needs beware. Such warriors' garments must be relinquished if the ark with the cherubim and Eleazar is to be followed fully.

" Thus saved by grace we'll gladly sing,

Till all tile heavens and earth shall ring

With Grace triumphant reigns! "

The Bride As a Relative Title

Is not" the Bride " in the place and relation we should expect to find her in the apocalypse? " The Bride, the Lamb's wife," could not be said were there no Bridegroom—" the Lamb." It is then primarily, in relation to Him, that the Bride is spoken of: for the Spirit says "The marriage of the Lamb is come, and His wife hath made herself ready;" and this is not as yet the government of the world. The marriage is celebrated before the Bridegroom and Bride come into public display, in relation to the reign in glory in the world. "The Bride, the Lamb's wife," is heard of first in association with the Lamb personally and in the marriage scene, which is surely indicative of the deepest affection, before she is seen associated with Him in the brightness of displayed glory. First the love and then the glory! Indeed, this is how the Lord said the Father's love should be demonstrated: but the love is there to be so (John 17:23-24). For is it not the glory given which displays the Father's love, if not to the Bride, at least to the saints of His family —" Hast loved them as thou halt loved me 2" The title " Bride " is given because there is a Bridegroom whose love has won her heart, and whom she loves with bridal affections.

I admit that the title, Lamb (Agnion), in the apocalypse is a title made good only in the future, and which will come into display in relation to the glory and government of the millennial world. The rejected One shall be the reigning One. This title occurs nowhere else, as applied to Christ: but in the book of the Revelation, which contemplates the seating of the Lamb on the throne of God; and it is a remarkable thing that it should appear there as often as twenty-eight times. Might we not say that this intimates that "The Lamb" characterizes it?

And I doubt not "the Lamb's wife" is also a title of the future; and that, as such, she will be associated with Him in glory when He governs the world in righteousness. But it does not take much spiritual discernment to see that love is that which makes and unites a bridegroom and a bride. The devotedness of the love on Christ's part is seen in what he has done and is doing: " Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it in order that he might sanctify it, purifying it by the washing of water by the word, that he might present the Assembly to himself glorious, having no spot or wrinkle or any of such things, but that it might be holy and blameless." This is the love, and these are the doings of love, and the object of the love on Christ's part: and surely, in each heart there is even now the reciprocal affection of the Bride, if there be not yet the preparedness, the marriage relation, or the glory. The love tells of present attachment to the Lamb the title "the Lamb's wife " of her coming special relation to Him in His glory, when administering the blessing and government of "the world to come."

The Love of Christ Which Passeth Knowledge

" And to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge that ye might be filled with all the fullness of God"—(Eph. 3:19).

You will remark that the prayer of which this verse is a part, is consequent upon the counsels of God being known. That we have in the first chapter followed by a prayer which is accomplished when these counsels are learned. The first prayer is, therefore, in a certain sense, future. But this prayer in the third chapter is present. It is what is to be formed in me consequent upon understanding the height into which God in His counsels of grace has called me; I am to have a sense of the love of Christ. The idea is that if you have got in spirit into a scene where everything sets forth what God was and is, then you have, as it were, a good opportunity for understanding the love of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It is not Christ's service that is here put forward to engage our minds and affections. Many are occupied with that, and rightly, too, in its place, but we must not forget that there is something else—Christ's love. No doubt a mother has service for her child, but she has love also, and many a child knows the service of its parent who does not know the love that produces the service. When you have reached the consummation of all the work of Christ, when you have got into the knowledge of God's counsels, and into the height in which these counsels place you—Christ accomplishing them all—there is still something further and deeper to learn, and that is where the second prayer of the Apostle comes in, " That ye may know the love of Christ." I have learned what His service is, and I am in all the benefits of it, still I am not occupied with the benefits that result from it, but with the love that produced it. And this is a wonderful comfort, and gives great elevation and dignity to a person. I am occupied not with what one did for me, but with the love that moved him.

"That ye might be filled unto all the fullness of God," is a more exact reading of the second clause of this verse. It is the full expression of God—that is, Christ. What I propose to set forth now is the varied ways in which we learn the love of Christ, for we have to learn it practically. It is not by circumstances that we are educated in the love of the Father; on the contrary, it is the knowledge of that love that prepares us for circumstances and makes us superior to them. Circumstances would mislead you, making you very elated when they are pleasant, and depressing you when they are disagreeable. Whereas, if you knew the love of the Father, you might shun the very thing that promises ease and pleasure, and accept the trying circumstances as a check or hindrance to save you from some impending danger. The Father's love puts you above the world. The world is that which is visible. The moment the visible thing comes in faith goes out; we judge according to the sight of our eyes. This is what the love of the Father saves us from. "This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith." The only one who can instruct me in that love is the Son.

Now we come to consider His love—the love of Christ as distinguished from the love of the Father. The love of Christ puts me not so much above things as above man in every form. I have the knowledge of the love of a Person who knows me where I am down here. One of the ways in

which He comes to us is by showing us that He has been Himself down in the circumstances that we are in. Nothing more affects a Person in this world than knowing that he has a heart thoroughly devoted to him. Is Christ's heart devoted to me? Yes, and thoroughly devoted to you if you knew it. It is an immense thing to find, too, that the person so devoted to you is One who knows all about you. Such is the love of Christ. It is the love of One who knows all about me and the circumstances I must go through, and who makes Himself known in my heart just in proportion as I surrender the man that is against Him.

You will never understand Christianity or the Bible rightly until you see that it is the history of two men. The first man failed in everything that God proposed to him. Another Man came in who met the mind of God in everything, and not only that, but when glorified in the mount—God's acknowledgment of His satisfaction and delight in Him—He descended from that point of eminence to bear the judgment due to the first man who had never done the will of God. The question then is, to which man do you belong? Belonging to Christ I am united to Him not by the flesh as to Adam, but by the Holy Ghost. I am "not in the flesh, but in the spirit " I have received the power of the Holy Ghost. It is not only man is out, but you have got a new power in you.

I propose to show different examples of this. First let me call your attention to the difference between knowing the service of Christ and knowing His heart. I will take one example as to that before going into the examples in which we learn how the love is made known to us. I take the case of the woman who touched the hem of His garment. If you look at that case you must be greatly struck with the Divine light in her soul. She saw a poor stranger there in the crowd and she said, "That Man has got power to cure me, and not only that, but if I only touch him the cure will be imparted." Just imagine yourself for a moment in her position, and think what a feeling was in her mind, what a disclosure the Spirit of God had made to her heart. She saw in that Stranger there in the crowd One who not only had power to relieve her of this terrible illness, but also with readiness to use that power, not because of any desert, but simply by contact. Do you think it cannot be done now even more simply than it was then? Do you apprehend the Son of God as One who has all power and all readiness to impart it, not only to entreaty, but even to a touch? This woman surely then knew His service, and she is an instance of a person knowing the service of Christ—feeling the effectual working of His grace—and yet not knowing His love. She is afraid to come to Him. She has touched Him, but she has not confidence to come to Him; on the contrary, she is fearing and trembling and hesitating. Perhaps there are some souls here who have never traveled into the great reality of actual nearness to the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't say they are not converted, but they have not come to Christ. When the woman came to Him and owned to Him the blessing she had received, she gets a further thing. She learns now not His service, but His love. "And he said unto her, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." "Daughter! " What a feeling her heart gets now. She goes away knowing not only that she is cured, but that she is loved by the Savior. We get the same order in the third of Ephesians. When you rise to an apprehension of the height in which you have been placed by God's grace, the great theme that is to be disclosed to you is the depth of the love of One who has been down here in all our misery and need.

I will turn now to the examples of learning the love of Christ. The first is in Gen. 1:15-21, " And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him. And they sent a messenger unto

Joseph saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, forgive I pray thee now the trespass of thy brethren and their sin; for they did unto thee evil; and now we pray thee forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him. And his brethren also went and fell down before his face, and they said, Behold we be thy servants. And Joseph said, Fear not, for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me, but God meant it for good to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now, therefore, fear ye not; I will nourish you and your little ones. And he comforted them and spake kindly unto them." Every one amongst us knows pretty well the history of Joseph. He was represented to his father as dead. But when the famine came and bread was wanted, the father heard there was corn in Egypt, and sent down Joseph's brethren. There it was discovered after a time that the one who had been reported dead was the one who had the bread of life. They were made acquainted with Joseph and received under his protection. It is all a figure of a greater than Joseph, and it sets forth the restoration of Israel to Christ. But the teaching of this passage for us is that it is possible for a soul to be acquainted with the service of Christ and to have received its benefits, and yet not know His heart. Nay it is not only possible, but it is a state of soul with which we are all conversant. They will speak warmly of the goodness and kindness of the Savior as to His service, and yet they do not know what the actual feeling of Christ is towards them, because they have never come to nearness with Him. Then nothing is hidden or reserved. It is often put off to a death-bed, Then, when everything but what is eternal is passing sway, the soul glances up into that great scene of eternal light and cries, " I am going to meet my Savior now," the reality of everything is out. In the case of Joseph's brethren this began with very great anguish; for they say, " We have indeed behaved badly to you." They had been living for seventeen years under Joseph's shadow, and no doubt they thought there never was such a brother as he was, but they did not know his feelings about them. That only came out after the death of their father, when they were forced to cast themselves directly upon Joseph, and had no one else to whom they could look.

If you have not already passed through this, the day will come when you must do it. And then what comes out? That whilst there is the most thorough disclosure of what I am naturally towards the Lord Jesus Christ, the love that is in his heart for me shines out at the same time. What a blessed thing! "Joseph wept when they spake unto him." It was quite true, as he tells them, that they had behaved badly to him, but he loved them. That is what a guilty man finds when he really comes to close quarters with the Lord. As I have said to a guilty person, if you are really repentant there is only One with whom you ought always to be found, One who can see you without a spot. "Your sins and iniquities I will remember no more." If I am strongly sensible of my sins, the only one I can be happy with is the One who forgets them forever.

"I will nourish you and your little ones." He takes them into his house, he spreads his wing over them. "He spake to their hearts" [see margin]. This goes farther than anything Joseph had done for them. This is what the guilty man finds when he comes near to Christ, not His service merely, but the love of the Savior's heart.

For another case turn to the second chapter of the prophet Jonah. Jonah is not exactly a guilty person. The leading thought in his case is that man disappears, and the practical working of Divine grace is seen. Man has fallen and failed in everything, and he must melt as a dissolving view from before the soul, that Christ may come in in the supremacy of His blessedness and perfection

supplanting man in our heart.

Jonah is not exactly the guilty man, but the willful man. He is told to do a thing and won't do it, but goes his own way, and as is always the case he finds it a very foolish way, for in the long run it lands him in the mud. What follows? "I will look again toward thy holy temple.", If your wilfulness has brought you into such a position as that, when no one has a word to say for you, and you cannot say a word for yourself, there is only One to whom you can turn. The heart turns to Him and is not disappointed. This is what Jonah learned here in the hour of his extremity, when he could not say a word for himself, just like Peter. Whom did the Lord first go and look for when He rose from the dead? He goes to comfort Peter, and to let him know His love. Then He tells him how he is to serve Him. So here God tells Jonah, "Do what I bid you."

I pass on to another example. Canticles ch. 5., "I sleep, but my heart waketh, it is the voice of my beloved that knocketh saying, open to me my sister, my love, my dove, my undefiled, for my head is filled with dew, and my locks with the drops of the night (ver. 2). This is neither the guilty man nor the willful man, but the indolent one. Are you never indolent? How often do we hear saints say, " I am not so bright as I used to be! ") I have met many such cases lately, cases of very deep depression. Scripture accounts for it. You are inactive, i you are asleep. Sleep means inactivity. It is not inactivity in doing good works merely. To express Christ 1 is greater than any good work, and if you are expressing Christ you will not do anything badly. For, remember, it is possible to do a good thing badly. How often men do right things wrongly! The best thing is to have the glance of Christ, to be expressing Him; because if you are living Christ, when a good work comes in your way you will do it. Don't think that I disparage good works; but I insist that there is a greater thing.

It is often said that as a man's knowledge increases his earnestness, declines. I cannot understand why it should be so. Yet I find many with a great deal of intelligence, but not a great deal of "panting " (Psa. 42). Why is this? Some intelligent man will tell me that belonged to a former dispensation. But I say it belongs to this. It is not true that as a person's knowledge increases his earnestness must decline. On the contrary, I believe that the man who has the largest and deepest sense of the love of Christ can the least do without it, and will be panting and pressing most eagerly after it. Here is inactivity—sleep—and the Lord comes to awaken. It is by a knock, not a voice. A voice is from the Word, a knock is rather circumstances. She is aroused by the knock, and opens to her beloved, but finds He has withdrawn Himself (ver. 6). This is the depression that people complain of. There are very sad cases of it. What is it all for? The Lord wants to teach you what His love to you is, to bring your heart into a deeper knowledge of Himself. How are souls recovered from this depression? We find the mode of recovery in verses 10-16. It is by occupation with what the Beloved is, all His graces and perfections.

There is an instance of it in the disciples whom the Lord met going to Emmaus. "He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." That is the point. That is what brightens up the soul. It is not seeking to find out how you fell into such a state. A man in a dark night does not watch the clouds that cover the moon, but looks for the moon that shines.

Another example different from any of those already looked at, is found in 1 Kings 17 Here is a peculiar case, and one that you would not expect, but it explains a great many experiences. Here was a poor widow at the point of starvation relieved by a prophet sent from God. Her resources were almost exhausted, she had just enough for one meal, and then no other prospect but death.

“But she did according to the saying of Elijah; and she, and he, and her house did eat a full year. (This is the reading of the margin, which I believe is correct.) Just think what a happy time that must have been. A prophet in the house, and there this woman went on whether it was winter, or summer, or spring, or autumn, without fear or care; an unailing supply of all she needed. Thus she goes on for a whole year. This represents the case of a soul that has only learned the service of Christ—here, of course, temporally. To give you a very accurate example of it, it was how the disciples knew the Lord on earth.

You do not lose this because you learn Him in a higher way. But if you only know Christ in this way a day will come when you will be in intolerable grief.

The widow's son dies. She comes to the prophet and cries, “Art thou 'come unto me to call my sin to remembrance.” What! After the 365 days of direct sustenance by God? Yes. Christ was not known yet in resurrection (speaking figuratively). Elijah stretches himself three times upon the dead body of the child, and in answer to his cry the Lord revives him. Thus Christ connects Himself with death, and I see His power over it. I learn Christ outside all this scene of ruin in resurrection life. I cannot enlarge upon this subject. It is what we find in 1 John “He that hath the Son hath life.”

What did this woman learn in this? A deeper and fuller sense of who this man was, and of God (ver. 24). And did she lose the value of what she had already learned, his provision for her needs? Or does anyone lose the great love of Christ on earth by learning Christ in resurrection? Having got Christ in resurrection I am not merely under His protection, but I have passed with Him out of all the ruin and disaster that I was in, and I am brought into the wonderful elevation of His own resurrection, where no evil can come, and life is the perpetual enjoyment of Himself.

This is what deepens my knowledge of Him, and my delight in Him, too. “Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord” (after resurrection).

Turn now to the New Testament for another case. Luke 5 You would hardly expect to find such a case here, still it is so. It is not a case of knowing Christ only on the earth, but of serving Christ with a fleshly sentiment. Here was Peter giving up his ship, his time, and his means for the service of the Lord. What more could be desired? The Lord tells him in effect, “You do not understand the right ground of service, you have not learned what I am yet.” It is not denied that he was really serving Him. But you may see a man giving his time and means for the propagation of the gospel, and yet very possibly he has never yet come to close quarters with the Lord. What is the effect when Peter recognizes who the Lord is. “Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” Was he doing anything wrong? No, but the Lord is teaching him what He is and what Peter is. And He brings him to this: “They forsook all and followed Him.” They never doubted his love afterward. Peter could cast himself into the sea to meet Him. People think you may bring human energy and zeal into the, service of the Lord, but it will have to die out some '!' day. You must be brought to know the reality of what Christ is, and that will show you what you are yourself. The result is what we see here. “They brought their ships to land, forsook all and followed Him.”

In John 13 we learn the same thing in another way. Here we see Christ washing His disciples' feet when the close of His life is near. “Having loved His own...He loved them unto the end.” Did your soul ever taste of that love of Christ? Think of the love that a parent has for a child. I don't look to

see a blemish in my child. I may see it—it is poor love that does not, if it is there—but I don't want any one else to see it. And this is but a faint picture of what Christ's love is. He is satisfied with nothing for the believer but holiness—perfect holiness. And He is working to take away everything that would cause the slightest reserve between the soul and Himself. Hence in John 21 we see that He does not merely forgive Peter for what He had done, but He puts the trying question, "Lovest thou Me?" And He does not drop it till every reserve in Peter's heart is removed. Then He tells him, "Feed my sheep."

How do you know when a person is restored after a fall? If the Lord will use him. If ever you fall out with people and afterward want to show them that you are quite at one with them again, don't offer to do anything for them but ask them to do something for you. So the Lord gives Peter work to do. He says, "I can trust him; he is a thoroughly restored man." It was, we may be sure, a delight to Peter's heart to hear those words, "Feed my sheep." And can anyone read his epistles without observing how diligently and earnestly he sought the welfare of the flock that had been entrusted to him?

There is one example more that I want specially to bring before you, John 11:33, &c., "When Jesus, therefore, saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit and was troubled." I have already remarked that the One who knew all about us was the One who took occasion from His very knowledge of our circumstances to show us His heart. Nothing gives us such an idea of the heart of Christ as His sympathy. Fellowship is when He raises us up to His own level, sympathy) when He comes down to our circumstances, not to our level. He came down into our circumstances to bear our judgment, too, but He never was on a level with us. Now, having borne our judgment and delivered us, He can satisfy His heart by bringing us to His own level.

It is sympathy that we have here. There are two sisters and their great stay gone. Whether man appears in guilt, willfulness, indolence, merely as a man on the earth, or in the zeal of the flesh, he must vanish. Here man dies, and what is se?? Christ. The Spirit of God alone can give us a sense of His love following us all along our path here and entering into all our circumstances. Can anything give such quiet blessed composure as to know that I am the object of perfect love, and that in One who knows all about... me? A mother with a peevish child may know the Lord's sympathy in such a trial of her spirit. If she loses her temper He does not sympathize with her; He must correct her.

There are two actions of the Word of God. It corrects and it directs. If I am directed by the Word I have Christ's sympathy. I am coming out of the wilderness leaning on the arm of my Beloved. If you want a figure of it, it is like a man in a wild mountain-forest; he sees a road through it; he follows that road, and he finds company on it. Correction is a different thing. As we see here the Lord corrects Martha, and does not move out of the place where she met Him; but He walks with Mary because she is subject to His word; she waits for it and acts on it. And He weeps. Can you form an idea of a heart that can stoop down to what is in yours, the sense of your bereavement, to use that as an opportunity for the disclosure of His love? The house of mourning is more welcome to Him than the house of feasting because it gives him an opportunity for disclosing His love? He comes and walks beside one, and can comfort the bereaved heart in the assurance that he is "a Friend who sticketh closer than a brother." Death had laid hold upon the stay of Mary's heart, but

death cannot lay hold upon Him. Man has failed, but the Lord fails not.

One word more as to sympathy. Nothing softens a person but this. It is easy thus to know a man who has met sympathy. The tendency of trials is to harden, but sympathy makes a man mellow, if I may use such a word. Just as the apple of an old tree is said to be mellower than the apple of a young one of the same kind. Why? Because of what the old tree has passed through; its long exposure to all kinds of weather and to the changing seasons. What makes a man mellow is not trial in itself, but the sense of the sympathy of the Lord Jesus Christ in it. It is not relief. I need not say that in the trial we look for relief. A mother with a troublesome child would honestly tell me, "I wish this peevishness in my child should cease." But that is not the Lord's way always. I say to her, "Turn your attention from this peevishness, and think of the Lord bearing you company in this trial!

The principle of the world is think of yourself, take care of yourself, for nobody else will. But how different this is? What a different tone and manner it gives me to know that there is One who cares for me, with a perfect unfailing love! In Mary's case the dearest object on earth is taken away from her, her prop and support is gone; but the Lord says, "I will use that to come in and acquaint you with my heart.

(He does not simply say, "I will raise Lazarus," though according to His wonderful grace He does raise him. What things Mary would have to talk of to her restored brother as they went along! She could say to him, "The Lord has given you back to me after teaching me how to do and bear without you; after teaching me that He can himself come in and with His wonderful sympathy supply the place of every loss."

So the Lord in His varied ways is teaching us one great lesson which should give a character to every one of us; the all-sufficiency of His love. Hence I look at everything as coming from Him. If I meet with love I from any I welcome it; for just as philosophers tell you that there is no light in the world but what came from the sun, so there is not a particle of love in the heart of a saint that has not come from the heart of Christ.

Do you complain of the lack of love? I have got more love than I can ever take in! My only regret is that I do not give out more. The cleverest man could not distinguish which lamp is lighting a particular spot in the room. They all are, they all combine. So it is with the love of Christ flowing through His people. It all combines. And there is more love in His heart than you can take in, more than you can practically understand; therefore, it is "the love of Christ which passeth knowledge."

I trust every heart here can join in the language of the apostle in the close of Rom. 8, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? "

The Divine Center of Unity

THERE must be an intrinsic power of union holding it together to a center, as well as a power separating from evil to form it; and this center found, it denies all others. The center of unity must be a sole and unrivaled center. The Christian has not long to inquire here. It is Christ. The object of the Divine counsel—the manifestation of God Himself—the one only vessel of mediatorial power, entitled to unite, creation as He by whom and for whom all things were made; and the Church as its redeemer, its head, its glory, and its life. And there is this double headship, He is head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all. This will be accomplished in its day—for the present we take up the intermediate period, the unity of the Church itself, and its unity in the midst of evil. Now there can be no moral power which can unite away from evil but Christ. He alone, as perfect grace and truth, detects all the evil which separates from God, and from which. God separates. He alone can, of God, be the attractive center which draws together to Himself all on whom God so acts. God will own no other—there is no other to whom the testimony could be borne, who is morally adequate to concentrate every affection which is of God and towards God. Redemption itself, too, makes this necessary and evident; there can be but one Redeemer, one in whom a ransomed heart can be given, as well as where a divinely quickened heart can give all its affections, the center and revelation of the Father's love. He, too, is the center of power to do it. In Him all the fullness dwells. Love, and God is love, is known in Him. He is the wisdom of God and the power of God. And yet more than this, He is the separating power of attraction, because He is the manifestation of all this, and the fulfiller of it in the midst of evil; and that is what we poor miserable ones want who, are in it, and it is what, if we may so speak, God wants for His separating glory in the midst of evil. Christ sacrificed Himself to set up God in separating love in the midst of evil. There was more than this, a wider scope in this work, but I speak in reference to my present subject now. Thus Christ becomes not, only the center of unity to the universe in His glorious title of power, but, as the manifester of God, the one owned and set up of the Father, and attractor of man, He becomes a peculiar and special center of divine affections in man, round which they are gathered as the sole divine center of unity. For indeed, as the center, necessarily the sole center, He that gathereth not with me scattereth. And such, as to this point, was the object even, and power of His death. I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me. And more especially, He gave Himself, not for that nation only, but that He might gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad. But here again we find this separation of a peculiar people. He gave Himself for us, that He might purify to Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He was the the very pattern of the Divine life in man, separate from the evil by which it was universally surrounded. He was the friend of publicans and sinners, piping in grace to men by familiar and tender love, but He was ever the separate man. And so He is as the center and high-priest of the Church. "Such a high-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners"—and, it is added, "made higher than the heavens." Here in passing we may remark, that the center and subject of this unity then is heavenly. A living Christ still became the instrument of maintaining the enmity, being Himself subject to the law of commandments contained in ordinances. Hence, though the Divine glory of His person

necessarily reached over this wall as a fruitful bough of grace to poor perishing Gentiles without (and it could not be otherwise, for where faith was, He could not deny Himself to be God, nor what God was, even love); yet in His regular course, as a man made of a woman, He was made under the law. But by his death He broke down the middle wall of partition, and made both one, and reconciled both in one body unto God—making peace. Hence it is as lifted up, and finally as made higher than the heavens, that He becomes the center and sole object of unity. Let us remark in passing, that hence worldliness always destroys unity. The flesh cannot rise up to heaven, nor descend in love to every need. It walks in the separative comparison of self-importance. "I am of Paul," &c." Are ye not carnal and walk as men 2 "Paul had not been crucified for them, nor had they been baptized in the name of Paul. They had got down to earth in their minds, and unity was gone. But the glorious heavenly Christ in one word embraced all. "Why persecutest thou me?" This separation from all else was more slow among the Jews, as having been outwardly themselves the separated people of God; but having fully shown what they were, the word to the disciples was, "Let us go forth to Him without the camp, bearing His reproach." The Lord, when as the great result He would have one flock and one shepherd, put forth His own sheep and went before them. Indeed, we have only to show that unity is God's mind, and separation from evil is the necessary consequence; for it exists as a principle in the calling of God before unity itself. Unity is purpose, and as He is the only rightful center, it must be the result of Holy power; but separation from evil is His very nature. Hence, when He publicly calls Abraham, the words: "Get thee out of thy country, and out of thy kindred, and from thy father's house.h fellowship with Him and walketh in darkness, lieth, and doth not the truth. Separation from evil is the necessary first principle of communion with Him. Whoever calls it in question, is a liar—he is, so far, of the wicked one, He belies the character of God. If unity depends on God, it must be separation from darkness. So with one another. If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And mark, here there is no limit. It, is as God is in the light. There the, blessed Lord has placed us by His precious redemption, and hence, by that, the whole manner of our walk and union must be formed; we can have no union (as of God) out of it. The Jew could, because his—though separation, and hence the same in principle—yet was only outward in the flesh, and the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest; no, not even for the saints, though in God's counsels doubtless they were to be there through the sacrifice about to be offered.and center of unity, but in the name of Jesus, of a people separated alike from Jew and Gentile, and delivered out of this present evil world into union with their glorious Head. By Peter, God visited the Gentiles, to take out of them a. people for His name; and of the Jews there was a. remnant according to the election of grace. As St. Paul, one of them, was separated himself from Israel, and from the Gentiles, to whom he was sent. And so was the constant testimony. He that saith he hath

fellowship with Him and walketh in darkness, lieth, and doth not the truth. Separation from evil is the necessary first principle of communion with Him. Whoever calls it in question, is a liar—he is, so far, of the wicked one, He belies the character of God. If unity depends on God, it must be separation from darkness. So with one another. If we walk in the light, as God is in the light, we have fellowship one with another. And mark, here there is no limit. It, is as God is in the light. There the, blessed Lord has placed us by His precious redemption, and hence, by that, the whole manner of our walk and union must be formed; we can have no union (as of God) out of it. The Jew could, because his—though separation, and hence the same in principle—yet was only outward in the flesh, and the way into the holiest was not yet made manifest; no, not even for the

saints, though in God's counsels doubtless they were to be there through the sacrifice about to be offered.

"a Bone of Him Shall Not Be Broken."

THIS is how we read in the synopsis on 1 Cor. 11 In the Lord's supper—

1. The Lord's death, His broken body, were brought to mind, and, as it were, made present to faith as the basis and foundation of everything.
2. The Lord's body had been broken; wondrous fact,! to which the Holy Ghost was to bear witness, &c.
3. The heart was brought back to this. The body of the Lord Himself had been broken, the lips of Jesus had claimed our remembrance.
4. His broken body was the object before their hearts in this memorial.
5. It is a body broken and not glorified.
6. The broken body was, as it were, before their eyes in this supper.
7. If they despised the broken body and blood of the Lord by taking part in it lightly, chastisement was inflicted. (Synopsis Vol. IV. 256.)

Scripture says, " A bone of him shall not be broken;" not that His body should not be; the saying of which would contradict the fact (see John 19:32-37) " They shall look on him whom they pierced."

Leviticus

The value and use of the blood having been thus declared, the next proclamation warned all against any inclination to be careless in the observance of the command (13, 14). Circumstances, the people would perhaps have thought, might exonerate them from the observance of it, and an instance of what might otherwise have been held to justify their neglect of it, we do read of in 1 Sam. 14:31-34. Faint from pursuing the enemy, the people flew on the spoil, and ate of the animals without killing them properly. But this command remembered, and attended to by Saul, the Lord's interference in judgment was restrained, as His law was honored by being obeyed.

In connection with this comes the regulation for those who had eaten of an animal which had died of itself, n'belah, or had been torn by a beast, t'rephah. In Ex. 22:31, in the covenant made with Israel on Mount Sinai, they were forbidden to eat of the carcass of any animal which had been torn by beasts in the field. In Lev. 11:40, any one who ate of the carcass of a clean animal which had died of itself, had to wash his clothes, and to be unclean until the evening. Here (17:15) the purification enjoined on any one who ate of any animal torn or that had died of itself, is stated, with the penalty such would incur if disobedient to this ordinance. The Lord would not allow uncleanness in those connected with His camp to pass unchallenged, or unpurged. A difficulty has been made of all this to discredit the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. But, viewing this passage in its context, it may be that the law of Lev. 17:15 had respect to the finding of any carcass in the open country when hunting, whilst Lev. 11:41. treats of death among their flocks or

herds. If this be the case they were allowed, under exceptional circumstances, to eat of that which had died of itself, or had been torn by beasts, subject to their compliance with the purification enjoined; whereas when they entered the land that which died of itself was forbidden them (Deut. 14:21), as well as that which had been torn by beasts (Ex. 21), though a stranger might eat of the former. There, surrounded with plenty, no exceptional circumstances could be pleaded on their behalf.

Jehovah, then, was their God—an immense privilege, as the Psalmist confessed: "Blessed is the nation whose God is Jehovah, and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance " (Psa. 33:12). But of His people, responsibilities rested on them to which other nations were strangers. Some of these we have looked at, and we come now to others which marked them out as a separated people, whether from the Egyptians, among whom they had dwelt, or from the Canaanites, into whose land the Lord was about to take them. So the ways, the habits, the customs of men, were no guide for them. How could they be? Israel were what neither the Egyptians nor the Canaanites could boast of, or ever become: the Lord's peculiar people, whom He had chosen for Himself. Hence He thus addressed them: "After the doings of the land of Egypt, wherein ye dwelt, shall ye not do; and after the doings of the land of Canaan, whither I bring you, shall ye not do; neither shall ye walk in their ordinances. Ye shall do my judgments, and keep mine ordinances to walk therein. I am the Lord your God. Ye shall, therefore, keep my statutes and my judgments, which if a man do, he shall live in them. I am the Lord" (Lev. 18:3-5). All men on earth ought to have served the Lord, but they did not, neither did they even know Him who is the self-existing one, the true, the living God.

In what dense moral darkness was man, that Jehovah was to many unknown. In what depths of degradation and filth were they found, that God had to warn Israel against the ways of the nations of the land, both social and religious (18:24-28), because of which the land would vomit them out as a nauseous thing. What had man become, man made in the image of God, and originally after His likeness also? But how had this come about? Had he got into this condition, or was he originally made in it? Was primitive pre-historic man originally in a state of savagery, out of which he gradually raised himself by self-culture?" God made man upright (Eccl. 7:29). Man before the flood was no savage, dwelling in caves or like habitations. Cain built a city. His descendants were noted for arts and musical instruments. Cain, too, at first tilled the ground, and Abel was a keeper of sheep. After the flood Noah became a husbandman, and Ham's descendants were noted as builders, and rulers. Man's primitive condition, whether before the flood or after it, was not a state of savagery, but quite the reverse. How, then, did he descend into the degradation and uncleanness characteristic of savagery and idolatry?' As with earth, so with man, the chaotic state of the former, and the degraded state of the latter, were the consequences of causes at work after the creation of both the one and of the other. God did not create the earth a chaos (Isa. 45:18), nor man a savage. This question, then, about man's condition, which history cannot answer, nor can archeology solve, God in His word has cleared up to us.

"Men when they knew God, glorified Him not as God, but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened; professing themselves to be wise they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image like unto corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies among them, who changed the

truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator who is blessed forever. Amen." And again, " As they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind," &c. (Rom. 1:21-28). Savagery was the result of man's departure from God. God did not create man in that condition, nor was he in it when Noah and his sons were blessed by God just after the flood. Men became vain in their imaginations, they became fools, their foolish hearts were darkened, not dark (see also Eph. 4:18). Hence man's degraded condition, whether as a savage, or an idolater, a condition out of which nothing can really bring him, but the converting power of the grace of God. What was the educated heathen, viewed morally or religiously, apart from the Spirit's work on his conscience? Contrast Rom. 1:32, with 2:14, 15.

Surrounded as Israel were with all the filth of heathendom, they were to be for Jehovah, and to keep His commandments and His ordinances. As His people, He told them what they were to do, and what they were to be. Certain instructions for their camp life to guard them from idolatry we have looked at in the previous chapter of this book. We now approach the chapter which treats of marriage, for, as Jehovah's people, He prescribed within what degrees of consanguinity or affinity, such unions would be deemed unlawful, and precursors of divine chastisement. Till Israel came to Sinai, we have no hint of any marriage law laid down by God. Before the flood, and certainly in the days of Cain, what the Levitical law ruled as incest, was lawful. Men married their sisters. And even in Abraham's day such unions do not seem to have been unlawful. Sarah was Abraham's half sister. Jochebed was Amram's own aunt, his father's sister. By the the law of Leviticus, such unions as Abraham and Sarah, Amram and Jochebed, and Jacob and Rachel, were distinctly forbidden (18:11, 12, 18).

Thus the law introduced changes in the innermost circle of social life, and Israel, Jehovah's people, had to learn from it what were the Lord's ordinances relative to marriage, and in what light He would view any infraction of them as there laid down (20.). In certain cases it would be wickedness, and death was the penalty annexed; in other cases, to die childless was the penalty such would suffer (20:20, 21). What, then, was lawful to Abraham and Amram, was, to their descendants, by the law made unlawful. The marriage, of the former if he had lived under the law, would have been wickedness. The marriage of the latter would have entailed on him and Jochebed the bearing of their iniquity. Now this deliverance of the Lord on the subject of marriage, clearly concerns not only Israel, but Christians as well; and although the marriage laws of our own land are not wholly regulated by this revelation made to Moses, still, all that God has here forbidden is reckoned illegal, and no Christian would act aright, if he transgressed the regulations laid down, which plainly tell us what to avoid, leaving us to gather from the prohibitions herein stated what unions are not reckoned unlawful in the eyes of the Lord.

Throughout the man is addressed, and never the woman, and the prohibitions are classed under three heads; first, what concerns certain blood relations of his own (18:6-13); next, certain relations in law (14-16); and lastly, certain relations of his wife (17, 18). Of his own blood relations, besides his direct line, i.e., his mother or his offspring, collateral branches are forbidden to him reaching out to his aunts by blood, the sisters of his father, or the sisters of his mother. All within that range are near of kin, and as such are debarred him. And if a man went in unto his aunt by blood, they were both to bear their iniquity (20:19). Of his relations in law three were forbidden; viz., his sons wife, his brother's wife, and his aunt by marriage, and all three on the ground that

they had been wives of his relations by blood.

Hence it is clear that relations in law were not put in the same category as relations by blood. The penalty for going in to his uncle's widow was not the same as if he went in to his own aunt, who was near of kin to him (20:20). His son's daughter was forbidden him, because she was near of kin to him; but his daughter-in-law was forbidden, because she had been his son's wife. So whatever relation by blood. was forbidden to the man, the widow of the corresponding relations in blood was equally forbidden, but on the ground. that she had been the wife of his near of kin.

What Characterizes the Christian Position

Luke 12:35-53

THE Lord had been warning the world in what precedes in this chapter. There was the folly of those who sought their comfort and pleasure in it; and He says, " Seek ye the kingdom of God, and all these things shall be added unto you; fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Now what distinguishes the Christian is this, that by the revelation of that which is not seen, he is borne up out of this world altogether. He has to pass through it; but, as a Christian, he does not belong to it at all. " They are not of this world, even as I am not of this world." Redemption is accomplished, and it gives us a title, like the poor thief, into Paradise, but still we are strangers as in Hebrews, and seek a country. There is nothing settled or established in this world, but its spirit from the very beginning is that of seeking rest where God in judgment has made us strangers.

It was all over with Cain, and God said to him, and he said to himself, " A fugitive and a vagabond shall I be in the earth." He declared he was made a vagabond, and went and built a city in the land of Nod-i.e., vagabond.

Man was driven out from Paradise, and Cain was jealous of Abel, and God's judgment was come upon him; but he went out from the presence of the Lord and built a city and settled himself there, calling it by his son's name. The next element is " cattle "-i. e., wealth, then artificers in brass and iron, and then comes the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. Sin made man a stranger to the Paradise of God, and so man sought to make for himself a rest. That is not quite all. When the blessed Lord came into this world, not only did man see no beauty in Him, but man cast Him out and crucified Him. And so, as to the world now, it is not only a world, the fruit of man driven out of Paradise, but the present state is the consequence of having driven God out of it when He had come into it in grace. This gave an occasion to God for the unfolding of all His ways; but when once the Son of God is rejected, then the moral history of this world is closed.

Yet the Lord could say, "Now is the prince of this world cast out," and He broke the power of Satan, though he is still "the god of this world." "But now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself." The world has not come to an end yet, but in the rejection of Christ, the blessed Son of God, man's moral history came to an end, and he is now treated as lost; not lost so that he cannot be saved, but lost as to his moral condition, and he now stands so before God. God has come down to this world and said, not merely you have done this or that, but He has to say—not " Adam, where art thou?"—but, What have you done with My Son? That is what He has to say to the world now, and what can the world say?

Christ came in goodness: even Pilate asked, " Why, what evil hath he done? " but man cast Him out.

And I cannot take up Christianity now without saying, the world has rejected Christ, that is the position in which it is: it has rejected Christ, and man is lost. But God has said to Christ, "Sit at my right hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." And the Lord Jesus Christ, rejected by man, is sitting at God's right hand, as man, expecting until His enemies are made His footstool. Patient grape is working meanwhile to call sinners to a knowledge of the salvation which He has wrought.

First, He came to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself, and then, to them that look for Him shall He appear a second time without sin unto salvation. But, then, that will be judgment, surely, for those who have rejected Him. We stand between the first coming and the second coming, the first being that when He accomplished redemption, and the second being the full fruits of it, including also the judgment of the dead. Christianity is characterized by this position between the two comings.

Now the prophets had prophesied beforehand of the sufferings of Christ. Look for a moment at that passage in Peter, 1 Peter 1-10, "Of which salvation the prophets have inquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you, searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow, unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, which things the angels desire to look into. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ." I only refer to this as to the order of things. The prophets before the sufferings (and so before the glory, of course) searched their own prophecies to understand them, and it was revealed to them, that they ministered them to us; and they are now reported to us; they are not come; so that Christianity is not the accomplishment of the things themselves; the things are reported by the Holy Ghost come down in the gospel, and, therefore, we are to gird up the loins of our mind, waiting for grace to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ. This is simple and clear, they searched their own prophecies and found the grace they spoke of was not for them. But now Christ is personally glorified at the right hand of God, and the Holy Ghost has come, and we are here walking by faith, not by sight. When the Lord was going away He put the disciples into this place, knowing that the effect would be opposition from the world. Peter testified, "Him whom ye have crucified and slain has God exalted to his own right hand." And so the Lord says, "O righteous Father, the world hath not known Thee, but I have known Thee." I have revealed Thee perfectly, but the world would not have the revelation, they rejected it. He had been faithful, and then He goes back through the accomplished redemption to "The glory which he had with the Father before the world was."

We get, then, this great fact, that the Lord Jesus has gone back as man, having accomplished the work of redemption, to sit at the right hand of God. The Man upon whom all had depended, has finished the work, and has gone to sit at the right hand of God accordingly. He had finished it as regards His friends, and has sat down because it is finished. The old priests were ever standing, and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices which could never take away sins, but this Man when He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down—i.e., sat down in perpetuity—at the right hand of God. But He is sitting upon the Father's throne expecting, until His enemies be made His footstool. And it adds, as regards His friends— i.e., all believers, "For by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified."

But then, in consequence, the Holy Ghost has come down. He never came until the day of Pentecost, just as the Son of God never came until the incarnation. There was a coming and a going, and so He says, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you." But before the Holy Ghost could come, man must be in the glory of God; and the great fact is that Man, the Blessed Man, the Son of God, had been glorified in the glory of God, before the Holy Ghost came. But He did come on the day of Pentecost to all them that believe. There we get the position. God had prophesied before of it, but God's word is a different thing from the accomplishment of the fact. Looked at as promises, "Jesus Christ was the minister of the circumcision for the truth of God to confirm the promises made unto the fathers." But there is more than that; He was the object of the promises. There was no promise to us that Christ should die for us; it was not promised to us that He should ascend (Psa. 68) up into heaven. But He is sitting at God's right hand. What was testified is, "Thou hast ascended on high." Christ has come down here, and dying and rising, is set down at the right hand of the Majesty on high. All was testified, and now all has been accomplished. The world rejected Him when He came, but God has set Him there in glory. Man saw no beauty in Him, He was wounded for our transgressions; but He glorified God in His death, and is now glorified of God at His right hand.

So now, if my sins brought Christ to the cross, the consequence is they are all put away; "He bare our sins in his own body on the tree." I go and acknowledge that my sins brought Him there under the judgment of God, but if so, then they can never bring me there. The whole work is completely finished, finished not merely for lawless people, not merely for law-breaking people as the Jews (and practically people are now under the law), but God has stepped in to settle the whole question of sin: Christ has come, God manifest in the flesh, into this world and died, so that I might be able to trust God in love, that I might say, I can trust Him. I cannot trust man in the world, he is so vile, but I can trust God who sent His Son, and He has wrought such a work that He Himself who did it is at the right hand of God in righteousness. That is the fact; that is not a promise. There are precious promises to help us along the road, surely; but this is a fact. When I come honestly as a sinner to say, my sins brought Him to that cross, and then God carried Him to His right hand, then I know He is not sitting in my sins at the right hand of God; that is no place in which to sit in sins! He glorified God on the earth, He "became obedient unto death, the death of the cross, therefore, God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name." The more we look at the cross of Christ the more we shall see that everything that is in question as to good and evil, is all settled. I get in the cross, man in absolute wickedness—i.e., hating God present in love; He had not come to judge the world, but to save the world. The prince of this world came and stirred up both Jews and Gentiles to get rid of Christ; man is wholly against Him, and the devil is against Him: but Christ was perfect in it all, "That the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." I have got man here in absolute (it is hard to say perfect) wickedness, with the complete power of Satan over the world, getting rid of the Son of God, and though they hated Him without a cause, yet He goes through all in perfect obedience, showing absolute perfection in Man.

If I turn to God in this scene, I find perfect love to the sinner: there is all that man can be in perfection in the person of Christ, and all that God is in His holy righteous nature against sin, and in perfect love to sinners. So, in the cross every way, God is perfectly glorified, and every question was settled there; it is in God the perfect judgment of sin, and perfect love together. If God had cut

off Adam and Eve it would have been all very right, but there would have been no love in that; and if he had passed sin over there would have been no righteousness. But in the cross, and nowhere else, you get all moral questions perfectly settled. It is the absolute bringing out of man and Satan too, and of God; and all is settled. Now God has owned that, and has raised Christ from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand as man in the heavenly places, after He had by Himself purged our sins.

This great truth remains, when everything was morally settled, man is found at the right hand of God; and God, too, has displayed His righteousness in it. Then the Holy Ghost is given upon earth: "and when He is come, He shall convince the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment." The Savior came in grace, but the coming of the Holy Ghost testified these two things,—that Christ was gone from earth, having finished His work; but also He was gone that God should set Him at His own right hand. In John He says, " Now is the Son of Man glorified," speaking of the cross, " and God is glorified in Him; if God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him," Son of Man as well as Son of God. As God has been perfectly glorified in Christ on the cross, so God will perfectly glorify Christ.

Then comes the work of the Holy Ghost given down here: the Spirit of God brings a man's own individual sins to his conscience, but He convinces " the world of sin because they believe not on Christ of righteousness, because I go to the Father of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." There is the testimony and proof of righteousness, because there is one who is a man, who in the very place of sin, sinless, but "made sin," perfectly glorified God; and God has perfectly glorified Him. That is the whole thing. At His first coming, He died, was raised again, and was glorified in virtue of what He had done; all that was finished first, and then the Holy Ghost came down. Christ, the One who bore my sins, is, as man, at the right hand of God in glory, and the Holy Ghost down here is the witness that He is there. Now that is our place, the Holy Ghost is received, and through the Holy Ghost the knowledge of perfect love in God, that He did not spare His own Son, And what this accomplishes then, is this, it puts me in the place where Christ is, and, therefore, you get, even by John Baptist's father, that it is "to give the knowledge of salvation to his people," and that is whence the knowledge comes: it is by the Holy Ghost that I know Christ is at the right hand of God. But that Christ is the Christ who bore my sins, and if the work had not been complete, finished, accepted, He could not have been there, but God raised Him from the dead. And that is where the Holy Ghost given puts those who believe. It is given only to believers, but it is the portion of those who do believe.

The presence of the Holy Ghost gives me the consciousness of the place I am brought into. Here I get infinite love, perfect love, for God gave His Son to be a man, and He died for me that I might be in glory. And He told me when risen, "I go to my Father and your Father; to my God and your God." We "are all the sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus," and that is the force of those words in John, "To them gave he power to become sons of God; "and then, "because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry, Abba Father." It is my place through Christ's work, and the Holy Ghost has given me the consciousness of it, for God has sent forth the Spirit into my heart. I cannot call a man my father, if I do not know whether I am his child or not. And then I know another thing by the Holy Ghost dwelling in me, and that is, I know that I am in Christ, and that of course is perfect acceptance. John 14, " In that day ye shall know that I am in the Father," when the Comforter is come, they could not know it until then. " And ye in me,

and I in you." People say, you cannot know; the Lord says, "ye shall know." Whom am I to believe? "Ye in me, and I in you." Well, then, I know I am in Christ, and that is perfect acceptance. You must condemn Christ in glory, if you condemn the believer, for he is in Christ. The Spirit is given that we may know Christ is in the Father, " And ye in me, and I in you."

But if Christ be in me, "The body is dead because of sin; and the Spirit is life because of righteousness." I get perfect acceptance, and so with it the character of responsibility; we are the epistle of Christ. It does not say, ye are to be, but, ye are, and the world ought to read Christ in you, as they might read the ten commandments on the two tables of stone. Mark, it is not responsibility as to our acceptance, we are in Christ, but if that is true, the other side is true also. "Walk worthy, therefore, of God, who hath called us to his kingdom and glory." And again in Colossians, where He speaks in the most definite way as to our acceptance, "Giving thanks unto the Father which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and He prays they " Might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing." He takes the Lord as the One in whom it all is. There is another character of that in Ephesians: "Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."

Another thing, "He that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God." "Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God." There I get what constitutes the Christian; the foundation is in Christ, His "body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, which we have of God. And after that ye believed ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession." Having been washed from my sins by the blood of Christ, the Holy Ghost makes my body His temple. That is the Christian position consequent upon redemption, it is the Christian place, and then I have to walk as Christ walked.

Forty days after His resurrection the Lord ascended, and He sent the Holy Ghost down here to dwell in those who believe, " Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him, but ye know him, for he dwelleth with you and shall be in you" And we know that He does dwell in us because we say, Abba Father. We look to Christ and know we are in Him, but the presence of the Holy Ghost characterizes the Christian, not in his inconsistencies, of course, but a Christian as such. How can you go and sin if your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost, and you are bought with a price? And so the believer is left here as the epistle of Christ in this world, and the life of Jesus is to be manifested in Him. That is his responsibility. He knows his place, cries Abba, Father; the love of God is shed abroad in his heart, he knows his relationship with God, and in Christ is sitting in heavenly places, while the Holy Ghost dwells in him as His temple. But if we are children, then heirs; heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.

Through Christ being in me my business is to show out Christ down here, and then it is a privilege to suffer with Him. I cannot go with the Spirit of Christ in me-through a world of degradation, and sin, and misery, and pace through it, without, in a poor measure, but really feeling what I go through, and its opposition as well as its character. But there is where the Christian is, he has received the Holy Ghost, and he passes through this world as being out of it, having his conversation (i.e., living association) in heaven. Christ " gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of this present evil world; " but now He has to go through this world, and supposing Christ had been crucified last night-am I going on with the world that crucified Him, or am I going on with Him?

Again, I must have the Holy Ghost to know that I am accepted. I cannot personally look up and say with joy, "Come quickly," without knowing that my redemption is settled; and then more, Christ is all, and in all, He is everything as an object to us, and He is in all as the power of life and joy. He is everything to my soul then, after He has washed me from my sins in His own blood. I cannot find a thing in Christ the value of which has not been spent upon me.

One thing let me remark here, we know whom we love, even if we don't love Him enough. If a person says, "I love my mother, and I think I love her enough," I say, "You deceive yourself, you do not love her at all." But the child that says, "Oh, I do not half love my mother, all her care, and painstaking and labor for me," I say that child does love its mother. So with the Lord and us, and therefore we long to see Him. And that characterizes the Christian position, the Holy Ghost has come down from heaven, and we know that we are sons. He dwells with us consequent upon accomplished redemption, but Christ has thus become precious to us, and therefore the second thing that characterizes the Christian is, waiting for Christ, and I say this advisedly.

Look at a believer, in a known Christian place, it is not the knowledge merely that he has got hold of that characterizes him, but it is that he is waiting for Christ to come back. The Thessalonians were converted to serve the living and true God, and to wait for His Son from heaven. Nothing can be simpler or plainer. All the various thoughts and feelings of Christians are connected with His coming again. Take the end of each chapter in 1 Thessalonians: the first connects His return with conversion, the next with Paul's ministry, the next with holiness which will be manifested at His coming, then with the death of the Christian; the Lord shall come and the dead be raised first, and we who are alive shall be caught up with them; and the apostle says, "Comfort one another with these words," but if you go and say that to many a Christian now, he will think you out of your mind.

I cannot go into all these points, but take one, "To wait for his Son from heaven." It is not merely true that I shall be happy in heaven, but the Lord says, I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." It is a striking thing, how it changes all a person's feelings, whether, as they say, you are going to heaven, or Christ is coming for you. But going to heaven, as people use it, is never spoken of in Scripture. The nearest approach to it is to the thief, "With me in Paradise." But going to Christ is what you do get. "Absent from the body, present with the Lord," it is true, but that is not the same thought. Not that it is not true, but that it strikes Christ's coming, out. If I die, then I go to be with Him, but if I do not die then He comes and takes me to be with Him. And, therefore, the calling of the Church, the hope, the object, the thing before us—and that is what a man lives by—is the Lord's return, for what characterizes a man is what he is going after. What was the calling of the ten virgins? To go out to meet the bridegroom. But what about the dear good men who lived many years ago? They all fell asleep like the virgins, and what awoke them? At midnight the cry came, and they all arose and trimmed their lamps. The cry woke them all up. And this will be a test of a man's state, am I ready to meet the Lord, supposing He should come to-night? I do not know when He will come. It says, "In such an hour as ye think not." But are your hearts, and thoughts, and affections in good order? Are your lights burning? Are you confessing Him before men? Are you like men that wait for their Lord? For such He comes and knocks, and opens to them immediately. But that is the character they are to have.

Talking about prophecy is all very interesting in its place, but when a soul has got salvation, then there are two subjects in Scripture—the government of this world, and the sovereignty of grace which takes poor sinners, and sets them in Christ. Prophecy refers to the government of this world, and the Jews are the center of that; but with the Christian I get this, he is predestinated to be conformed to the image of God's Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Now when will that be? If I die first, I shall go to be with Christ, and blessed that is; but it is not all, it is not what Scripture calls conformity to His image. When will that be? "We know"—a word that Scripture is fond of, for the Holy Ghost is come—"we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." That is when I shall be conformed to His image. And I am going to be really like Him. Meanwhile, we are to be like Him in spirit, and for that we get, "Our conversation is in heaven." We have, then, this blessed truth, "I am coming again to take you up to be with myself; and the Lord himself is coming to catch me up that where He is I may be also." Then again, I find that when the disciples are looking up into heaven, as the Lord was caught up, they were told, "This same Jesus which is taken from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner, as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Time will not allow me to multiply passages, but I get the calling of the Christian as such, which is to be waiting for Christ to come, "Ye as men that wait for their Lord." And I only ask you, if you were waiting for Christ, would you heap up money to meet Christ with?

A word or two on the details about it here. He speaks of it in a double way to show how fully he would develop it. Those are blessed who wait for Christ to come. We belong to heaven now, and to what is eternal, but I do not know when Christ will come and take me there. Are our hearts so taken out of this world as a place from which He has redeemed us, as that we are watching for Him to come? It is called the word of His patience, because He is expecting, and if He is, of course we are. The Lord is not slack concerning His promise as some men count slackness; the world is willingly ignorant, but the Lord is not willing that any should perish. And then, second, I find, "Blessed are those who are found watching." What characterizes the blessed one, does also those who wait for Him, watching to open for Him instantly as He comes.

Then follow the accounts of the blessedness of those who are so watching. When the Lord cometh, "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." He spreads the table in heaven for them, and then sets them down at it there. He spreads it with the best things of heaven, and not only that, but He will come Himself, and minister to them too. But now, He says, until I come, you must have your loins girded and your lights burning; presently, when I shall have it all my own way, I will have you sit down to meat, and I will serve you myself! What a thought it is of the love of Christ! Of course, it is a figure, but He will never give up ministering to His own the fullest blessedness.

Now, the Father has given all things into His hands, He takes a towel and girds Himself, and comes, and washes His disciples' feet, saying as it were, "I want to have you with me, and even while you are here on your way, you must be clean enough for where I am going." Again you find, "If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous."... When they are watching for Christ with their hearts on Him, He will make them all sit down in blessedness, and Himself minister to them. Here is, indeed, the reward of labor, and a wonderful place it is that we shall have in the kingdom, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ. When He takes the power and reigns, we shall reign with Him. But as to our intrinsic blessedness, the Lord girds Himself,

and makes us sit down to meat, and comes forth Himself and serves us.

But when the Lord speaks of watching and waiting for Him, He appeals to the affections of the heart that we may wait, and then when He comes, He will make us enjoy the blessedness of heaven. He is not going to rule over the works of His hands alone; but we are made joint heirs with Christ, He is the firstborn among many brethren.

Then comes one word of warning, which I must not enlarge upon: " But and if that servant say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming." This is the position of the professing Church; not that men say, "He will not come," they do not say this, but they do not look for Him as a present thing. " And shall begin to beat the menservants and maidens, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken," i.e., to go on ruling and governing and enjoying the world—" The Lord of that servant will come in a day when he looketh not for him, and at an hour when he is not aware, and will cut him in sunder, and will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers." He is in the place of a servant, but he says, "My Lord delays," and his Lord comes when he does not expect Him. It is the judgment of the professing Church. I get the broad fact, that when the Lord's coming is deliberately put off in the heart, such an one has his portion appointed with the unbelievers. But in watching for Christ the heart's affections are drawn out to Him, that is the one great thing, and the other is, He sets us down, and comes forth to serve us.

Meanwhile, there is service for us here; but still His heart's delight is to serve us; and Christ will never be satisfied, until He has us in the same glory with Himself. He is now sitting on His Father's throne waiting, but He will come and receive us to Himself, this is all true believers, that where He is, we may be also.

They were converted to wait for God's Son from heaven, and when they went to sleep, and lost the expectation, the thing that woke them up was the cry, "Behold the Bridegroom!" And then comes the question, are we waiting and watching for Christ? I do not believe this has any relation to time at all. The government of this world is interesting in its place, but it has nothing to do with this. There is no event to be waited for between me and Christ's coming. Plenty of events, but they all belong to this world, and we do not. How far are our hearts up to this is the practical question. The world has rejected Christ, but He will return, and we shall come with Him when He comes again, and the proper portion of the Christian is, that Christ takes him to Himself. We do not half believe the interest Christ takes in us. It is true of every one of us who through grace believe, that we do not trust half in His personal interest in us.

The Lord only give us to be as men that wait for their Lord, " Blessed are those servants whom the Lord, when He cometh, shall find watching." We have to go through this world, but can we say that we are watching for Christ? Do our hearts answer to the love that Christ has to us now? And are we answering to that love, by waiting and watching for Him, because He is going to have us in the glory with Himself?

GOD forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified to me, and I unto the world. Gal. 6:14.

How can self be denied, difficulties met, the flesh kept under? Only by the Cross. We must learn to say of everything that is evil, "I can have nothing to do with that, because my Lord was crucified on account of it." Ah! We shall go into heaven with faces radiant with glory, able to look right up,

because of that Cross. God forbid that we should ever find anything in this world worth glorying in, any standard on which our souls can rest, save that cross!

I HAVE fought a good fight Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing. 2 Tim. 4:7, 8.

This crown is not given for being a Christian, but for a faithful walk. Poor Lot will not have it, nor Demas. All will be in glory on the ground of free grace, but Christ watches to see if we run well, and will bestow a reward if there has been faithfulness, and a crown of righteousness to those who love His appearing.

Leviticus

THUS we see that consanguinity is really the guiding principle on the man's side, whether as regards his blood relations, or those relations in law, which were forbidden on the ground that they had been the wives of relations in blood. This last is an important point, and casts light on a question where men have added restrictions unknown to the principle laid down in God's word. And we see how needful it is to come to the book to learn God's mind in the matter, instead of drawing our own deductions, and putting relations in law as such, on the same ground as relations in blood. The reader may see by comparing 20: 12 with 20:20, 21 how needful it was to learn God's mind from His own written word.

Coming now to the wife relations, with whom the man is not at liberty to contract a marriage, her own direct line is positively forbidden him. This we can all understand. But here we have left the ground of consanguinity, for between a man and his wife there is, unless he marries his cousin, no blood relationship, and their union does not make it. They are one flesh, but between them there is no tie of consanguinity. Hence, besides the wife's direct line, no collateral branch on her side is forbidden the man, except her sister during her lifetime. The Lord in mercy to the wife would preserve her by this law from the sorrow incident to her husband, following the example of Jacob. Beyond this God's word does not go.

The simplicity, the order, the rational character of these directions we learn as we study them; and this, too, we learn, that the wife's blood relations, her direct line excepted, are not viewed in the same light as the husband's own near of kin. Consanguinity, we repeat, is really the guiding principle on his side, whether it be as regards his blood relations, or his relations in law, On his wife's side he was not to marry her sister during her life. Now were his relations in law simply as such forbidden him, his wife's sister would be barred to him as much as his brother's wife. But, it was not so. The brother's widow, except to fulfill the peculiar condition of the levirate law, he never was to make his wife, but his wife's sister he was free to marry after his wife's death. Again, relations in law, even on his side, are not by God viewed in the same light as relations in blood, as we have already pointed out. Further, the man and the woman are not in the Old Testament placed by God on equal ground. A man was permitted to have two wives (Deut. 21:15) by the law, but no woman was ever allowed to have two husbands. These simple facts kept in mind, we shall be preserved from drawing deductions, and imposing limitations on the creature's freedom in the matter of marriage, which God's word neither authorizes nor countenances.

But human law on this subject is not always in harmony with God's revealed will. Restrictions which God has not imposed have been introduced, extending the prohibited degree of consanguinity beyond the limits laid down in the Word; and men have argued, and legislated as if relations in law, simply as such, were to be viewed in the same light as relations by blood. Were this in accordance with the word of God, the wife's sister must be forbidden to the man as much as his own sister. Now to go in to the latter was wickedness (20:17), and public execution was the punishment awarded to both. To marry the wife's sister was only forbidden to the man during the lifetime of the former, and no punishment is even hinted at if he married her subsequent to her sister's death. We cannot, therefore, argue that the wife's relations are placed on the same ground as the man's own.

In saying this, however, we would make it plain that we are not in the least advocating the advisability of such unions. It may not be expedient for first cousins to marry, but that is no reason why such unions should be forbidden by the Church of Rome, unless the parties get a dispensation from the Pope. It may not be expedient for a man to marry his deceased wife's sister, but that does not justify the promulgation of a law which prohibits it, by regarding it as a nullity, refusing to own the wife's status, and treating the children as bastards.

Are we, then, at liberty to disregard human law on such a matter, because it may go beyond the requirements of God's word? No Christian should accept such a proposition for a moment. We are to "be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God.

The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1) We are to be obedient to rule (Titus 3:1); and to submit ourselves to every human institution for the Lord's sake, as Peter (1 Peter 2:13) exhorts us. Are we, then, advocating a blind subjection to earthly rule?' By no means. For when human commands conflict with the divine word this same apostle has taught us how to act, as he, with the other apostles boldly told the Sanhedrin. "We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). But in this matter there is no conflict of authority—God's word does not enjoin on us the contracting of such unions as those of which we write, though it permits them. No one, therefore, is under divine obligation to do in this matter what the law of the land will not sanction. The Christian is clearly bound to respect such an enactment, though it may curtail the freedom allowed him by God's word. For the Lord's sake this law of the land should be respected by the child of God.

Obedience having been insisted on in chapters 17 and 18 because Jehovah was Israel's God, we come in chapters 19 and 20 to a fresh section of the law, the thirtieth according to the masora, which appeals to Israel to be holy, as the Lord was holy, who had separated them to be a people unto Himself. In chapter 19 we have drawn out somewhat in detail what they should exhibit, and in chapter 20 we read of the impurities which they were to avoid. In the former of these chapters we see the inculcation of holiness applied to the every day circumstances of the Israelite in his home life, in his worship, in his intercourse with his neighbors, in his cultivation of the ground, and in his behavior towards the stranger. Starting with a reminder to cherish filial fear, and to keep Jehovah's sabbaths, two lessons which would have been practiced had the fall never been known, the law-giver goes on to warn against idolatry, and treats of the, spirit of worship, apart from which the Lord would not allow them to have communion with Himself by sacrifice (4-8). Then due care for the neighbor is dwelt upon (9-18), and the principle of separation which was to be carried out in various matters connected with the cultivation of the ground. Besides that, reverence for the aged

is insisted on, just dealing with everyone is enjoined, and the showing kindness to the stranger is impressed on them. To be Jehovah's people was a privilege. They were to value it, and to exhibit by their ways what became them as such. Very useful, then, was this portion to them, and to us it is not without interest, since the Lord drew from it (5:18) part of His answer to the scribe about the great commandment in the law (Matt. 22:39; Mark 12:31); and Peter it would seem referred to it when he wrote, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15,16). And the "all manner of conversation," of which he writes is well illustrated by the details of that chapter of the law.

In chapter 20 we have the avoidance of gross impurities insisted upon by all in the land, for it contemplates the people in the possession of Canaan. A great deal of what is here forbidden was forbidden in chapter 18, yet chapter 20. is no vain repetition of it, for it tells us what the other did not—the penalties attaching to the various acts of impurity against which they are here solemnly warned. That men could practice such vileness was bad enough, and shows the degradation into which they got, the consequences of sin. But the warnings vouchsafed to Israel show us into what uncleannesses they were in danger of falling, if left to themselves, and that without a revelation from God they had really no right standard by which to regulate their conduct in that which so intimately affected their happiness and the purity of family life.

Another sin against which they are warned is that of turning to those who had familiar spirits, or wizards, to go a whoring after them. Against such the Lord would set His face, and cut them off; and the wizard, or the person who had a familiar spirit was to be put to death by being stoned with stones (9:6, 27). God's word does not become obsolete. Saul had put down such in accordance with this law by executing the judgment here laid down (1 Sam. 28:9), but he himself came under it, as set forth in verse 6 of our chapter, and the Lord in fulfillment of His warning executed the judgment on him. "Saul died," we read, "for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit to inquire of it; and he inquired not of the Lord, therefore he slew him" (1 Chron. 10:13,14). None, not even the king, was exempt from the punishment threatened. "I will set my face against that soul, and cut him off from among his people," the Lord had said by the hand of Moses, and Saul proved the truth of it in his own death. There were sins for which under the law no sacrifice could be brought, and in this chapter we have some of them.

I AM the Good Shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine, John 10:14.

Yes, He is leading and watching every individual sheep. Not one lock of wool taken from a single sheep, that He does not see. Does He see rolling through my mind thoughts of Himself, and the glory awaiting me? My heart dwelling up there, and my walk corresponding? or like Jacob, halting on the thigh, because the flesh needs crippling.

ACCEPTED in the Beloved. Eph. 1:6. God's delight in us is connected with Christ and redemption. The blood of Christ has washed all my sins away. All my guilt and misery were judged on the cross. It sinks me into insignificance to be nothing, and Christ everything. God looking on His Son with ever the same delight, seeing His members, and loving them, as such. It is pure grace from first to last.

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