

CHRISTIAN FRIEND VOLUME 7

by Unknown

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83 Chapters

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Christian Friend Volume 7

Praying

“Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” One feels that the want of this is the cause of weakness. If we said half as much to one another, and twice as much as we do to God, it would be better. Many a thing that we say to one another, if said to God, would produce a different effect. I never can get out of this place of dependence-praying because my heart longs to pour out and cast itself on God, but not for the sake of praying.

A Little Child

It is important in a day of decline -for the day of apostasy advances (Jude 14,15), and the saints are in danger of becoming infected with its premonitory symptoms, those of "lukewarmness" (Rev. 3:15,16)-it is of all importance to return to what is the desire of the great Head of the Church for us all. This, if cultivated and sought after, is calculated to preserve from this spirit, which is tingeing almost the whole of religious profession. I refer the reader, in illustration of His desire, to the Lord's reply to the question asked in Matt. 18:1: "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" In the preceding chapter there had been given them a glimpse of the "Son of man coming in His kingdom" -a little foreshadowing of His glories, which, as Son of man, are yet to come. Would one who gazed thereon seek to place any on an equality with Him? No sooner is the proposal on the speaker's lip than the voice of the Father is heard interrupting the vain desire, "This is MY BELOVED SON, in whom I am well pleased: hear ye Him." From the excellent glory He is thus declared beyond compare glorious and beloved, the center of all, greatest and highest. Thus Peter's voice was hushed; and though there with Him, and the eye-witness of His majesty, as he afterward declares, yet He is God's Center, the only One who in Himself has title to be there. In the day of the manifestation of that glory we who believe shall be with Him too, our voices hushed in the contemplation of Him who is God's Center-a day which will 'see the fulfillment of His prayer in John 17 "Father, I will that those whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world."

Descending from the glory where they had heard the testimony of the Father as to the Son of His bosom, they ask the question already quoted, whose tenor is, Which of us shall be next to Him? And what a reply comes from those gracious lips-a reply for each heart to weigh the import of then, and a lesson for us to ponder still! Does He deny that there is such a place? Does He assert that we shall be all equal in that day? No, He does neither; but, exposing by contrast their love of self with what will be the true ground of exaltation, personal love, and devotedness to Himself, He replies, "Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." He does not say, as is (perhaps unintentionally, but commonly) misquoted, "Whosoever shall humble himself as this little child humbles itself, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven." We cannot understand a little child humbling itself, because one who is in the place, who is that, needs not to come down to it; for already he is a little child. The Lord's words are rather, "You must become as this little child, if you desire the highest place in the day of my kingdom glory." This expression of infant helplessness, "a little child" (παῖδιον), is the same as the apostle John delights to use in his first epistle, chap. 2, when distinguishing, "Fathers, young men, and babes" (little children). This is the word he uses in verses 13 and 18. It describes the infant, the youngest in the household.

Such is the attainment, my reader, which the Lord Jesus proposes to each of us to aim at and to reach" a little child." Do we ask why? It is because we are not in heart and spirit, and ways and affection, such; they betrayed it in their question; and do we not betray it in ourselves day by day?

May I then draw your attention to two or three things, seen prominently in the model before us, seen in "a little child."

Watch him in the nursery (picture of this world wherein we grow up, and where the child of God now is); not a fear, not an anxiety, not a care has he! Dependent for food, and shelter, and raiment, and everything he wants or possesses on another; while in himself without plan, or thought, or resources, and with no ability to make his wants known save to One, who alone can understand the baby language that he speaks-such is our model. Is he happy? Let any who doubt it observe him; or let my reader look back at the days of his own infancy, and the reply is at hand. But while his feebleness is thus before us, we must remember that he has a consciousness, young as he is-a consciousness that only deepens and increases with the lapse of years -that consciousness is that he is beloved, beloved by the One we have already mentioned, with a perfect and never-changing love. 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. That person who loves fills the whole range of his vision-a person, my reader, not a place. And is it so to-day? Is it so with each of us? One, as he walked this earth, has borne the marks of it. "One thing I do... that I may win Christ, and be found in Him "" For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "Not as though I had already attained, either were already perfect: but I follow after, if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus." A Person filled the sphere of his vision. He was beloved, and he knew it. "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." Reader, do you know it? Can you say it? and has it power over you as it had over him?

But the nursery time is passing away with all of us. Let our model, "a little child," be brought then from the nursery into all the light and brilliance of that day of the coming glory for which we wait. Let the assembled company stand back to make way for the approach of a "little child." "Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven." (19: 14) Why amidst the brilliant throng wanders his eye timidly from one to another? Is there not enough in the grandeur of all around to engage his attention? No; the place is naught to him, while all the grandeur and all the dignity do but distress him. He seeks for One whose heart's affections are twined around him, and whose love he has learned and proved in other days, and in other scenes, than these; for that same person, who fully satisfied him then, can only fully satisfy him now; and passing by all else, he hastens to the arms and the bosom of love. And He, whose is all the grandeur and dignity of that day, delights to pillow that timid, trembling head on His own bosom.

And thus shall it be in the day of the kingdom-glory; and THUS has the "little child" reached the highest place, even the bosom of that One to whom it shall be confessed in that day, that fast-coming day of His glory, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing." (Rev. 5:12)

Reader, who will occupy the place of the little child? If you occupy it now He declares you shall occupy it then. Again we would ponder His blessed words, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." Oh, may we cultivate day by day, and seek grace to manifest day by day, the simple heart and ways, and the spontaneous affections for Him, our one beloved object, which are seen in "a little child!" H. C. A.

The Red Sea and the Jordan

Why are we said to be co-risen with Christ in Col. 2:11, before we are said to be co-quickened with Him in verse 12?

The doctrine of the Epistle to the Colossians lies between that of the Romans and the Ephesians. In Romans the believer is dead with Christ to sin, dead to the law, but not risen. Chapter 6 does not go so far as being risen with Christ. Our responsibilities, as in the old creation, are discussed most fully; all are under sin, all under judgment before God. The death of Christ -His precious blood presented to God-meets all our guilt, and we are justified freely by His grace, through righteousness. Our state then is taken up from chap. 5: 12 and onwards, and deliverance from that by our having died with Christ to sin and from under law, which had its application to our old state, as in Adam. Chapter 6 unfolds this truth with regard to sin; chap. 7. as regards the law, which is the strength of sin. But we are not seen as risen with Christ. The nearest approach to such is the statement of chap. 6: 8: "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him;" and this verse leads us onwards towards the Colossians-putting it as a result of the doctrine there unfolded-forming the link with that Epistle. The saint, however, is not risen with Christ; but is dead with Him to sin, and to the law.

In Colossians we get a step further. Here he is risen, co-raised with Christ, and he is dead absolutely. "Ye are dead;" not merely dead to this or that, though "with Christ." He is "dead with Christ "-" dead with Christ from the rudiments of the world"-but he is not in heavenly places yet. He has a hope laid up in heaven; and his state is a subjective one suited to heaven, though not there.

In Ephesians we find his responsibility in and of the new creation unfolded; and he is not only dead with Christ to sin and the law (Romans), with the hope and result before him in the words, "If we be dead with Christ, we believe we shall also live through Him "(Rom. 6:8), nor merely "dead "absolutely and co-risen with Christ (Colossians), but he is co-quickened, co-raised, and co-seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus, both Jew and Gentile. He has left the place of death as a sinner, and the world as formed for the first man, and he is brought into the full place of being in Christ Jesus in heavenly places.

This ground has been gone over before, and I do not follow out what has been before many; but desire to present other features of truth.

First of all, let me remark that I do not think we find the typical teaching of the "Jordan "in Rom. 6 It is the Red Sea; though, like it, Israel passed through, and enjoyed full deliverance from their enemies. In the type they saw sins, and death, and judgment all behind them. Sins were their part; death was Satan's, who wields its power (Heb. 2); judgment was God's part; and all are passed forever. They were, so to speak, dead to all these. But remark, it is never stated that they came up out of the Red Sea. Historically, of course, we know it was so; but it would have marred the type to have recorded it, as it would in Rom. 6 to have said, we were risen with Christ. It is fully stated afterward that the people came up out of the Jordan; and there it was needed to say so, but not

before. Thus the Red Sea is one aspect of the truth-that which is seen in Rom. 6-and like as in this chapter (vs. 8) we have to look out for more. So in the song of Moses (vs. 16) they anticipate the truth, yet to be experienced, in their passing over the Jordan, and being planted in the mountain of the Lord's inheritance-in the place He had made for Himself to dwell in; in the sanctuary which His hands had established. But they only looked for this in the hope of faith. They are not therefore said to have come up out of the Red Sea, as they are not said in Rom. 6 to be risen with Christ. But in Josh. 4:17,19, we read that Joshua said to the priests, "Come ye up out of Jordan." "And the people came up out of Jordan," which rolled on in his channel as heretofore. And they were thus cut off from the world, as the death of Christ has done for us. And as at the Red Sea they looked forward to the Jordan, so now at the Jordan they look back at the Red Sea, as we read: "For the Lord your God dried up the waters of Jordan from before you, until ye were passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which He dried up from before us, until we were gone over." (vs. 23)

The Red Sea and the Jordan thus coalesce, and form two sides of the same truth, though quite distinct. We cannot confound, and we cannot separate them. Rom. 6 does not take in the Jordan and risen with Christ, though it looks out for it. Col. 2 does not take merely dead to sin and the law and the type of the Red Sea, though it looks back at it, as we shall see. Exo. 14: 15. does not say that Israel came up out of the Red Sea, though they sang a song, which looked for more to come. At Jordan they are said to have come up out of the Jordan, and are taught to look back at and connect it with the deliverance of the Red Sea. Let the Red Sea and the Jordan coalesce for a moment in our minds, and let us drop out the wilderness from our thoughts. (Eph. 1 does this; as will Israel's future deliverance, which bases the nameless Psa. 114 on this likewise The sea saw it and fled, Jordan was driven back.") Let these two waters lie together, and let the wilderness lip of the Red Sea touch the side of Jordan eastward. Israel enter death from all who pursued at the Egyptian lip of the sea, and rise on the Canaan side of Jordan in full and complete deliverance and redemption, into the land of promise. The wilderness is never in the purpose of God, though it is His plan to test and prove His own heart and ours.

When He announced this purpose He left out all allusion to it. "I am come down to deliver them... and to bring them up out of that land into a good land and a large, unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites," &c. (Exo. 3:8)

When Moses proclaimed it, He said, "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out... and I will bring you in unto the land." (Exo. 6:6,8)

When Faith, accepted it, it sang, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed. Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of thine inheritance." (Exo. 15:13,17) And When Experience looked back upon it with the words, "And He brought us out from them, that He might bring us in." (Deut. 6: 23)

Now when we turn to Col. 2 we find an apparent difficulty; but, like all such, if we wait on divine instruction we shall get it from God. "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God," surely applies indirectly even in these things. Why are we said to be "risen "with Christ before we are said to have been co-quickened with Him? (vss. 12, 13) Let me draw your attention to it for a little. I must leave full details aside in doing so, interesting though they are. One first thought in his mind is to establish their souls (as all others whom he had never seen in the flesh, chap. 2: 1) in conscious

union with Christ in glory, and this without naming the bond-the Holy Spirit. He saw the danger in the want of this; and how the soul was open to every device of the enemy; and he would unfold the glories of Christ as he never had before, and give them the consciousness of “completeness in him.” To have even named the bond of union-the Spirit of God, to such a state would have been to occupy them with the Holy Spirit rather than Christ Himself, and damage their souls. Instead of this he would lead them most blessedly, as in chapter 1: 9-14, into the true experience of the Spirit in the soul which is at peace-i.e. the thoughts begin with God, and flow downwards from the light of His glory into the conscience of him who is their recipient. The Spirit of God reasons ever from God to us; and when the soul is at peace and the heart free, the reasonings and experience of the soul flow in the same direction. How strange, and yet how lovely, then, to find the apostle in the one passage praying to God, writing Scripture, teaching the saints, and giving the true experience of the soul who stands in grace, by the same words! In verses 12-14, he begins in the light of the Father’s presence with praise, and by seven steps he reasons downwards from His heart, to the conscience of the worshipper, giving them the true direction of thought, when the soul is right with God.

1. “Giving thanks unto the Father.”
2. “Which hath made us meet.”
3. “To be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.”
4. “Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness,”
5. “And hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son,”
6. “In whom we have redemption,”
7. “And the forgiveness of our sins.”

We learn this in the inverse way, from us to Him: from the depths of the need of conscience, to the light of the Father’s presence. We see this in the order of the offerings, and in their application. How in the unfolding of the doctrine of them He begins with God, and in their application to the sinner he begins with him, and so on constantly.

I allude to the first chapter of Colossians, because it helps us in the second. It gives us our apprehension, experimentally known, what we have through grace. Chapter 2 gives us God’s side rather. He looks at Christ Jesus, the Lord; He beholds Him in whom dwelleth all the completeness (πληρωμα) of the Godhead bodily, as man In Him “we are complete.” From Him he reasons in the same way as in the first chapter-from God downwards to our depths of need. Here Christ and His identification with His people, that they may be thus “complete in Him,” is his theme. Again we find seven steps in the train of thought: 1, “completeness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him.” “God is complete in Christ for us; we are complete in Him for God,” as one has said.

2, “In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ.” He has left the scene, given up His life here below, and all that connected Him to this scene and Israel His people. He is gone on high, the beginning of the creation of God.

3, "In whom also ye are co-risen through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised Him from the dead." [Remark here that in verse 12 I have omitted the first clause-" Buried with Him in baptism." I would read that clause as a parenthesis. Just as Rom. 6:8 was the link forward with Colossians (see also Ex. 15:16), so this parenthesis is the link backwards with Rom. 6 (See also Josh. 4:23) This, too, re-relieves us from any controversy as to whether ■v ■ should be translated "in whom "or "in which; "either translation being possible from the original words; the spiritual sense alone determines the true translation. Read verses 11 and 12 for a moment, omitting the parenthesis, and the meaning is plain. "In putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ... in whom also ye are co-raised through the faith of the operation of God," &c.

This leaves baptism its own true meaning, that of the person baptized being buried to death. It does not, in my mind, go farther than that, and just ends there; the person is buried to death, as we read in Rom. 6, "Therefore we are buried with Him by baptism unto death." Read the first clause of Col. 2:12 as a parenthetical link connecting us with Rom. 6, and read what follows as in connection with "Christ... in whom ye also are co-risen," &c., and all is plain Faith in God's operation comes in there and clears baptism of the thought of resurrection, though it follows where there is faith in God's operation.

4, "And you being dead in your offenses, and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath He co-quickenened us. together with Him."

5, "Having forgiven us all the offenses."

6, "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us... nailing it to His cross."

7, "And having spoiled principalities and powers, He made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it."

Thus we see the reason why the co-raising us up with Christ should come before the co-quickenening; because the Spirit of God reasons in the true divine order-from God in Christ to us, and down to all our ruin in which we lay, by the seven steps of His truth. (1) Complete in Him; (2) circumcised in Him; (3) co-risen with Him; (4) co-quickenened together with Him; (5) forgiven through Him; (6) the law nailed to His cross; and (7) the whole power of Satan destroyed.

Now let me notice another thing which is very fine. The seven steps of chapter i. give us our subjective consciousness, what we possess and know in our own soul's experience, what we have from God. Those in chapter ii. give us rather the objective unfolding by revelation -what is in Christ for us, apart from our experience, though known to faith, of course. Both lines of thought reasoning from God to us, whether in a revelation objectively presented in Christ, or what our own souls consciously possess in Him.

F. G. P.

Sheltered by Blood

In no divine communication about sacrifice, to which we have yet turned, have we met with a single word about blood. In God's instructions to Moses for Israel, concerning the passover, we first learn something about it. The Lord had warned Pharaoh, at the outset of His communications to that monarch, of the penalty He would exact, if His command by Moses was disregarded: "Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my first-born: and I say unto thee, Let my son go, that he may serve me: and if thou refuse to let him go, behold, I will slay thy son, even thy first-born." (Exo. 4:22,23) Moses, on the occasion of his last interview with Pharaoh, before the execution of this judgment, announced to the king that it must and would be carried out. The day of mercy was over, the carrying out of the sentence was determined upon; and that not only on Pharaoh's house, but on the houses of the Egyptians likewise, and on the first-born of their cattle as well. Nothing like it had ever been known; nothing like it would they ever again endure; and at midnight would it take place. At the time when men are ordinarily least prepared, then Jehovah would go out into the land of Egypt. (Exo. 11:4-6)

In God's mind it had all been settled centuries before. He had evidently purposed it when He called Abraham to go out from his country, his kindred, and his father's house, and thus made him start from his ancestral home, Ur of the Chaldees. For it was at the end of "four hundred and thirty years, even the self-same day "that Israel departed out of Egypt. (Exo. 12:40,41) Now, from whence are we to reckon this period of time? Its termination being given us, the date of the Exodus, its commencement is not difficult to determine. From the birth of Isaac to the Exodus was to be four hundred years. (Gen. 15:13) From Abraham's departure out of Haran to the birth of his son was twenty-five years more.

(Gen. 12:4;21. 5) It is probable, then, that his departure out of Ur was five years previous to his leaving Haran; thus the four hundred and thirty years are to be accounted for, comprising the whole period of the sojourn of Israel and the patriarchs in countries which they did not possess. But God did not, that we read of, declare, at the outset of Abraham's career, what He had purposed as to the duration of the period of their sojourning.

His purposing, and the announcement of His purpose, do not always synchronize. He did, however, reveal it to Abraham more than four hundred years before He executed it. Yet He did not carry out His purpose of judicial dealing with the Egyptians till He had warned Pharaoh, and had given him time to avert the impending doom. Thus, on the one hand, we see God purposing to judge the Egyptians; and, on the other, the Egyptians proving by their ways that they deserved it; and God did not carry out His mind, till those who were responsible to obey had refused to let Israel go. Who doubts for one moment that Pharaoh richly deserved his punishment? An opportunity, however, was afforded him of averting it, but he did not make use of it.

How this illustrates God's ways on a large scale. He has announced that He will judge the world in righteousness. He has appointed the very day, and the judge likewise. (Acts 17:31) Can any charge Him with injustice for this? He will demonstrate when He judges, as He did in the case of

the Egyptians, that He is only acting righteously; for men will have plainly shown that they deserve it. God's sovereignty, and man's responsibility, may seem to some impossible to harmonize; but we see how they were harmonized in the case of Pharaoh at the Exodus. Not only, however, had God determined to judge, He had purposed also to shelter from judgment. He had pledged Himself to Abraham to bring up Israel into Canaan. (Gen. 15) He had promised the same to Jacob (46: 3, 4), and Joseph on his death-bed reminded the people of it. (1: 25) The Lord, too, had announced beforehand to Moses, that He was determined to effect it (Ex. 3:8), and now He was about to accomplish it. Hence, whilst announcing to Pharaoh his impending doom, the Lord, by Moses, told Israel how they could be exempted from the visitation of the angel of death. (12)

Here two important points should be noticed. First, though Israel were clearly the subjects of divine counsels, and objects of special divine favors, they had need nevertheless to make use of God's way of shelter from the inroad of death into their houses. Second, though the Lord made known to them the only way of deliverance, they were in themselves no better morally than the Egyptians. Had any of them rested their hopes of security from the impending judgment on the fact that they were part of a favored people, they would, in common with the Egyptians, have been bewailing and burying their first-born on the fifteenth day of Nisan. (Num. 33:3,4) Had they trusted to any goodness in themselves for exemption from the threatened visitation, they could never have been sheltered from it; for they were at that time idolaters who had positively refused to put their idols away. (Ezek. 20:6-10; Josh. 24:14) Thus God's faithfulness and grace were both displayed on that night, which was to be much remembered (Exo. 12:42); faithfulness in fulfilling His word to Abraham, by judging their oppressors; grace in His dealings with Israel, by sheltering them from the sword of the angel of death. How they had provoked the Lord in Egypt by their disobedience Ezekiel sets forth. So we have to turn to that recital of the nation's ways by the prophet, when the ten tribes were in the land of their captivity, ere we are in a position to estimate aright this display of grace towards them.

It was nothing new for God to deal in judgment. He had dealt judicially with men by the flood. He had overthrown the cities of the plain; now He was about to destroy the first-born of man, and of beast, in the land of Egypt. The old world being ungodly, and proving itself to be disobedient, was destroyed by the deluge, Noah only and his family having a refuge provided for them in the ark. The cities of the plain -illustrations of apostasy- received their just doom, Lot only, with his two daughters, being saved by the intercession of Abraham. (Gen. 19:29) The ungodly and apostates had been thus punished; now idolaters were to be dealt with; and their lying vanities, to which they had trusted, were to be exposed. For Jehovah, the self-existing one, would march through the land of Egypt, supreme in power, and terrible in judgment. He would take up the cause of His people by manifesting Himself to be the true God.

"Who is Jehovah," said Pharaoh, in the pride and dense ignorance of his heart, "that I should obey His voice, to let Israel go? I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." (Exo. 5:2) Such were the words of a mortal creature. But the Lord is known by the judgment which He executeth. (Psa. 9:16) This Pharaoh found to his cost; so men will find by-and-by. "Known by the judgment which He executeth!" How truly was that the case in Egypt; for on all the gods of Egypt did He execute judgment. He had foretold it. (Ex. 12:12) He fulfilled His word. (Num. 33:4) The Egyptians discovered by the infliction of divine judgments the inanity of their idols. The proud Pharaoh of the Exodus stooped to ask the blessing of Moses and Aaron, the representatives of the people he had

kept so long in slavery, when his first-born lay death-stricken in his house. And Israel could see, surely did see, whilst sheltered in Jehovah's goodness from the infliction of His judgment on their families, the folly of idolatry which they had so long practiced.

Against all the gods of Egypt the Lord executed judgment. This is a statement soon read; but how terrible was that of which it treats. Man had no refuge on that day from the avenging arm of Jehovah. The gods of Egypt were powerless when Jehovah rose up to judgment. Shelter, help, deliverance, there was none. The angel of death entered every house of the Egyptians, and with an unerring blow smote the first-born of whatever age or rank he might be. The most exalted in position could not shelter his first-born, the meanest could not escape the observation of God; for "the Lord smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle. And Pharaoh rose up, he, and all his servants, and all the Egyptians; for there was a great cry in Egypt; for there was not a house where there was not one dead." (Ex. 12:29, 30) It was a terrible moment indeed; for the Lord Jehovah was passing through the land of Egypt, and no power could hinder His passage. The angel of death was entering into houses; and no bolts, no bars, no chains, no incantation, nor demoniacal agency, could shut him out. A power which man could not cope with, and which man could find nothing to resist, was carrying all before it, making the first-born of man and of beast its victims. Every Egyptian was made to feel that Jehovah alone was God, who had the life of His creatures absolutely at His disposal, and who could act in discrimination, smiting those He would, by singling out for death the first-born male in each house. Such was the state of matters among the Egyptians.

With the Israelites how different. Fear, distress, sickness, death, were harassing their oppressors. Peaceful security reigned within their houses. There is a calm, which presages a storm, when all the forces of nature seem resting preparatory to their re-awakening to action with redoubled vigor and violence. There is a calm, which forebodes no disturbance to be at hand, the effect of an atmosphere perfectly serene; all nature enjoying repose after the disturbing forces have spent their strength. The calm peacefulness, however, which reigned in the houses of the Israelites differed from both of these. It was like a calm before a storm, for they awaited the outburst of the judgment. It was like a calm resulting from the knowledge that the tempest would not expend itself on their heads. But it was more; it was the peaceful serenity, which confidence in God's word can alone give, assuring the one who receives it of immunity from coming judgment. Israel knew both the day, and the hour, when the threatened visitation falling on the land of Mizraim would evoke a wail of distress from every house of their taskmasters; but they were insured against the divine visitation by the blood outside upon the door-posts.

Now, this way of escape was quite new to them, and unheard of before. Further, it was a secret between God and them. No Egyptian was informed of it. Neither man, nor any power known to man, nor all the gods of Egypt together, could keep the destroying angel from entering any house that night; but the blood upon the door-post was to prove an effective shelter. So, whilst the Egyptians were learning the powerlessness of man, and all that they had trusted in, to cope with the power of God in judgment, the Israelites were proving how effectual was the shelter provided by blood. Across a threshold thus distinguished the messenger of death did not pass. Inside the house they could feed in calmness and security on the lamb, whose blood was on the lintel and the side -posts outside. For God's word to Israel was: "And the blood shall be to you for a token

upon the houses where ye are; and when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you, when I smite the land of Egypt.” (12: 13) What virtue could there be in the blood? they might ask, and probably ask in vain. But their security lay not in what they thought of it, but in what God thought of it. With their door shut they could not see it, nor was there any need for them to see it. The point, and the all-important point, was, Would Jehovah see it? He did; so not one of the first-born of Israel was smitten that night. Now, no one could have devised such a way of escape from judgment, and none but God can declare what will exempt from His visitation of wrath; for, since it is divine judgment which is to be executed, to God alone belongs the prerogative of announcing what that is which can screen sinners from it. But why was the blood of the paschal lamb to keep out the angel of death? In the blood is the life of the flesh. (Lev. 17:11) So, sprinkled outside on the door-posts, it proclaimed that life had been taken on behalf of those who were within. Hence they were secure in the midst of a scene of judgment. Believing God’s word, obedient in faith, they proved the sheltering efficacy of blood.

But what virtue was there in the paschal lamb None intrinsically. It was the type, however, of that sacrifice which is of priceless and abiding value before God; so there was one mark in common between it and the true sacrifice, which helps to identify it as the type of that which was to be offered to God on the cross. A bone of the former was not to be broken (Exo. 12:46), the foreshadowing, as John the Evangelist points out (John 19:36), of the treatment by the soldiers of the body of the Lord Jesus Christ when dead upon the cross. As then, so it is now. There is a wrath to come. (Rom. 1:18) Of this Christians were fully cognizant in apostolic days, and were awaiting the advent of Him who delivers from it previous to executing it. (1 Thess. 1:10) So the Thessalonian saints, but recently idolaters, when sheltered by the blood of Christ from all fear of the coming wrath, could rest in the contemplation of the future on the simple word of God. For the Lord has said: “He that heareth my word, and believeth Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment; but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24) Is every reader of these lines, like Israel, sheltered by blood from coming judgment. Is every reader, like the Thessalonians, waiting for God’s Son from heaven, who delivers from the wrath to come. If not, why not?

C. E. S.

Overcoming

How consoling it is for the true heart to recount its resources in a day of ever-increasing weakness and ever-deepening gloom, to feel that an eye is watching over us, moment by moment, which can take in the scope of circumstances, and can estimate the bearing and influence of each upon our lives while, in a path capable of demonstrating the weakness of even the foremost at every step. Guided by that eye, and guarded by the love which has made us its special objects, we may confidently move forward in the course He marks out for those faithful to Him in communion with the Father, and complacently observe Him turning every circumstance to account for the glory of the adorable, thrice-blessed object of His eternal delights, though the occasion should be the failure of His most privileged ones.

Let us remember the portion of our Master, when in a scene where “all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, is not of the Father.” In the place where Satan has furnished man with sources of pleasure, He was the “Man of sorrows; with means of self-aggrandizement, He walked in self-emptied poverty. (2 Cor. 8:9) Though born King of the Jews, He dwelt in Nazareth! Come to His own, they received Him not; to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, He was led as a lamb to the slaughter. For His love He had hatred; and for His faithfulness to God He was rejected and cast out, so ignominiously that even “they that were crucified with Him reviled Him;” yet then, as much as ever (and oh, may our hearts, in the energy of faith, retain in our momentary consciousness the wonderful mystery!), the mighty God, the everlasting Father! We slip from this; and how a sense of it, when recalled, humbles us afresh! Faith alone can scan, value, and use such a mystery. What strength and unspeakable grace the words carry with them: “Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world!” And what it cost the blessed One to enable Him to say this for our encouragement!

The same quality of moral tension was, likewise felt by those who had received grace to own Him; the kingdom of God was preached, and men pressed into it (Luke 16:16; Matt. 11:12,13); and the world on its part reciprocated the action. (John 9:34) Though, in His rejection, when He looked for comforters, and found none (He was then “alone “), contempt was the price of identification with Him, however feeble was the tread of the most determined in such a path. But the corn of wheat having fallen into the ground and died, fruit was the blessed consequence, in the power of the Holy Spirit descended. The reproach of Christ was henceforward the coveted portion of “His own “(Phil. 1:29); His cross the boast of one who by faith saw Him in His ascended glory, and realized oneness with Him above. Overcoming the world required little explanation in those days, and faith was equal to the emergency. (1 John 5:4,5) Still dangers in the contest were earnestly pressed, even on those who had overcome the wicked one (1 John 2:14-16); and contest itself generally, as the present heritage of believers on earth, was fully recognized. (Rom. 12:21; 1 Peter 2:19-22; James 4:4, &c)

There are, then, antagonisms in the pathway of faith, and it is our truest wisdom to acknowledge the propriety-necessity, may we not say? (2 Tim. 3:12)-of their place in normal Christian

experience. Where they have ceased-and where in this day are they seen?-there is evident room for suspicion, that faithfulness to the Lord is at a discount. Amongst us there is the truth; but much besides that the truth would expunge were it held in power. Outside there is a tacit admission of where the truth is (which flatters our vanity), and on their part is tantamount to the challenge, that the truth is useless to sustain, and unable to guide; to which our manifest, though unfelt, weakness renders us unable to reply. The word which assures us of that which we all look forward to with inexpressible gratitude (Rev. 21:7), gives also the nature of the path which leads to such glory. (2 Tim. 2:11,12) But where, we may ask in vain, is now the comely treading of that path?

The early Christians accepted the ease which "the world" offered, on its own terms of course; and so dropped into the delusion of estimating the Church's prosperity according to its position on earth, to the abandonment of that identification with a rejected Lord, which would retain them in the condition of pilgrims and strangers here-God's gracious estimate of us in His word. (1 Peter 2:11) The delusion once started gains strength at every step in the Church's history, following the Smyrnan persecution, up to the culminating point of Papal usurpation in Thyatira; even Sardis, though it had "revived" and "heard," is immersed in the delusion; and it reaches a climax in Laodicea. From the moment that the professing church purchased the world's smile, at the expense of faithful testimony to the rejected Lord, to the moment when it will be spued out of His mouth as a worse than worthless testimony, the delusion never ceases. Hence, those faithful to the Lord, at any time between these two events, must be so in presence of the delusion and its withering effects-simply a new and peculiar form of worldliness; and there is, therefore, an additional tax on the energies of faith, as well as a peculiar occasion for the exercise of spiritual discernment.

Co-extensive with the delusion, however, is the path of precious grace-warning, sustaining, encouraging, restoring, and condescending; unchecked by man's levity and failure, and unhindered by his abuse of that grace. To Ephesus the Lord offers an opportunity of retracing its steps, of finding its way back to those feelings which He could at all deem suitable response to His love, and warns it with a jealousy which bespeaks the depths of that love. In Smyrna He "sits as a refiner of silver," sustaining those who suffer in faithfulness to Him. Even though Pergamos has so completely compromised the true standing of the assembly of God on earth by accepting the world's patronage, He still remonstrates graciously. In Thyatira, where He cannot sanction the corruptions of Jezebel, He addresses Himself to the remnant ("the rest") in the most condescending tenderness, as a company, before giving the usual admonition to individuals. In Sardis He had given and spoken, though the use made of these privileges has been so faulty that Sardian testimony is not up to His mind at all. There is no true church testimony in it; no occasion for the exercise of spiritual discernment; e.g., as to how long a true heart should remain associated with what professes His name unworthily-He still lingering over it in yearning grace; no manifest bridal recognition of Him as Head, though doubtless there are "names." Nothing more clearly implies the Judaized condition of things in Thyatira and Sardis than that; in the succeeding church phase, those forming the Philadelphian assembly required to pass through "an open door," out of Thyatira and Sardis, of course, the only two systems of things of the first five stages, which "go on to the end." It is a repetition of John 10:3; just as in Matt. 25, the virgins needed to "go out" a second time. Lastly, in Laodicea, where the claims of the Lord are disowned; and all true ecclesiastical responsibility abandoned, in a lukewarmness which has no room for bridal

affections-however much zeal may be displayed for “the benefit of man”-condescending grace is still seen in its divinely persevering activity, offering every necessary thing to render the last phase of church testimony suitable to His eye; grace as free and as perfect at the close as at the outset of our sad history! “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today, and forever.”

But more. What depths are in the love which, in view of the dark history of the Church for the past eighteen hundred years-yea, whilst recording it, all this incessant failure on our part collectively-could stoop to notice individual state, and supply personal need, in a tenderness which is inexpressible, and an anxiety depicted in the reiteration of the admonition given in Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6, 13, 22, which our heedless hearts too often read as a mere formula. He notices the snares, difficulties, and hindrances of the faithful soul -the overcomer- in each phase; administers the needed strength, and bears with its weakness; encouraging and comforting it, whether it be found standing firmly in the midst of general departure from His way, or in circumstances through (perhaps out of) which its spiritual instincts or intelligence lead it upward towards the source whence have flowed the blessings which bespeak to his heart the character of that source.

The last sentence introduces a twofold aspect of overcoming: one, acquiring; the other, maintaining. It is evident that the churches are viewed by the Lord, in these epistles, according to their states for walk on earth, i.e., in their responsibility, rather than as the body of Christ before God in acceptance. There is, therefore, room for an introduction of the distinctions as to overcoming just alluded to; though all true believers will doubtless in grace be regarded as overcomers by-and-by, as all will, being joint-heirs with Christ, “inherit all things.” (Rev. 21:7) The path of an overcomer in acquiring is clearly traceable up out of the indifferentism in Laodicea by way of “gold,” “white raiment,” and “eye-salve,” into the blessed intimacy of personal communion with the Lord-the portion which never-failing grace has secured to a true heart in the midst of utter wreck. (3: 20) There is also evidently acquiring in reaching true church ground from Thyatira, Sardis, and Laodicea in a later day. But just as evident is it that maintaining is in view (e.g.) in Smyrna (2:10, 11) and in Philadelphia. (3:11)

There is difficulty (reluctance rather, is it not?) felt in realizing that circumstances should obtain in Philadelphia which would give occasion for overcoming in its second aspect; that is, a general defection amongst those professing the truth, from the state the company was in when the Lord reviewed it, and spoke of it as we find recorded in verse 8; a condition, in fact, of corporate weakness and failure, induced by inroads of worldliness and allowance of evil, wherein faithfulness is exceptional in maintaining its links with the Lord. That Laodicea should at the close be characteristic of the Church shows that those on Philadelphian ground have declined corporately from their original condition. And looking around us, can we with any show of reason really appropriate the Lord’s estimate of the Philadelphian character given in verses 8-11?

To entertain the thought that we could is at least hazardous; for self-judgment is therein departed from, and room left for the self-complacency which not only constitutes us a body in our own esteem, instead of a mere remnant as we are before God, but displaces Christ also, in whom alone is our worth found. Were He everything to us, we should judge of things in their suitability to Him, or otherwise; and viewing things in this light, nothing but dissatisfaction could fill our hearts, a dissatisfaction appropriately expressed in ample confession (as in Ezra’s case, chap. 9: 2-7) of

how our God sees everything, from our individual selves outward to the utmost limits of the Church, and the causes which led to its (our) utter failure in testimony. It was this avenue which first led to the place we now through much grace occupy. If we have slidden from such a state, then circumstances are present which call for individual faithfulness-overcoming, even where the truth is professed, in a maintenance of that condition of soul which corresponds to the state Philadelphia was in when the Lord described it. The heart determined on this, is touchingly assured of the Lord's sympathies in verse 12, as has often been remarked. Who will be in the enjoyment of them when He comes?

J. K.

Three Exhortations

“Rejoice in the Lord always.” Who was a fit person to say that? The man who had been in the third heaven? No. The man a prisoner at Rome. That was rejoicing always; as we have in the Psalms, “I will bless the Lord at all times.” When I get the Lord as the object of my heart, there is more of heaven in the prison than out of it. It is not the green pastures and waters of quietness that made him glad. “The Lord is my Shepherd,” not the green pastures, though green pastures are very nice. And even if I wander from them, it is, “He restoreth my soul.” And if death is in the way, I am not afraid; for “Thou art with me.” And though there are dreadful enemies, there is a table spread in their presence. Now he says, “My cup runneth over.” He carries him through all the difficulties and trials of his own feebleness. Ah I he says, “Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.”

The man who trusted in the Lord, the more trouble he was in, the more he proved that all was right. Paul says, “I know Him free, and I know Him in prison.” He was sufficient when he was in want, and sufficient when he abounded. So he says, “Rejoice in the Lord always.”

What could they do with such a man? If they kill him, they only send him to heaven; if they let him live, he is all devoted to lead people to the Christ they would destroy.

It is more difficult to rejoice in the Lord in prosperity than in trials; for trials cast us on the Lord. There is more danger for us when there are no trials. But delight in the Lord delivers us altogether from the power of present things. We are not aware, until they are taken away, how much the most spiritual of us lean on props. I mean, we lean on things around us. But if we are rejoicing in the Lord always, that strength can never be taken away, nor can we lose the joy of it.

“Let your moderation be known unto all men.” Do you think people will think your conversation is in heaven if you are eager about things of earth? They will only think us so if there is the testimony that the heart does not stick up for itself. “The Lord is at hand.” All will be set right soon. If you pass on in meekness, and subduedness, and unresistingness, how it acts in keeping the heart and affections right and the world can see when the mind and spirit are not set on it. So he says, “Let it be known unto all men.”

“Be careful for nothing.” I have found that word so often a thorough comfort. Even if it be a great trial, still “be careful for nothing.” “Oh,” you say, “it is not my petty circumstances; it is a question of saints going wrong.” Well, “be careful for nothing.” It is not that you are careless, but you are trying to carry the burden, and so you are racking your heart with it. How often a burden possesses a person’s mind, and when he tries in vain to cast it off, it comes back and worries him. But “be careful for nothing” is a command; and it is blessed to have such a command.

What shall I do then? Go to God. “In everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” Then in the midst of all the care you can give thanks; and we see the exceeding grace of God in tins. It is not that you are to wait till you find out if what you want is the will of God. No. “Let your requests be made known.” Have you a burden on your

heart? Now go with your request to God. He does not say that you will get it. Paul, when he prayed, had for answer, "My grace is sufficient for thee." But peace will keep your heart and mind, not you will keep this peace. Is He ever troubled by the little things that trouble us? Do they shake His throne? He thinks of us we know, but He is not troubled; and the peace that is in God's heart is to keep ours. I go and carry it all to Him, and I find Him all quiet about it. It is all settled. He knows quite well what He is going to do. I have laid the burden on the throne that never shakes, with the perfect certainty that God takes an interest in me, and the peace He is in keeps my heart, and I can thank Him even before the trouble has passed. I can say, Thank God, He takes an interest in me. It is a pleasant thing that I can have this peace, and thus go and make my request-perhaps a very foolish one; and, instead of brooding over trials, that I can be with God about them.

It is sweet to me to see that, while He carries us up to heaven, He comes down and occupies Himself with everything of ours here. While our affections are occupied with heavenly things, we can trust God for earthly things. He comes down to everything. As Paul says, "Without were fightings, within were fears. Nevertheless God, that comforteth those that are cast down, comforted us." It was worth being cast down to get that kind of comfort. Is He a God afar off, and not a God nigh at hand? He does not give us to see before us, for then the heart would not be exercised; but though we see not Him, He sees us, and comes down to give us all kind of comfort in the trouble.

J. N. D.

The Potter's Broken Vessel

I feel and judge very distinctly that there is a special character in this present time through which we are passing. The great powers which are destined to fill out the action of Christendom's closing day are practicing themselves, each in its several sphere, with great earnestness and skill. I mean the civil and the ecclesiastical.

I do not doubt but that, for a season, the ecclesiastical will prevail. The woman is to ride again for a while—a prophetic symbol, as I believe, signifying ecclesiastical supremacy. And this present moment is marked by many efforts on the behalf of that which takes the place of the Church, or of the ecclesiastical theory, thus to exalt itself; and she is so adroitly directing those efforts that success may speedily await them, and then the blood of the saints may flow afresh.

The civil power, however, is anything but idle. The wondrous advance that it is making every day in the cultivation of the world proves great skill and activity on its part. It is largely boasting itself, showing what it has done, and pledging what further it means to do.

At this moment each of these powers is abroad in the scene of action, and the minds of men are divided between them. In some sense they are rivals. There is the commercial energy, and there is the religious energy; the one is erecting its railroads and making its exhibitions; the other is extending its bishoprics, building its temples, multiplying its ordinances, and the like. The attention of the children of men is divided between these things; but the saint who knows the cross of Christ as the relief of his conscience, and the reason of his separation from the world, is apart from them both.

I doubt not that the civil power will have to yield the supremacy for a time, and the woman will ride again, though her state and greatness will be but for a little; for the civil power will take offense, and remove her.

If we, in God's grace, keep a good conscience towards Christ and His truth, we may count upon it that no inheritance in the earth is worth, as people speak, many years' purchase. If we consent to become whatever the times would make us, of course we may go on, and that, too, advancing with an advancing world.

I have been sensible lately how much the spirit of Jeremiah suits these times. He lived in the daily observation of evil. Iniquity was abounding in the scene around him, though it was called by God's name, and was indeed His place on the earth. The house of prayer had become a "den of thieves," though they still cried, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these." He knew that the judgment of God was awaiting it all, and he looked for happy days which lay in the distance, beyond the present corruption and the approaching judgment. Over all this corruption Jeremiah mourned; against it all he testified; and, like his Master, he was hated for his testimony. (John 7:7) He was, however, full of faith and hope; and in the strength of that (anticipating the future) he laid out his money in the purchase of Hanameel's field. (Jer. 32) All this was beautiful—the present sorrow over the corruption of the daughter of his people, faith's certainty of the coming judgment,

and hope's prospect of closing crowning glory.

This is a pattern for our spirit. And I observe another feature of power in the prophet. He was not to be seduced from the conclusions of faith by occasional fair and promising appearances. (See chap. 37) The Chaldean army had broken up their camp under the walls of Jerusalem because of the arrival of the Egyptian allies. This circumstance flattered the Jewish people into hopes; but Jeremiah left the city, because he would still hold to the conclusions of faith-that Jerusalem was doomed of God in righteous judgment.

All this is a fine exhibition of a soul walking by the light of God, not merely through darkness, but through darkness which seemed to be light.

All seems to be quiet around us at present, and even more than that, things are greatly and rapidly advancing, as far as all the accommodations of social life extend. But the moral of the scene, in the eye of faith, is more serious than ever. The apostate principles of man's heart are but ripening themselves into their most fruitful and abundant exhibition. There is something of rivalry in the different powers that are in action just at present. The secular and the religious are apart to a great extent. Each has its respective worshippers; but ere long confederacy will take the place of rivalry, I believe. The world must, even for its own ends, adopt religion for a time, that man's system may grow solid, as well as extended and brilliant, and propose itself as that which has earned a title to conform all and everything to itself.

Separation is the Christian's place and calling-church separation-separation because of heavenly citizenship and oneness with an already risen Christ. Abraham's separation was very peculiar; it was twofold. He was separated from the natural associations of Mesopotamia, "country, kindred, and father's house," and from the moral associations of Canaan, or its iniquity and its idols.

In the thought of these solemn truths, beloved, may the Lord Himself be more real and near to us! May the hope of His appearing be found lying more surely and calmly in the midst of the affections and stirrings of our hearts! All was reality with Jeremiah, to whom I have referred. The present corruption was a reality to him, for he rebuked it and bewailed it; the approaching judgment was a reality to him, for he wept at the thought of it, and deprecated it; the final glory was a reality to him, for he laid out his money upon it. He had occasional refreshments of spirit. His sleep, and the dream that accompanied it, in chap. 31, was, as he says, "sweet unto him." was a moment on "the holy hill" to him; for a light from the kingdom, or the glory, visited him. He had likewise revelations, and he could speak and write of them -but not only as thus refreshed and gifted in spirit; he was real and true in moral power. He testified against this "present world" unto suffering, and laid out his money, his expectations, and labors, on "the world to come."

It was this which completed his character, and all would have been poor without it. We may speak of Christ, and teach about the kingdom-one's own soul knows it well; but to witness for Him against the world, and to be rich towards God, this is to fill out and realize our character as saints. We may covet these elements of the Christian character. Some of us, if one may speak, are but half Jeremiahs. We can talk of Christ, but can we suffer for Him? We can teach about the kingdom, but can we lay out our money upon it?

All this may admonish us, beloved, but I have another word in my heart just at present also.

The parable of the potter, in Jer. 18. 19., was designed to let Israel know that, though brought into covenant, they were still within the range and reach of the divine judgments, and that such judgments would overtake them because of their sins. In John Baptist's time, Israel is found in the like character of self-confidence. If in Jeremiah's day they would say, "The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, are these;" in the Baptist's day they said, "We have Abraham to our father." But John, like Jeremiah, would again teach them that, though in covenant, judgment could reach them. In the Lord's ministry we find the same. Israel still boasted. They talked of Abraham being their father, and of God being their Father (John 8), but we know how the Lord again and again warned them of the coming judgment. All this has a lesson for our learning.

Christendom or Babylon has taken this ancient place of Israel. She trusts in security in spite of unfaithfulness. She boasts in the Lord, though her moral condition be vile. She says, "I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow" (Rev. 18:7), though blood, and pride, and all abominations, stain her. But Rev. 18 is another action. Like that of the prophet in the potter's house, it teaches the unfaithful one that the doom of the broken vessels, or of the millstone cast into the sea, awaits her. This is for our learning. God never sanctions disobedience. He did not go into the garden of Eden to accredit Adam's sin, but to bring relief in the way of grace for it. So, in the gospel, He utterly condemns sin, while delivering the sinner.

Nor does He ever commit Himself to His stewards. He commits Himself to His own gifts and calling (Rom. 11:29), but never to His stewards. They are always held responsible to Him, and disobedience works forfeiture. Christ is the only Steward that ever stood and answered for Himself in the conditional place, and in this respect, as in every other, He is the moral contradiction of man. In the temptation (Matt. 4) the devil sought to inspire the Lord with confidence in spite of disobedience. He partially cited Psa. 91, quoted the promised security, omitting the required obedience. But he was utterly defeated. The Lord in answering cited Deut. 6, and acted accordingly; for in that chapter obedience is declared to be Israel's ground of security. In this way did Jesus keep His own blessings under Psalm 91., and His Israel's blessings under Deut. 6. But all other stewards, in their several turn and season, have failed, and Babylon's boast, which we have already listened to, is a lie.

All this may now-a-days be had in our remembrance seasonably; for we live at a time when Babylon is filling herself afresh with this boast, just before her overthrow, when she is to meet the doom of the millstone. (Rev. 18:21) For the boast of "the eternal city," as she calls herself, only the more awfully signalizes her for the judgment of God. It is a favorite thought with her, that while other churches tremble for their safety, she is above such fears-she is God's city, and has His walls around her. This is imposing; but, when considered by the teaching of the Word, it only the more distinctly declares what she is, and witnesses her more advanced ripeness for the judgment of God. Because this boast is defiance. It is not faith in God, but disavowal of His rights and authority. It is the denial of her subjection to Him, of her stewardship or place of being answerable to Him and His judgment. This boast of being "the eternal city" so far identifies her with the Babylon that says, "I sit a queen, and am no widow," and it leaves her for the doom of the potter's vessel in the valley of the son of Hinnom, or of the millstone in the hand of the angel. "Thus saith the Lord of hosts; Even so will I break this people and this city, as one breaketh a potter's vessel, that cannot be made whole again." (See 19: 11)

J. G. B.

Fragment: Drawn Out of the World

Prophecy drives us out of the world; Christ in glory draws us out of the world. We have the word of prophecy as a candle, a light shining in a dark place-God's candle; but I have to do with the bright and heavenly side as my own heart's portion.

When I can boast of a truth, it has no hold on my soul.

The Resurrection

The saints are the witnesses of the Lord's resurrection. Our souls too little dwell on the stupendous import of the act which introduced a total change in the position and character of God's people. Not in the nature of their redemption; for as guilty they always needed forgiveness of sins; and as sinners it was always necessary that they should be born again to enter the kingdom of God.

But besides the fact that forgiveness of sins was not entered into as a present and assured blessing before the resurrection, the earth and blessing on it, length of days, and abundance of riches, with the favor of God, were what bounded the vision of the saints. An Abraham might not actually get so much of the promised inheritance as to set his foot on; and a David might suffer persecution under the government of God, though he were God's chosen king; but the revelation given to them respectively of the seed, in whom all the nations would be blessed, and by whom the land would be possessed, and of the final judgment of the wicked, and deliverance of the righteous, satisfied their minds so that they went on contentedly with God and what they had. Thus also was it with others who embraced the promises as having seen them afar off, but who died in faith, not having received them. The Spirit of God in Heb. 11 gives His own value to the faith that thus simply waited on God, and so connects it with unseen and heavenly blessings. But we are not to suppose that these saints had a portion in heaven definitely before their minds; for such was not revealed to them, and they were taught to look for the time when there would be no obstacle to God's blessing His people here on earth, and even when the traces of sin would be removed from it.

There is a decided and complete change in this respect when resurrection is accomplished. Not only is heaven presented as the proper sphere of the blessings of the saints now, and earth is definitely refused, and the world separated from, as unfit for them in their true character, but the character and extent of the blessings which are revealed are now found to be expressed in that which the Lord Jesus enjoys as the risen and ascended Son of man. We may perhaps take verses 42, 43 of Luke 23 as illustrating this, what the thief actually received from the Lord being a figure of the blessing of the saints now in contrast to the portion proposed in verse 42, which will be that of the Jew in the future day. "Lord, remember me when thou comest in thy kingdom," was all that the Scriptures would then have led one to expect; and so this man, who was subject then to the teaching of the Spirit, was led into the revealed mind of God. But, "To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise," is perfectly new. Literally it, of course, refers to the state of his soul, his condition of existence, immediately after death; but in figure it sets forth the kind of blessing the Church has in contrast to the other. The resurrection is everything to her, and chap. 24. brings this out.

The angels announce it (5: 4-8), almost reproaching the disciples for being so untrue to their peculiar blessing as still to cling to earthly hopes, when they say, "Why seek ye the living One among the dead?" He is not to be found in this world at all for us, and to expect to find Him here, or to seek to connect Him with earthly hopes, is to seek the living One among the dead. "He is not here, He is risen: remember how He spake unto you." He had sought in His love and care for them

to prepare their hearts by His words; but these hearts, as usual, proved truant; but “they remembered His words.”

We see the great difficulty which they had in apprehending it at first in verses 10, 11; and it appears (from vv. 13-25) that the disciples even went back to earthly concerns in a spirit which gave up and denied the truth of all their blessing as connected with Him in His new character and position. But they are immediately set right, and their hearts recalled, when He is known to them as Lord in resurrection, and they at once return to their proper path as connected with this One (vss. 31-34) of whom they are to testify. It should be remarked, that though the Lord graciously drew near to them in their backsliding, and gave them communications of His mind from the Scriptures, so as to cause exercise of heart in them, still “their heart burning within them” must not be mistaken for communion with Him, for His presence was at that time unknown to them. They were not intelligently enjoying His company, and true communion there could not be without that enjoyment. They find on returning that the same Lord has thought of others of His doubting people; but those who were not so ready to act in self-will have the truth brought home to them sooner, and without their experiences. The eleven, and those with them, are found gathered together, saying, “The Lord is risen indeed.” He appears amongst them to strengthen and confirm this faith (vss. 35-43), and shows them how that He Himself, known as thus risen, is the key to the entire Scriptures (vss. 44, 45), making them witnesses of the truth (vs. 48) thus brought out, and connecting them by the gift of the Spirit (vs. 49) with Himself as ascended to glory (vss. 50, 51), and truly an object of worship, as well as a subject of joy and praise. (vss. 52, 53)

Thus the proper blessing of the Church is immense. She does not wait till the kingdom will display the truth as to Christ, but even now enters into God’s thoughts about Him by virtue of knowing Him so immediately. Not only so, but also the measure of the glory in which Christ in resurrection is known being far above that of the kingdom, the extent to which divine wisdom in the Word is opened is immensely greater now than then.

F. J. R.

Fragment: Known, Enjoyed Relationship

A KNOWN, enjoyed relationship gives quietness and rest.

Fragment: Faith

Faith is my thinking God's thoughts instead of my own.

Fragment: Heaven in Everything He Did

The Lord Jesus had the taste of heaven in everything He did, and the world cannot bear this.

Fragment: Why We Suffer

We suffer here because we have a soul risen in a body that is not risen, and that in a world at enmity with God.

Fragment: Christ in View

What is often important to man is not so to God, for God has Christ in view.

Watching

The characteristic of a person who has his ear open to the Lord is watching. "Blessed are those servants, whom the lord, when he cometh, shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat (that is a figure), and will come forth and serve them." I find Him serving, then, in divine love, still in the same character. He comes and brings us to heaven-to His Father's house, that where He is, there may we be also. "While you were in that wicked world," He says, "I was obliged to keep you on the watch, in a state of tension, with diligent earnestness to keep the heart waiting; but I bring you to a place where you are to sit down, and it will be my delight to minister to you."

It is one of the greatest comforts to me that I shall not want my conscience in heaven. If I let it go to sleep for a moment now, there are temptations and snares; there there is no evil, and the more my heart goes out, the more good it is. Here I dare not let it, but I must watch and pray; I shall not need that in heaven. The full blessedness of it is, the Lord being there of course; and next, the saints being perfect. What does the heart desire that cares for the Lord's people? That they should be just what Christ's heart would have them. That will be there; He will see of the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. Then there is after that this comfort, that my heart can go out-here it cannot-to God and the Lamb, and to the saints in measure too; but then, roam as it will, there is nothing to roam over but a paradise where evil never comes, and it can never go wrong.

He comes, then, and takes us there; and what heaven can find there for the heart to feed on is spread on the table of God. "You shall rest there and feed on it," He says, "and I will gird myself, and come forth and serve you. I am not going to give up my service of love." Thus, while I have the blessedness of feeding on what God has to give, I have the increased satisfaction, that if I put a morsel of divine meat into my mouth, I receive it from the hand of love that brings it to me. When He brings us there, all is turned round. "Here," He says, "you must have your lights burning, and be watching; when I get my way, I must put you at ease, and make you happy." "Then shall the Son also Himself be subject." He was serving here. It was man's perfection to serve -the very thing the devil tried to get Him out of. If he had, it would have been doing his own will; but "though He were a Son, yet learned He obedience by the things that He suffered." But when all things shall have been subdued unto Him, He is subject after that. In the meanwhile He has been on His own throne; now He is on His Father's throne, our High Priest; but He will take His own throne and power, and reign, bringing everything into subjection. Then it is not serving, but reigning; afterward He gives up the kingdom in that sense to His Father, for everything is brought to order. In the millennium it is a King reigning in righteousness; but then it is new heavens and earth, wherein dwells righteousness. Innocence dwelt in the first paradise; sin dwells in the present earth; and then, in the new heavens and earth, it will be "wherein dwelleth righteousness." He gives up the mediatorial kingdom, as it is called, to God, and takes His place as a man-" the first-born among many brethren." He never gives up a place in which He can own us as associated with Himself in the blessedness of first-born of many brethren. As all was ruined in the first Adam, all shall be blessed in the last. "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the

heavenly.” Then I find myself enjoying everything that God can give to the objects of His love, and enjoying it with Christ then at the head of everything-Son of God and Son of man; we associated with all the blessedness, and He administering to us so that the heart can taste His love. And He does not just bring us there, but it is to all eternity. He has purchased us too dearly to give us up. His love will be in constant exercise towards us. It leads us to adore Him more than anything that can be thought of; but we can trust a love that never ceases in heaven.

You see here His heart is going out to do it. Then you must have your lights burning. “Let your light” (not your works) “so shine before men,” that they may know where your works come from, “and glorify your Father which is in heaven,” that they may attribute them to God. I do whatever God tells me to do, and it is a testimony to Christ. People say that is what comes from a man being a Christian. It is that there may be no uncertainty as to what we are-a well-trimmed lamp, the testimony of the life of Christ-that it may be manifested what I am, and what I am about -a pilgrim and a stranger in a thousand different circumstances, the ordinary duties of life to perform, but one service-to be the epistle of Christ. I may be a carpenter or a shoemaker; I must be a Christian. In various relationships, servants, masters, in eating or drinking in our houses, wherever it is, I must be a Christian.

What characterized those servants was waiting, and they got the blessing. “Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching.” Ah, beloved friends, are you watching, waiting for Christ practically? I cannot be watching and going on in my own way. Are our lights burning, or have we slipped down to the ease and comforts of this world like other people? That is not having our loins girded, and it is not as a doctrine we are to have it only.

J. N. D.

Fragment: Christianity Without Living Power

THE nearer a man is to God externally, if his soul has not living fellowship with Him, the worse he is. Judas is worse than the Pharisees; the Pharisees than the Samaritans. Hence the profession of Christianity, where there is not its living power, is the very place where the most terrible evil is to be looked for.

Fragment: Christ in Our Hearts

If we let Christ practically out of our hearts, it costs a deal to bring Him back again.

Fragment: the Lord Gives Fully and Perfectly

Whatever may be withheld in a time of ruin, the Lord gives, not what would take His people out of it, but fully and perfectly what they need in it.

The Burnt-Offering

From patriarchal times, and from that memorable night in Egypt, the last that all Israel ever spent in it, as their home, we pass on to the laws about the offerings and sacrifices given by God to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai. As yet we have only met with burnt-offerings, with sacrifices which had the character of peace-offerings, and with drink-offerings; now we are made acquainted, through the Mosaic ritual, with these and others as well; viz., meat-offerings, sin-offerings, and trespass-offerings. To these may be added heave-offerings and wave-offerings. But the burnt-offering, meat-offering, peace-offering, sin-offering, and trespass-offering have this in common, that they all typify what is true only of the Lord Jesus Christ, whereas the heave-offering and wave-offering were not confined to that which is peculiar to Him, and the drink-offering did not typify Him at all, but testified of the joy of God, and of the offerer in Him.

Hitherto, in the history of sacrifice, we have met with no directions respecting the manner of sacrificing. Now we come to regulations minute and explicit, revealed to Moses. And the first to be described, though not always the first to be offered, where more than one kind of sacrifice was prescribed, is that called the burnt-offering, and so called, we are expressly informed, because it burned all night upon the altar (Lev. 6:9) unto the morning. It was the only offering which was burning all night, and it formed the basis on which all other offerings were burned by day on the brazen altar in the court of the tabernacle, or of the temple. No wonder then it has priority over all the other offerings in the Mosaic ritual. It was the only one they could never do without. It was the only one that was never to be absent from God's eyes till the true sacrifice, its antitype, should be offered up, and animal sacrifices thenceforth cease, until preparations should be made for the Lord's return in power.

Further, this was the only sacrifice of which the whole went up to God, so, in whatever way one might classify the offerings, this one would always come first. For it speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ in a character especially important, and ever to be remembered, as it tells of His whole surrender to death to do God's will, without which, as we well know, no sacrifice on our behalf could ever have availed before God. Sinful man could not have offered himself to God on his own behalf, or on behalf of others, and earth could never have provided that sacrifice with which the Holy One could in righteousness have been satisfied. There was needed for the sacrifice not only an offering free from sin, but one who was holy in all his ways; his life, his energies all devoted to God, and who could also die. One only can answer to all these requirements; viz., the Lord Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God.

But though earth could not provide the sacrifice, certain animals on the earth could be accepted as types of it. Israel could bring to the Lord Jehovah, and offer on His altar, that which in His eye was typical of the death of His Son. Of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl Noah offered his burnt-offerings to God. (Gen. 8:20) Of clean beasts, and of clean fowls, Israel could offer burnt-offerings to Jehovah; but the occasions on which they were to be offered, the manner of offering them, and what animals were to be brought, they had to learn from the Mosaic ritual. On

private and on public occasions burnt-offerings could be presented. For instructions about private occasions we turn to Lev. 1; for directions for public or special occasions we must turn elsewhere. On private occasions God allowed the offerer a choice. On public, and at times on special occasions also He prescribed what should be brought.

If any one in Israel was moved in his heart to present a burnt-offering to God, it might be either of the herd, of the flock, or of fowls. In the case of no other offering was there such a choice. The wealthiest and the poorest could meet on common ground at the altar of burnt-offering; and whilst the rich man could bring his bullock, which required the services of more than one priest to sprinkle the blood and to place the parts of the animal on the altar, the poor man, who for his bird needed only the ministry of one priest, could return from the altar with the assurance of his God, that his turtle-dove or young pigeon was equally with the bullock "an offering made by fire of a sweet savor unto the Lord." (Lev. 1:17) How gracious was this! The Lord accepted the offering, not according to its intrinsic value, as man would have appraised it, but according to His own estimate of that of which each was a type—the self-surrender to death of His well-beloved Son the Lord Jesus Christ.

Where the sacrifice was of the herd or of the flock, the offerer's identification with it was openly declared by placing his hand on its head. In the case of the bird this significant action is not mentioned. When a bullock, or sheep, or goat was brought, the offerer killed it, and the priests sprinkled the blood round about the brazen altar; then the offerer skinned the animal, washed the inward parts with water, and, having dismembered it, presented the parts to the priests or the priest to be placed in order upon the altar. When the sacrifice was a bird, the priest nipped off its head and burnt it on the altar, and squeezed out its blood at the side of the altar; then the offerer plucked away its crop with its filth (not its feathers), which was cast on the east part by the place of the ashes. Then, cleaving it with the wings thereof, he presented it a whole carcass to be burnt upon the altar. In every case the head was treated separately from the body; but in the case of the bird the body was burnt as a whole. Further, in every case the sacrifice was to be clean, and to be a male without blemish if it came from the herd or from the flock.

Thus far we have detailed to us the part the offerer had in the service. He had to provide the offering, and to bring it, and to prepare its body for the sacrifice; whilst the priest's part was to deal with the blood, and to burn the carcass upon the altar. Hence, in the case of a quadruped the priest had no place at all in the matter, till the blood had to be sprinkled on the altar round about. In other words, death took place before the priestly service at the altar was called into requisition. The priest's place was at the altar; he ministered there, but, till death had taken place, in the ordinary way he had nothing to do. The death of the sacrifice must be an accomplished fact, and acknowledged to be such ere the priest's work could begin. The exception to this in the case of the bird arose probably from the physical difference between it and the beast. From the latter the blood readily poured forth; from the former it had to be squeezed out. (Lev. 1:15)

This principle is an important one. It puts the offerer in his place, and the priest in his. The priest did nothing till the offerer killed his offering, after identifying himself with it. So the Lord offered Himself, and only after His death entered on his priesthood, as Heb. 8:4 clearly states. The priest was required for all that went on at the altar, but only after the death of the victim has taken place beside it, or in front of it, as the case might be. Accurate as the type was in this respect, it came

short, as each must do of the full delineation of that of which it was but a type. Here we read of the offerer, of the offering, and of the priest, all three distinct; but the offerer, on whose behalf the sacrifice was brought, here killed the beast; whereas the antitype, the true sacrifice, offered up himself. (Heb. 7:27) In reality the offerer, the offering, and the priest are one and the same person seen in three different characters. Christ offered Himself, being the Lamb of God, and the high priest, who has entered into heaven by his own blood. Everything, then, that had to be done in connection with sacrifice He has done, and done once for all (Heb. 10:14), leaving to man the only part he can take in it; viz., identification with the sacrifice, so as to share in the rich results which flow from it, by owning it to be the offering on his behalf, according to the value of which he stands accepted before God.

Under the law the offerer presented the sacrifice for his acceptance (not "of his own voluntary will," as our version has translated the Hebrew word *lizono*), owning thereby the ground on which he stood before God. But we do not present the sacrifice, since that has been already done. Christ offered Himself without spot to God (Heb. 9:14), and offered up Himself as well. For though men crucified Him, He nevertheless laid down His life of Himself. (John 10:18) None could have taken it from Him Thus both actions, the presenting the sacrifice and the offering it up, indicated by the Greek words *προσφέρω* and *αναφέρω*, were carried out by Him in His grace.

But more. The burnt-offering offered up for the man's acceptance, he learned that it made atonement for him. Now this mention of atonement is instructive, since it shows that, apart from the aspect of sacrifice typified by the burnt-offering, atonement could not have been accomplished. There was needed for that, not only a substitute for the sinner-One who could bear the sins of the guilty one in His own body on the tree -but One who would surrender Himself wholly to do God's will by dying, on whom death could in no way have a claim. One essential element then in atonement was the sacrifice of One who could surrender Himself to die, apart from, though of course closely connected with, His position as the sinner's substitute. And the offerer in Israel, when he brought his burnt-offering, moved probably by the sense of Jehovah's goodness to him, but without reference to any sin that he had committed in the past, learned his need of atonement through the provision Jehovah thus made to effect it.

Precious was this sacrifice to God. All of it went up to Him, the skin only excepted, which was to be the priest's who offered it. For the priest at the altar being always typical of Christ Himself, the skin, symbolical of the circumstances through which the Lord passed, would rightly belong to him; for who but the Lord can know what those circumstances were? And here the reader should be reminded that only one priest officiated at the altar to burn the sacrifice. When the animal was of the herd several priests were required to sprinkle the blood, and to lay the pieces on the altar on the wood, but one priest (vs. 9) it was who burnt all on the altar. Precious indeed was all that was consumed thereon; for whatever the sacrifice might be in itself, all that was burnt on the altar was a sweet savor to God, and went up to Him, as it were, as incense; for all thereon burnt spoke of what the Lord Jesus Christ was in Himself to God, and not of what He was made for us. All that typified Him as a sacrifice was holy. What typified that which He was in Himself was, when burnt, as sweet incense to God. Precious was the burnt-offering to God, so it never was to be out of His sight, and all night long it burnt on the altar-ever in God's remembrance, ever under His eye. What a thought that gives us of its preciousness to Him He could always, as it were, be looking on it, the witness to Him of that self-surrender to death of His Son, then future, but now past; then a secret

known only to Him, but now shared in through grace by us who believe on Him whilst still the world is asleep, and the night has not passed away.

Precious was this offering. So at all their feasts, and on stated occasions provided by the law, as well as on special occasions as they arose in after years, this offering was always in season. Each morning and each evening it was offered up on the altar-the first sacrifice in the morning, the last in the evening. This was a standing ordinance in Israel, ever to be remembered and observed. At the close of each week, on the Sabbath, a special burnt - sacrifice was appointed in addition. At the commencement of each month a burnt-offering of the flock and of the herd was enjoined. At each of the feasts, and on each day of the feasts, special burnt-offerings were commanded; and so on the day of atonement. At Aaron's consecration, too, this sacrifice had its place, and again at the setting apart of the Levites. No mother in Israel would rejoice over the birth of her child, whether male or female, without bringing for her purification the appointed sacrifice for a burnt-offering. Each leper, too, that was cleansed was reminded of his need of it ere he could re-enter his tent in the camp, and be at home there again; and every one, whether man or woman, made unclean by an issue was taught the importance, in his or her case, of bringing a burnt-offering to God. So on special occasions Samuel at Mizpeh (1 Sam. 7), David on mount Moriah (2 Sam. 24), Elijah at Carmel (1 Kings 19), offered burnt-offerings to the Lord. And on that day when the Lord, under the symbol of the ark, first took up His abode in Jerusalem, David sacrificed burnt-offerings after they had carried it into the tent prepared for it on mount Zion. (2 Sam. 6)

Very prominent then was this class of sacrifice in Israel's worship, whether national or individual. The brightest day could not pass without it; the darkest was a fitting season for it; and we understand the reason of it, whatever those of old could have told about it. It spoke to God, and, we can add, it speaks to us too, of that self-surrender of His Son, even to death, the death of the cross, to whom in a marked way the Father's love flows out (John 10), and whom in consequence God hath highly exalted, and has "given Him a name which is above every name." (Phil. 2)

C. E. S.

Taken Aside

“He is chastened also with pain.... He looketh upon men, and if any say, I have sinned, and perverted that which was right, and it profited me not; He will deliver his soul from going into the pit, and his life shall see the light.” (Job 33)

“ He hath looked down from the height of His sanctuary; from heaven did the Lord behold the earth; to hear the groaning of the prisoner; to loose those that are appointed to death.” (Psa. 102:19,20)

“He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind.” (Luke 4:18)

“And they bring a blind man unto Him ... He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town.” (Mark 8:23)

“ They bring unto Him one that was deaf ... He took him aside from the multitude.” (Mark 7:33)

“They heard not the voice of Him that spake to me.” (Acts 22:9)

Gone! in a moment from us

Taken “aside” to die!

Father, our hearts in anguish

Yearningly question, “Why?”

Is there no answer coming?

We listen in waiting faith;

Faith which can trust the Savior

Even in silent death.

Even if settled darkness

Broods o'er the shoreless sea;

Savior, we wait Thy coming!

Light, in Thy light, to see!

Wait for the sweet surprises-

Wonderful words of love-

Which shall fill our hearts with rapture,

Told in the home above.

Telling, how in the darkness,
No loving watcher by,
To the world-worn, restless spirit,
“Jesus Himself” drew nigh,
Speaking words of compassion
Gently, while drawing near;
And the soul was content for, silence
That wonderful voice to hear;
Content for the sudden summons
To come when all alone;
And the Savior’s band to lead him
Unto the Father’s home.
What were the words He uttered?
What was the answer given?
Ah! the joy of that private meeting
We must wait to hear in heaven.
Savior and sinner meeting,
Meeting after long years;
Wonderful words of greeting
Softening the heart to tears.
Broken words of confession
Breathed in the Father’s ear;
Then His embrace dispelling
Once, and forever, fear.
Breaking the chains of Satan,
Setting the captive free;
Then to the ransomed spirit
Saying, “To-day with me.”
Wonderful, glorious moment!

When at the Savior's word
Eyes long blinded were opened,
Opened to see the Lord.
A look-at the One beside him
A word-and the work was done;
And the threshold crossed to glory
By the blood-bought ransomed one.
A.S.O.

Intimacy With the Lord

The position in which Abraham is presented in this chapter gives a very descriptive display of the ground of intimacy with Himself on which the Lord has set His people. In many respects it is a positive blessing to be brought into association with the Lord, as we find in the case of Abraham; but he is here presented, not as the depository of promises, or the object of covenanted blessings, but as enjoying the intimacy which his position brought him into with the Lord.

The condition of the revelation which separated him from natural associations and earthly ties, and made him a stranger and pilgrim in the world, put him into this place of intimacy, as God had said to him, "Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward."

But the testimony to us is, that in virtue of God's dealings with us in Christ we also are brought into this place of confidence and intimacy, though in a much higher sense. Abraham stood on the earth, the place of judgment; but God's call in grace puts us in direct association with the blessing, and as risen with Christ, altogether apart from the place of judgment. Eph. 1:9 presents this intimacy as resulting from the place in which we are set in Christ: "Having made known unto us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He hath purposed in Himself," &c. This revelation to us of the thoughts of God does not relate to our own direct blessing, but is the token of confidence toward us whom He has set in such intimacy of relationship with Himself. As Christ said to His disciples, "I call you not servants: for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth: but I have called you friends: for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you."

Abraham's position with the Lord was one of perfect peace and unquestioning confidence. He has no question to settle with the Lord, but is on that ground where he can enjoy without any hindrance communion with Him. Neither the scene that was passing before him, nor the thoughts of the judgment that the Lord tells him he is about to execute, have any power to disturb the quiet with which he maintains his intercourse with the Lord. In the sixteenth verse it is said, "The men rose up from thence, and looked towards Sodom: and Abraham went with them to bring them on the way." The Lord directed them in judgment, and Abraham went with them to show them the way. He is here the companion of the Lord and confidant of His thoughts. And to us the Lord is not only the eternal spring of blessing to our souls, but He makes His saints His companions; not invariably, it is true, but still He does so. And it is in the communications which the Lord makes to us that He thus makes us His companions; for certainly there is not a mote happy or certain way in which any one can show his love to another than by communicating to him his thoughts and feelings. "Who hath known the mind of the Lord?" "But we have the mind of Christ."

"Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him," So we are called to walk with Christ until He comes and takes us up to Himself. The exercise and the path of faith are all in this world, but the issues of the trial and the bright "hope of righteousness by faith" are above. "Abraham went with the men to bring them on their way." That was all. He was entirely apart from the judgment that was about to be executed upon Sodom, as the Church is also above the world's judgment,

though not above the Lord's discipline for its good. Lot, in his desires after the good of this world, had looked towards Sodom and found himself ensnared by it; but Abraham was so entirely out of it, as to be talking to the Lord about its fate when Lot had to be roused by the startling words of the angels, "Hast thou here any besides? Sons-in-law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place: for we will destroy this place." But the Lord said to Abraham, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do? For I know him," &c.

The Lord God put Abraham into the place of covenant blessing, and on this ground He communicates to him His thoughts. He had, in a sense, bound Himself to be Abraham's companion by the very terms of the revelation He had made to him; for He had said, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." And the result is this introduction into confidence and intimacy of intercourse with the Lord, who speaks to him "of his house for a great while to come." And the ground of the Lord's communication of His thoughts to us is, that having centered His love in us, He lets us into His confidence. He has united the Church to Christ, and associated it with Christ, and hence He makes known to us "the mystery of His will." It is the consequence and result of the place in which He has set us. The Lord says of Abraham, "I know him," &c. There is the greatest blessing in this; it is so entirely the language of friendship, and so opposite to the way in which He speaks about judgment. He does not talk about "knowing" those He is going to judge, but says, "I will go down now, and see whether they have done altogether according to the cry of it, which is come unto me: and if not, I will know." Until He has fully investigated He will not strike even in judgment. But it is not thus with the saints; He has no need to go down to see about them; for He fully knows and owns them, as He said to Abraham, "I know him." "The men turned their faces from thence, and went toward Sodom; but Abraham stood yet before the Lord." It is a blessed thing to so know our place and blessing with the Lord as to be able to do this; for if the Lord thus "knows Abraham," so as to secure to him the blessings he had promised, it is answered by Abraham's staying with the Lord Himself.

He is going to bring judgment on the world, but He will not smite until He cannot help it, as He said, "The iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full." But no judgment that was coming on the cities of the plain could separate Abraham from the Lord. The Lord's eye so rests on him that he is able to rest quietly in the Lord. And so it is with us; whatever trial, or sorrow, or judgment, is coming upon the world, our place is to abide with the Lord Himself, and then, like Abraham, the effect of having drunk into His grace will be that we shall be calm, quiet, and happy. There will, alas I be many Lots in the well-watered gardens of the plain; but let us be in the mountain with the Lord, abiding in perfect peace, not alone in security from the judgment, but in that which is far higher, with the Lord Himself.

Abraham being thus with the Lord in perfect peace, has nothing, as we see, to ask for himself, but becomes the earnest intercessor for others. And even subsequently, in the case of Abimelech, the Lord says, "Restore the man his wife, for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live." The force of this is, "If he be a prophet, if he has this intimacy with the mind of the Lord, let him pray for thee, and I will hear him." So it is with us: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you." The possession of the Lord's mind gives us the power of intercession for others. This is not like wrestling Jacob, who had to get the blessing for himself, though it is possible we may have to wrestle for ourselves in order to get

individual blessing; for we must not be untrue to our actual state; but Abraham's prayer for Sodom is communion, and the knowledge of this communion produces peace and joy. It is not that reverence will be absent from the soul; for Abraham says, "I am but dust and ashes," in the profoundest sense of his own nothingness in the presence of God. Still there is the most perfect intimacy, as we witness in his advancing from point to point in his pleadings with the Lord for the sparing of Sodom; while this whole wondrous scene closes with the simple words, "And the Lord went His way as soon as He had done communing with Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place." =====

Oh, How I Want to See the Man That Saved Me!

It is a great thing when the soul gets beyond the fact of its deliverance, wonderful and blessed as that is, and lays hold by faith upon the person of the Deliverer; for it is in being occupied with Him, in the having to do with Himself personally, and addressing Him in happy, assured confidence of heart as one now known and delighted in, that positive and increased blessing of an inexhaustible character consciously accrues to the believer. And the more I value the immensity of the blessing I now possess, the more surely should I desire to make the direct acquaintance of the One who has conferred so wonderful a boon upon me at the incalculable cost of the sacrifice of Himself. How much, dear reader, do you and I know of personal intimacy with Him, of Jacob's well at Sychar, and of Martha's cottage at Bethany, now the Man enthroned in glory? How much of that individual intercourse with Himself, without which each recurring day should be to us a cold and cheerless blank, and will be, unless we are drawing from earthly springs and human cisterns? Alas! how many habitually grieve Him by accepting the benefit bestowed, while exhibiting pronounced indolence or indifference as to the Benefactor, depriving themselves thus of that peculiar joy which fills the heart for the first time in that thrilling moment when we are conscious of what has never dawned upon us before—that we are personally known to Christ and He to us! Nor can we doubt that it is equally a time of exceptional joy to Him when a soul in the bloom and beauty of its new-born spiritual life is brought thus fully and blessedly into conscious acquaintance with Himself, to enter upon an intercourse as intimate as the relations of the Father to the Son, and as lasting as God's eternity. It is the occasion on which the believer can say, and say it unequivocally, "Well, now I know Him, my Savior! Not merely do I know what He did for me when He was here; but I know the One who has left the scene, the Man now in glory, and have been so brought into the secret of His own presence to have immediate contact with Himself, that, indeed, I know Him more intimately than I know any earthly relative, and am known of Him infinitely better than by any such!"

We are fully persuaded that hundreds of believers who are well assured of the blessing they have received go on in coldness and leanness, withered and stunted in soul, because of the absence of this. What they need is to have their hearts stimulated to seek this direct knowledge in cultivated and constant intercourse of the person of Christ. The Spirit of God loves to conduct the soul of the believer to Christ now, as also He will his body by-and-by, when morning breaks and glory dawns. For us nothing could be more profitable or more blessed; for Him no tribute so acceptable!

It is as somewhat illustrating this point that we put the following little narrative before the reader.

A few years ago a poor woman, one of a number who earn a scanty living by washing at the river-side near Glasgow, and whose only possession was the tub in which her daily task was performed, had the misfortune to fall into the Clyde, and as the river was deep and the current, strong, her case was imminent, no help being apparently at hand. Suddenly a man who was a renowned swimmer and had saved many lives, plunged into the stream; but only by extreme exertion, and well-nigh at the cost of his own life, did he succeed in rescuing the object of his

solicitude. The old woman herself had been so long submerged that animation was suspended, and no little effort was requisite before consciousness returned. And now, dear reader, what do you think were the first words which, issuing from her lips, manifested to those around that she had really come back, as it were, from death to life? Some expression of anxiety as to her home, her family, her friends? Some disclosure of her feelings while in the jaws of death, or on her discovery that she had been rescued? No, nothing, nothing of this! But words that should be a touching lesson for us, who have been further gone than she towards a far more terrible fatality, and who have been rescued, not at the almost, but at the actual cost of another's life. Her words were those which head this paper, "Oh, how I want to see the man that saved me!" Beautiful exclamation in the mouth of one who had nearly perished, but whose unselfish gratitude led her to concern herself about him whose self-sacrificing work had brought her back from death. The man came at her word. Again she spoke, "Oh, sir," she said, "you've saved me, and I've naught in the world save you tub; but, oh! if you'll take it you 're welcome, with all my heart!" The man, no less astonished than gratified, made no reply, but doffing his hat went round collecting from the assembled crowd, and speedily coming back poured all he had received into her lap, enriching her as she had never in her life either experienced or expected.

Is it not thus, though in an infinitely higher and more blessed way, that God, having given us eternal life in Christ, with Him also freely gives us all things? Have we, like the poor woman, experienced deep longings of heart to see the One who has saved us, and when we have made His acquaintance laid all we possess with all our heart at His feet? If so, surely we shall have found that, inasmuch as it is more blessed to give than to receive, He will be no man's debtor; but taking to Himself the higher blessedness which is His due, He will pour into our lap all that He has received, to share with us the spoils of His own victory, the guerdon of His own work! And thus to us shall belong the double and lasting indebtedness which our narrative illustrates. May we who have been so wondrously blessed, and who sometimes sing of Him, "And gave us all that love could give," be led of the Holy Spirit into personal acquaintance with the Man in glory whom grace has made our satisfying portion forever. And may the taste we thus acquire for what we more and more find only in Himself intensify, as it surely will, the longing desire of our hearts to see Him face to face, when the day dawns and the shadows flee away!

W. B. D.

Fragment: Prayer

In prayer I have not only to ask for things, but to realize the presence of Him to whom I speak. The power of prayer is gone if I lose the sense of seeing Him by faith. Prayer is not only asking right things, but having the sense of the Person there. If I have not that, I lose the sense of His love, and of being heard.

J. N. D.

The Laver

The laver is the last of the sacred vessels enumerated. Together with this the tabernacle and its arrangements are completed. It was placed outside, in the court of the tabernacle, between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar; i.e. between the brazen altar which was inside the entrance into the court, and the entrance into the holy place. Thus passing the altar of burnt-offering, on their way into the tabernacle, the priests would encounter the laver on the road. The reason of this will be shown as we proceed.

“ And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Thou shalt also make a laver of brass, and his foot also of brass, to wash withal: and thou shalt put it between the tabernacle of the congregation and the altar, and thou shalt put water therein: for Aaron and his sons shall wash their hands and their feet thereat. When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not; or when they come near to the altar to minister, to burn offering made by fire unto the Lord: so they shall wash their hands and their feet, that they die not: and it shall be a statute forever to them, even to him and to his seed throughout their generations.”

It will be observed that nothing is said as to the shape of the laver. All the illustrations that are given of it in works on the tabernacle are without authority; in fact, they are purely imaginary. There is without doubt a divine reason for the concealment both of the shape and size, as it is the thing typified rather than the vessel itself to which the Spirit of God would direct our minds. The silence of Scripture is as instructive as its speech, and it is the happy privilege of the believer to bow to the one equally with the other. “The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.” (Deut. 29:29)

It was made entirely of brass, both the laver and its foot. The significance of this material has been frequently explained, but may again be recalled. It is divine righteousness testing man in responsibility, and consequently in the place where man is. Brass, on this account, is always found outside of the tabernacle; while gold, which is divine righteousness as suited to the nature of God, is found within, in the holy place, as well as in the holy of holies. But testing man, it of necessity condemns him, because he is a sinner; and hence it will be found to have associated with it a certain judicial aspect. There is another element to be specified. The laver was made out of a special character of brass, out of the brazen mirrors (see margin) used by the women who assembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation (38: 8), out of the very articles that revealed, in figure, their natural condition, and thereby showed their need of cleansing. If the brass therefore revealed and judged the condition of those it tested, the water was there to cleanse and purify.

For the water is a symbol of the Word. It is so used in John 3:5, compared with James 1:18 and 1 Peter 1: 23-25. It is also found in Eph. 5:26, in the special sense of the water of the laver.

But this will be seen more fully as we consider the use of the laver. It was for Aaron and his sons to wash their hands and their feet thereat. "When they go into the tabernacle of the congregation, they shall wash with water, that they die not," &c. It was an imperative, as well as a perpetual, obligation upon the priests to wash their hands and their feet on the occasions specified. Now before explaining the character of this washing, it will clear the way and aid the reader, to make a few preliminary remarks. Remark then, first, that the washing of the bodies of the priests, as at their consecration, is never repeated. It is the hands and feet only that are repeatedly to be washed in the laver. The reason of this is obvious. Washing the whole body is a figure of being born again, and this cannot be done again. Our Lord taught this truth in John 13 In reply to Peter He said, "He that is washed" (bathed, literally; i.e. washed all over) "needeth not save to wash" (another word) "his feet, but is clean every whit." The feet, or, as in the case of the priest, the hands and the feet, might be defiled, and need to be cleansed again and again, but the body never; for that was cleansed once and for all in water at the new birth. Observe, secondly, that it is water, and not blood, in the laver. It has often been attempted to deduce from this ordinance for the priests that the believer needs the repeated application of the blood of Christ. Such a thought is not only alien from the whole teaching of Scripture, but it also tends to undermine the efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ. Yea, it impugns the completion of atonement, and consequently the title of Christ to an abiding seat at the right hand of God. The blood of Christ has to do with guilt, and the moment the sinner comes under its value before God he is cleansed forever; for by one offering He hath perfected forever them that are sanctified. The one object of the Spirit of God in Heb. 9 and x. is to enforce this precious and momentous truth. That it has been lost sight of in the whole of Christendom is only too true; but the guide of the believer is not to be found in the current teachings of men, but in the immutable word of God. Whoever therefore will read the two chapters indicated, and read them honestly, will at once perceive that there is never a question of the imputation of guilt to the believer, but that he is entitled to rejoice in having no more conscience of sins, if he has been once cleansed by the precious blood of Christ.

What then, it may be distinctly asked, was the nature of the cleansing at the laver? It was confined, as pointed out, to the hands and the feet. Comparing this with John 13, a difference will be observed. In the case of the disciples the feet only were washed; in the case of Aaron and his sons it was their hands and their feet. The difference springs from the character of the dispensations. The hands are indicated for the priests, as well as the feet, because with them work was in question; they were under law. But with the disciples the feet only are washed, because, though done before the Lord had left them, it was an action typical of the present position of believers, with whom it is no question of work, but one of walk. Let it then be repeated that the priests were never re-washed or re-sprinkled with blood. They are looked upon as born again in figure, and as abidingly under the value of the blood. But thereafter comes the question of defilements in their service and walk. Now if there had been no provision for these they would have been debarred from their priestly functions in the sanctuary; for how could they have gone in before God with defiled hands and feet-into the presence of Him of whom it is said, "Holiness becometh thine house"? Hence this gracious provision of the water-symbol of the Word-that ere they entered into the holy place they might cleanse their hands and feet from the defilements which they had contracted.

Bearing in mind then the difference of the dispensations (as shown by the inclusion of the hands), the teaching of the laver corresponds entirely with that of John 13; that is, it is a question of cleansing from defilements. We find thus our Lord seated with His disciples, and it is said, "having loved His own that were in the world, He loved them unto the end." (vs. 1) This statement is significant on two accounts-first, as showing that it was a dealing with those who belonged to Him; and secondly, as revealing the motive of the ministry which He was about to perform. "During supper" (not "supper being ended") "the devil having now put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray Him; Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside His garments; and took a towel, and girded Himself." (vss. 2-4) The meaning of this action was, that as He could not continue longer with them, for He was going to God, He would show them how they might have part with Him in the place to which He was going. They had been washed (vs. 10), but in their passage through the world their feet would be defiled, and thereby, unless, as in the case of the priests, provision were made for their cleansing, they would be unable to have part with Him (vs. 8)-they would be unable to enjoy communion either with the Father or His Son Jesus Christ. Hence He reveals to them, by this symbolic act of washing their feet, how He by His ministry above on their behalf would remove the defilements they might contract. There are three points in the act to be noticed-first, having laid aside His garments-emblematic of His departure from this world-He took a towel, and girded Himself, an act expressive of His service on behalf of His own; then, secondly, He poured water into a basin. Water is also here a symbol of the Word. Lastly, He began to wash His disciples' feet; i.e. to apply the Word so as to effect their cleansing.

Bearing this in mind, we shall easily understand what answers to this in Christ's present ministry for His people-the truth really set forth by the laver. The apostle John says, "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous," &c. (1 John 1:1) The context shows that this is stated of those who have eternal life, and are brought into fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. It is also clear that there is no necessity that such should sin. "These things write I unto you that ye sin not;" and then he adds, "If any man sin." The advocacy of Christ with the Father is therefore for believers-and a provision for sins after conversion-God's means of removing the defilements thus incurred. If therefore a believer sins (there is never any question of the imputation of guilt; but) his communion is interrupted; and this can never more be enjoyed until the sin is removed-forgiven. As soon as he sins, Christ, as the Advocate, undertakes his cause, intercedes for him. An illustration of this is found in St. Luke: "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not." (Chapter 22:31,32) It is so now; as soon as-not before-the sin is committed Christ intercedes; and the answer to His intercession is the application of the Word through the Holy Spirit, sooner or later, to the ' conscience.

An illustration of this point also is found in the same gospel. After Peter had denied his Lord, as he had been forewarned, there was no sense of his sin, not even when he heard the cock crow, until the Lord looked upon him (Luke 22:61) This reached his conscience, broke his heart, as we may say, so that he went out and wept bitterly. In like manner, when the believer falls into sin, he would never repent if it were not for the intercession of the Advocate; and, as a matter of fact, he does not repent until, in response to the prayer of the Advocate, the Word, like the look upon Peter, used by the Holy Spirit reaches the conscience, and lays bare the character of his sin before God.

Then he is at once bowed in the place of self-judgment, and confesses his sin. This leads to the next and final stage. Confessing his sin, he finds that God "is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9); and now, his soul restored, he is able once again to enter the tabernacle, or, in other words, to enjoy again fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

This truth, the truth really of the laver, is of all importance for the believer. It is essential, in the first place, to know that we are cleansed once and forever as to guilt. But learning this, it is equally essential to understand that if sins after conversion are unconfessed and unjudged we are shut out from communion with God, disqualified for priestly service and worship; and not only so, but if we remain in that state, sooner or later God will deal with us, in answer to the intercession of Christ, to bring our sins to remembrance. The advocacy of Christ therefore meets the need of the believer-being, as it is, God's gracious provision for our sins-for the removal of our defilements, so that we may be free to go, without let or hindrance, into His immediate presence for worship and praise.

One thing more may be added. Aaron and his sons were always to wash at the laver when they entered into the tabernacle. This may teach us our need of continual self-judgment. How often are we hindered in prayer, worship, and service from neglect of this? There has been some failure, and we have not recalled it, or carried it into God's presence for confession and self-judgment; and hence, though unwittingly, we have been entering the tabernacle with defiled feet. As a consequence, we have been made to realize our coldness and constraint, our inability to occupy our priestly positions. May we never therefore forget the use of the laver-our constant need of having our feet washed by the loving ministry of our Advocate with the Father.

E. D.

A Note on Balak and Balaam

I think it is interesting to notice whereabouts in Paul's epistles this interesting scene comes in. We are well aware of what Paul says, "All these things happened unto them for ensamples "(types), &c. (1 Cor. 10:11) Hence we read his epistles with interest, and find therein the true meaning for us of the Red Sea, the Jordan, &c. This interesting scene, described in Num. 22-24, shows the people encamped in the plains of Moab, at the edge of the Jordan, just where they crossed over to Gilgal. Now the epistle to the Romans gives us the truth of the Red Sea; Col, 2. gives the Jordan; Eph. the land itself. Where then in these epistles do we see these questions (as in Balak's attempt to curse Israel) raised and answered? I think we shall find that, as in Israel's case, God justified His people, and would hear nothing against them; so God takes the same place of not allowing one charge against us, and that too at precisely the same spot as typified in Num. 22-24, just at the edge of the Jordan. Where then do we see ourselves brought thus far in the history of our redemption, as opened out for us almost in panoramic line in Paul's epistles? I think Rom. 8:31 and onwards mark the spot exactly. Read Num. 22-24, and then read, "What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us?" and see if the picture is not complete and beautiful. Balak took Balaam up to three places to view the people: first, to "the high places of Baal;" then to the "field of Zophim;" then to the heights of Peor. Do we not see in Rom. 8, first, "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" then, "Who is he that condemneth?" then, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Look at the people from any point whatsoever; let the questions be raised at these spots. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" "Who is he that condemneth?" "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Not one charge will God allow or listen to about His people. Their justification is complete. Now Rom. 8 just brings us to the edge of the Jordan, but neither into it nor over it, and the truth of Col. 2 (Jordan) links on there; but before entering on the truth of Col. 2 there comes in what answers to the scene of Num. 22-24 Again, "accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Balak really did that, but feeling himself powerless to accomplish the slaughter, he hires Balaam), yet "we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us." "Whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He justified, them He also glorified."

J. S. R.

Fragment: God's Heart and Grace

If I can fathom God's heart, I can fathom grace.

Fragment: to Have the Mind of Christ

There is nothing I feel more in going out to visit, than the desire that Christ should be so there, that the thing should come out that would come out of Christ-not my own thoughts. We do not know half how blessed it is to have the mind of Christ; but the mind of Christ was to go down to the cross.

J. N. D.

The Meat-Offering

Next to the burnt-offering comes the meat or food-offering, especially called most holy. "It is," we read, "a thing most holy of the offerings of the Lord made by fire." (Lev. 2:3) In this it had a feature in common with the sin-offering, and with the trespass-offering; whilst in common with the burnt-offering and the peace-offering it spoke of something about the Lord Jesus Christ apart from a delineation of anything that He was made for us. The burnt-offering, as we have seen, spoke of His death. The meat-offering spoke of His life, though not without a distinct reference to His death, and to that divine judgment, because of sin, which He in His grace stooped to bear. For no offering which the Israelite was permitted by the law to bring, if typical of the Lord Jesus Christ, passed over as of no moment the truth of His death. The offerer could never bring one which did not in some way or another testify of it. The wave-sheaf, typical of Him as risen, necessarily reminds us of His death. But whilst the wave-sheaf typifies Him as alive in resurrection, the meat-offering views Him as alive before death-of His life before the cross-all of which was a sweet savor to Jehovah.

A perfect man then this offering prefigured-one holy, harmless, undefiled; tempted in all points like us, sin apart, and in whom there is no sin (Heb. 7:26; 4. 15; 1 John 3:5); one, too, whose delight it was to do God's will, and who always did the things which pleased the Father, setting the Lord Jehovah always before His face (Psa. 40:8; John 8:29; Psa. 16:8); speaking what He had heard of the Father, and doing what He had seen the Father do (John 8:26,49; 5. 19); and at last becoming obedient unto death, the death of the cross. (Phil. 2:8) Till the Lord Jesus appeared, no such man had been known; since His departure to heaven, no similar person has been seen. So when the meat-offering was prescribed in the law, no man had ever been known in whose life on earth its lineaments could be traced. But since the advent of the Lord Jesus in humiliation we do know one, though only one, of whom it certainly was and could be a type.

Composed of fine flour, whether dry or cooked, it typified the Lord as a man; mingled with oil, and presented with frankincense as often as that was the case, it spoke of His conception by the Holy Spirit, and of His life on earth, being a sweet savor to God. And when the anointing with oil is spoken of, we are reminded of Him who was anointed with the Holy Spirit after His baptism by John the Baptist. Under various conditions could meat-offerings be brought. They might be voluntary or compulsory. Of the voluntary, we read in Lev. 2; as to those commanded, we have the directions in different parts of the law. After the people had entered the land, whensoever they, or the stranger that sojourned with them, brought a voluntary burnt-offering or a peace-offering to God, a meat-offering was to accompany it (Num. 15:1-16); and the same rule held good for Israel at all their solemn feasts (Num. 28:29.), and on special occasions as well (Lev. 9:14.; Num. 6: 8), besides the daily meat-offering that accompanied the morning and evening burnt-offering (Exo. 29:40), and the weekly sabbatic-offering. (Num. 28:9) In all these Israel individually or nationally had part. But whereas in the case of the voluntary meat-offering no measure defining its size or quality was mentioned, for those which the people were commanded to provide, a regular measure was laid down, according as the animal sacrificed was a bullock, a ram, or a lamb.

Another meat-offering which was also commanded by God to be brought had its measure prescribed, and its daily offering was enjoined. We allude to that presented daily for the priests by the high priest, commencing from the day of his consecration. (Lev. 6:19-23) All these were typical of the Lord Jesus Christ. There remains, however, one other offering, called in Hebrew by the common term minghah, and translated in the authorized version a meat-offering, and that was the special offering on the feast of weeks of the two wave-loaves, typical really of those from Jews and Gentiles who together form the Church of God. Dismissing all consideration of this, since no part of it was offered on the altar of burnt-offering, we shall confine our attention throughout this article to those meat-offerings which were really typical of the Lord Jesus Christ, a portion therefore of which was burnt on the brazen altar; only adding, that as minghah means a present, and meat-offering is simply food-offering, the reader may understand how the wave-loaves could be thus designated.

And first of the voluntary meat-offering. Its composition was defined by the Lord Jehovah; for who, save God, was to say what would be as such acceptable unto Him? It might be either what is called the dry meat-offering, which was composed of fine flour uncooked, or it might be of fine flour previously baked, or boiled, or made into wafers, since the man Christ Jesus could be viewed either simply as a man, or as a man who passed through trials on earth at the hands of His enemies; for in both these aspects He was seen to be perfect, and God could take delight in Him.

In the dry meat-offering oil was only mingled with the flour, typical of His birth who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; and consequently that holy thing which was born of the Virgin Mary was called the Son of God. Son of God by eternal generation, the only-begotten of the Father, as John the evangelist describes Him (John 1:14;3. 16-18), He is also Son of God as born in time according to the testimony of the second Psalm (vs. 7) Perfect then as a man He always was, and holy from His birth, and by the manner of His conception. As a child He "grew, and waxed strong" (for thus probably St. Luke wrote), "filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon Him." (Luke 2:40) Such was He seen to be ere He completed His twelfth year.

Then, at Jerusalem, among the doctors, hearing them, and asking them questions, but not teaching them; "all that heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers," who was now about His Father's business, as He told His mother in the temple. Perfect in His position as a child with the doctors, He was as perfect in the home at Nazareth, going down thither with His mother and Joseph, being subject unto them, where "He increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man" (Luke 2: 51, 52), and worked at Joseph's trade, as the people at Nazareth years afterward attested. (Mark 6:3) Then, at His baptism by John, God's seal was openly put on His life up to that moment when the voice from heaven declared, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." (Matt. 3:17)

Perfect, too, in His life of service, going about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil (Acts 10:38); approved of God amongst Israel by miracles, signs, and wonders which God did by Him in their midst (Acts 2:22); seen to be the Holy One and the Just (Acts 3:14); borne witness to a second time by the Father as His well-beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased (Matt. 17:5); this was the One of whom the fine flour mingled with oil, and with frankincense placed on it, was the type; His manhood typified by that which came out of the earth, the peculiarity of His conception delineated in the oil which was mingled with it, and His acceptableness as a man to

God set forth in the frankincense placed upon it.

The offering brought to the altar, a handful of it was cast into the fire, which was kept alive thereon by the daily burnt-sacrifice; for, until that had been done by the priest, the offering was not completed. Now this point is a most important one. The fire on the altar is the emblem of divine judgment. Hence the offering of that which typified the Lord in His life on earth as a man was not complete without the memorial also of His death. To God His walk on earth, as we have seen, was always acceptable; but no man is allowed to bring that in remembrance before God apart from the recognition of His having borne the divine judgment due to sin. To attempt to speak of His pure and perfect life before God, unless we own what He suffered in His death, is not worship acceptable to the Father. And since the priest at the altar is always the type of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, there was shadowed forth at the altar the offering up of the Lord Jesus Christ by Himself, His voluntary surrender to bear divine judgment—a truth we must always remember, if we would speak in the holy presence of God. of the fragrance and acceptableness of His life. How much is this ignored, yet how clearly is it taught us in this offering! Men can admire the even walk of the Son of God across the stage of this world, who refuse to own the need or the results of His death. But God will not accept such homage; He will not allow that to be true worship to Him. How completely then is the fallen creature shut up to the recognition of Christ's atoning death, if he would worship God acceptably! We can only enter the divine presence without judgment overtaking us, as we go through the veil—His flesh. We cannot worship God acceptably if we do not acknowledge before Him the death of His Son on the cross, here symbolized in the memorial of the meat-offering burnt upon the altar.

The memorial having been burnt thereon, with all the frankincense, the offerer left the remainder with the officiating priest for consumption by all the males of the priesthood, as part of the divine provision for those who ministered to God. For the offerer could not partake of the residue; God's priests alone were to feed on it. Now Christians are a holy priesthood similar in that to the priesthood of Aaron and his sons, so as priests they are to find in the life of Christ food for their souls; and as the remainder of the dry meat-offering was for Aaron and his sons, so the life of Christ is for us now, and is food common to us all.

But here again God carefully guarded the truth about the person of Christ; for the fine flour was not to be baked with leaven when prepared for the use of the priests, and it was to be eaten with unleavened bread by Aaron and his sons in the holy place. The perfect purity of Christ, and His separation from the least admixture of, or connection in Himself with evil, is thus traced out, and all undue familiarity and lack of reverence towards Him as a man is distinctly rebuked. This food was holy, and differing from common food, was to be partaken of in a holy place in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation; and everyone that touched it was to be holy. (Lev. 6:14-18)

But the Lord's life on earth can be viewed in two most distinct aspects—in His walk simply as a man, and His walk through sufferings and trials before the cross. As typical of the Lord Jesus in this second aspect, the cooked meat-offering next comes before us. Until after his baptism by John in Jordan He had not, that we read of in the gospels, ever experienced the world's enmity. His appearance in the synagogue at Nazareth, where He had been brought up, confirms this. What He said there aroused the anger of the congregation, though till He spoke it they appeared to be ready to welcome Him. But with the commencement of His ministry His sufferings from man

began. Of such Peter wrote (1 Peter 2:23), and Paul likewise (Heb. 12:3), and to them the Lord referred (John 15:20,21), and the Holy Spirit had predicted them in the Psalms and the prophets. Hence in the cooked meat-offering we read of anointing with oil as well as mingling with oil, foreshadowing the Lord's anointing with the Spirit at His baptism preparatory to His work of testimony for God, and in service to man upon earth. With His baptism commenced a new chapter in His life. He was henceforth to minister to men, and in the great congregation, till the circumstances immediately connected with the cross should cause that ministry to cease. In harmony with this the directions about the cooked meat-offerings commence a new paragraph.

For the dry meat-offering, as we have remarked, no measure was prescribed. What the offerer could, or was minded to bring, that the Lord was willing to receive. In the cooked meat-offering the same readiness on God's part was manifested-no measure for it was fixed; and three different kinds are mentioned, any of which a person was free to present. No sacrifice but one, and that the most costly, could be accepted on man's behalf, and that the Lord Jehovah provided; for nothing short of the gift of His Son could really meet the requirements of His holiness. But when any one would present a cooked meat-offering to God, the requirements as laid down in the law placed such within the reach of the poorest; and if it were only an oblation in a kettle (not frying pan, v. 7), it would be, when presented by the priest, an offering made by fire of a sweet savor unto the Lord, though there was lacking in it the full delineation of Christ, which was so carefully portrayed in the other two, in both of which there was the mingling with oil, and the anointing with oil. In the first of these, described in verse 4, the unleavened cakes were to be mingled with oil, and the unleavened wafers to be anointed with oil; for the wafers with the cakes really formed but one offering. In the second case, when the offering was on a flat slice, or griddle, it was to be of fine flour unleavened, mingled with oil, then parted in pieces, and oil poured upon it. How precise are these directions, typical of what then was only known to God! Yet little as the Israelite could have understood it, when he brought his offering as enjoined by the law, he was presenting in type to God that which was full of fragrance to Him-His own well-beloved Son, a man dependent, obedient, and perfect, and whose life on earth, in all its stages, was fully acceptable to Him.

C. E. S.

(To be concluded, if the Lord will, in the next number)

Crucified to the World

It can never be true that we are crucified to the world unless the heart is in constant communion with the cross of Christ. The cross comes in, in everything, as a matter of daily experience. How is one to pass into the old age of a Christian? How find one's self laid aside, no longer with any energy? Surely only by the cross. 'How can one meet difficulties with a word, and be kept in perfect quietness? Only by the cross. How can we keep under such flesh as ours? Does the "old man" ever get to be better? Not a bit! but you must learn to be able to carry the cross, saying of everything that is evil, "I have nothing to do with that, because my Lord was crucified on account of it."

G. V. W.

Devotedness and Separation

<R ROM 12:1-2)At different times we see that the testimony of the Spirit of God has been to some particular truths to meet the special need of the day. In our day it is a testimony to practical devotedness, and entire separation from the evil that is in the world. It has been through God's laying these two truths home on the conscience that anything like revival in this country has been accomplished. Notice the lever the apostle uses in this chapter to move the saints. Had he not a heart for the sheep? Assuredly he had. But there was another he had a heart for, and that was the Lord Jesus Christ. He begins, "I beseech," &c. (observe the claim which this emphatic love is led to use), "by the mercies of God." This is the motive by which he appeals to them. Mercies went up to the God of heaven, and down to the mind of the poor feeble Christian. Without a sense of the mercies there cannot be devotedness to God, and separation from evil. Holiness will not do it. If I am lingering in Sodom, it is because I have not learned what mercy is. What do you think God ought to do towards you? Have you any claim upon Him, but that He should hate you? Are you just clay in the hands of the Potter, what no other potter could make anything with? Are you in His hand, for Him to mold you as He will, guilty and loathsome as you are in contrast with Christ? Christ is light, and you are darkness.

God could do nothing with you but pick you up in mercy.

Observe what this mercy really is. It is not merely providential mercy as men talk, but the mercies are summed up in all the preceding chapters of the epistle; and the summing up does not even close at chapter 8., but after showing the dispensations in chapters 9. to 11., when He has opened and shut all that for the earth, &c., he breaks out, "I beseech you, by the mercies of God." What there is for man must be all on the ground of mercy. God does not want a testimony from us in heaven, but He does upon the earth; and He will have one. We must get into God's thoughts about things, and we see that God never brings any one into such a position as not to need mercy.

"That ye may prove what is that perfect, and acceptable," &c. The thought is, that we are to prove what the risen Christ is in one who has the conscience of sin in the members. We are told to "cease to do evil." Aye, but you say, I find evil is within me, and I cannot get away from it. But you are told to cease to do evil, not cease from evil. Satan may put things into my thoughts; but I am not to give heed to them. No; I have done with them, you say. But it may be suggested that your heart and mind are running upon the evil. No; I have done with it, done with it. John Bunyan vexed his soul for many a long year with what was afterward his very joy. "Tell Him, tell Him!" was the tormenting word to him. But afterward he found it was because Christ was his that Satan had vexed him; and when he could take things boldly for Christ, things went more easily with him.

Why is the Christian left here at all? If a man makes a clock, it is for a purpose. It has hands to show the time, and they are like the living members of Christ here-made for use, for service to Christ; or else why are you converted before you are just going to die? It would have saved God a great deal of trouble and much dishonor if He had not converted people till just before they died. God meant to get honor to Himself down here. As the clock is made to show the time, so God's

people were intended to show forth His praises. A clock is never kept in order if it is not kept going; and you will never find a body in health if not in action; and in spiritual things, you will never find a Christian in a healthy state who does not keep his body a living sacrifice for God. A Christian ought to be full of joy and of the Holy Spirit.

The second exhortation of the apostle is to nonconformity to the world, and this is a point which tests us all very closely. It is a most difficult thing to get the true test as to what worldliness is. There is one thing certain-you will never get it if you keep to the outside features of conduct; for worldliness may as nicely be fed in the heart with all the appearance of denying it. In Cain we see the selfishness of his plea- 'Lest any finding me, kill me.' What does He do when God sets His mark upon him? He goes and settles himself down nicely without God. It was self and not God he thought of. He had not the single eye, his thoughts all clustering round self, and not the God that had spared him; and there was his sin. If a man is grasping after something for self, he is not satisfied with God, and is wanting something else, and something by which he may exalt himself a little in the world. "It is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life." All these deny that God made us for Himself. The moment Adam and Eve catered for themselves, all the mischief was done. With Christ Satan tried these three things, but could not get in, because Christ had no mind to cater for Himself. The world can creep in between the leaves of the thoughts of one's mind, and do more mischief than the bookworm in a library. Just as the worm does the harm in secret, so does the world in the heart: self is most difficult to detect.

That form of worldliness which connects itself with feebleness of conscience is most deceitful. The body, soul, and spirit is for Christ. A man says, "I am not at liberty to eat meat." Well, he must not eat it against his conscience, and yet after awhile he may find it was just the world in his conscience that hindered his doing it. It might be his own great religiousness, and more light will show him this. How can you decide between conscience and feeling? In answer to this question, I would ask another: Do you really mean to say to God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, "Thou requirest this of me, and I give it thee"? Ah I say, Take care you do not mistake feeling for conscience. If you walk like the world, you are no witness for Christ, and you have to pick your way out of Sodom as quickly as you can. Does the world come in where God should be? If I am seeking something apart from God, it is the world, lust, &c. The only power to sustain this pilgrim course is mercy. If you leave it behind you for a moment you break down directly. Nothing dissolves the ties to the world first or last but that which separated us at first.

G. V. W.

The Songs and Their Solution

Of the 150 Psalms two of the shortest are 131 and 133; but they are spiritual gems of the inspired word. Each is a song of degrees of David. In the first of them we see Christ; in the other His brethren.

Surely only He could say that He was without the pride of the natural heart; only He could disclaim every scornful look. None but Himself could court the gaze of the Searcher of hearts, saying, "Jehovah, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty." What a lesson this for His saints. If ever there trod upon earth one in the form of our humanity who was entitled to carry a lofty mien, and to take in hand its great matters, it was He who voluntarily accepted the lowest place, and who said, "I am meek and lowly in heart;" the One who did neither strive nor cry, and whose voice was not heard in the streets! He made himself of no reputation, but took a bondsman's form, and humbled Himself therein unto absolute obedience, even unto death. What a study for every true disciple is His Nazariteship, and His emptying Himself for that deep, deep descent which none can measure but He, for none ever made it save Himself; that unequalled stoop from God's eternal throne down to the place and the circumstances of penury, suffering, and shame, entitling Him unaffectedly to say, "My heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty."

Our first lesson then is one of lowliness; the second is separatedness. "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child." Again are we struck with the fitness of these words in His lips. How often, when we read this language, and much more of like import, we have to say, How true to the letter is all this of the eternal Son of the Father in His incarnate nature, God's lovely man upon earth. But when we ask ourselves if it be equally descriptive of His disciples, our own hearts rebuke us, we are self-condemned, and have to confess with dismay that our following Him has been sadly like that of Peter—"afar off." But let us gaze with admiration upon Himself, and acknowledge in what divine perfection the Psalmist's utterance found its unqualified answer in the Lord Jesus. 1 He who learned obedience by the things which He suffered also trod the path of practical separation—the unworldly One, the heavenly Stranger—who equally, amid attraction and distraction, behaved and quieted Himself "as a child that is weaned of his mother." The One who could truly say, as to experience, "My soul is even as a weaned child." It is indeed a beautiful lesson for faith; but again are we smitten with the conviction how imperfectly we have learned it. One who is really weaned, we must observe, is not simply cut off from nature's springs, but has lost all his former relish for them; and has acquired in its place a new-born taste for the more solid food that is adapted for growth and maturity. Must we not admit that most of us are little, if at all, beyond that cutting off from the world—that which is of the earth earthy—which arises from the discovery that it is no longer allowable to us or consistent with the path of faith; but whose hearts linger over it, and whose appetite has never been eradicated? It is no little measure of attainment then, when neither cynically nor stoically, but solely because the heart is captive in glory with Christ, we pass by all that the world presents to the observing eye, the appreciative ear, the educated mind, the cultured taste—unattracted, unaffected, undetained! And doubtless more especially is that so in the case of those whose means enable,

not to say permit, them to indulge and gratify what the most delicate and refined feeling alone seems so laudably to suggest. Thus how small the number of those who have positively turned away from nature's springs, having no longer any zest for her attractions, because of the excellence that has been found in that new and spiritual food by which Christ Himself is practically appropriated more and more by the soul; who, passing along the moving scenes of daily life, know how to refuse the world's good equally with the world's evil; before whom its brightest things are lusterless and its gayest scenes joyless, because of "the glory of that light "which has eclipsed everything but itself, and closed our eyes to all but Him who is its center and its source. It is these alone who can truthfully say-

" This world is a wilderness wide!

I have nothing to seek or to choose;

I've no thought in the waste to abide;

I've naught to regret nor to lose."

Few indeed are they whose affections are so wrapped up with Himself that without hyperbole they can affirm-

" 'Tis the treasure I've found in His love

That has made me a pilgrim below."

Only such can fittingly use the language of our psalm, "Surely I have behaved and quieted myself, as a child that is weaned of his mother: my soul is even as a weaned child!"

With manifest consistency there ensues confidence in the Lord, which is our third lesson. "Let Israel hope in Jehovah, from henceforth and forever." Nothing is so conducive to confidingness in Jehovah as the being weaned from natural things. The heart is free then to turn to Him who is invisible, and confidence in Himself is engendered and increased. And who is our great exemplar in this, also, but that blessed One who, in the same hour in which He pronounced woes upon the guilty cities which had witnessed His mighty works, and the unbelief of which had made them a waste and a wilderness to Him, rejoiced in spirit as He turned His sorrowful eyes upward saying, "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth "(the heaven of His glory and joy, and the earth of His shame and sorrow), "that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." Could there, be a finer utterance or one of a deeper and more touching pathos? And how divinely does it exhibit Him as a child weaned from His mother (Israel and her cities) to find His meat in doing the will of Him that sent Him, and His peculiar joy in the revelation of His Father to the babes!

The fitting sequel we find in Psa. 133 The Spirit of God is there delineating the grace and the beauty of unity among saints, the brethren of Christ, a term applied both to the Church and to the remnant (Compare Matt. 28:10 with 25: 40) The first verse embodies the proposition; the second and third yield suited illustrations. Nothing could be higher in moral beauty than the first of these. (vs. 2) The Spirit's unity is surely suggested; and the precious, holy anointing oil clearly prefigures the Holy Spirit Himself descending from the mitred head of the true Aaron (see Heb. 2:9) down to the very fringe of His garments. Nor is the illustration less appropriate than beautiful; for the saints

should surely be to Christ as the flowing robes of His adorning, each having received the Holy Spirit-an unction from the Holy One-first poured out upon His person, and then having been a second time received by Him, descending from Him, the Head in Glory, upon the members of His body down to the very least. Nor is the closing verse less suggestive of the breadth of the stream by-and-by. When all His paths shall drop fatness! when the nation shall be united in Jehovah's land; when Israel and Judah shall dwell together as brethren; when, as the dew condensing on the mountain slopes of Hermon and of Zion, the Spirit shall be poured out from on high, and the wilderness be a fruitful field, and the fruitful field be counted for a forest. (Isa. 32:15) Then, and not till then, shall He see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied!

“ Lord, haste that day of cloudless ray,

That prospect bright, unending;

Where God shall shine, in light divine,

In glory never fading.”

W. R. D.

Fragment: Christ's Sympathies

IF we knew more of Christ's sympathies, the children of God might have more for one another. If full of sorrow yourself, go and sympathize with another, and your own will be gone.

What Is a Christian's Rule of Life, Christ or the Law?

It is commonly taught among Christians, that the believer's rule of walk is the moral law, or the Ten Commandments. It is admitted, of course, by all, that the believer is not justified by the deeds of the law, and that if the law be thus used, it will only add to man's condemnation. His justification must clearly be by grace, and on the principle of faith; but when justified, what is the standard by which his life is to be governed? This, it is generally held, is the moral law, which was undoubtedly the rule given to Israel, and for its own purpose is, therefore, as perfect as all the other works of God's hands. It is true that believers are said to be under grace, and not under law; but this, it is maintained, applies to justification, not to walk. They are urged also not to return to law, but this is explained to mean the ceremonial law, not the moral. These distinctions are intelligible, but are they scriptural? Where does the word of God speak of a believer as being under the law for one purpose, and not for another? Where does it declare that while the ceremonial law is abrogated, the moral law is still in force as the rule for Christian walk? No doubt there is a distinction between the moral and ceremonial law, and also between the law as a ground of justification, and the law as a rule of life; but when this distinction is used to make Scripture harmonize with theology, it behooves us to inquire whether Scripture is thus fairly interpreted.

It is said, "that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth;" but it is added that the believer does not live, having "become dead to the law by the body of Christ, that he should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." (Rom. 7:1,4) Then follows-" Now we are delivered from the law, having died to that" (the true reading) "wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter." (vs. 6) Here, as usual in this epistle, man is looked at as first alive in the flesh. Such is his standing before God, and in this standing the law "hath dominion over" him. But believers are "dead with Christ" (6: 8), and are therefore "become dead to the law "-" delivered from the law, having died to that wherein they were held." No language can be clearer. The believer, as dead with Christ, is free from the law.

Is this the ceremonial law? Evidently not; for the passage goes on-" I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet "(vs. 7); so that it is of the decalogue itself that the Holy Spirit is here speaking, and to the decalogue itself that the believer is declared to be dead. Is he dead to it, then, only as concerns justification, and still alive to it as a rule of conduct? In the above passage the question of justification is not even alluded to; and the reason why we are said to have "become dead to the law "is, that we "should be married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God." When "in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members, to bring forth fruit unto death." (vs. 5) The contrast, then, is not between justification and condemnation, but between the fruits produced under the law, and those produced by our being "married to another." We cannot be "married to another "until we are dead to the law. If alive to the law, we are not dead with Christ, and the result is "fruit unto death." If married to Christ, we are dead to the law, and the result is "fruit unto God." The believer is, therefore, dead to the law, not only as a ground of justification, but as a rule of

walk. The law can no more produce fruit to God after his conversion, than save him from his sins before his conversion. So in the previous chapter it is said, "Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but yield yourselves unto God as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. For sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law, but under grace." (6: 13, 14) Here, again, the subject is not justification, but walk. Our justification is assumed, and the question is, whether, being justified, we shall serve sin or God. What delivers us from the power of sin? When "in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death." Now, however, being "not in the flesh," but "dead with Christ," are we put under the law again to be kept from sin, and to bear fruit for God? Just the contrary. "Sin shall not have dominion over you; for ye are not under the law, but under grace." In a word, the power for walk is not in our being under the law, but depends upon our being dead to the law.

The apostle then asks, "Shall we sin because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid." (vs. 15) But what is the ground for this decided negative?

Does he say, "You must not sin, because, though not under the law for justification, you are under it for walk"? Surely if this had been true, it would have been the obvious reply, and that the apostle does not so reply proves that the doctrine is not true. Instead of drawing this theological distinction, he shows that the new basis of Christian morality is, not the law partially revived as a rule of conduct, but the new position into which the believer is brought as dead and risen with Christ. The law, so far from being the rule of life for a believer, works nothing but misery when the believer thus uses it; for even of a quickened soul it is said that "sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence" (Rom. 7:8), while elsewhere it is written that "the strength of sin is the law." (1 Cor. 15:56) So the apostle reproaches the Galatians for bringing in the law after grace was known. "Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh?" (Gal. 3:2,3) This is very striking, for the Holy Spirit here speaks of the introduction of the law, after they had believed, as a reverting to the flesh. He then shows that the law, however introduced, is fatal; "for as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (vs. 10) It may be said that this refers to justification, not to conduct. It is, however, addressed to persons already justified. Moreover, the principle is a general one, applying to any use of the law whatever, and showing that there is no such thing as being half dead to the law, and half alive to it; but that if we are under the law at all, we are under the curse. So it is taught elsewhere, "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." (Gal. 5:3) How could Scripture and theology more flatly contradict each other? Theology says that we are under the law in one way, and free from it in another. Scripture says that we must be under the law altogether or free from it altogether.

Sinking theology, then, and following Scripture, we find that the believer is dead to the law, not only for justification, but as a rule of life, and that its introduction in any form is a departure from the principle of grace. But does this give rein to lawlessness? The apostle deals with this very question in the Romans. If the law were retained as a rule of life, it could never have arisen, and the fact that it did arise proves that the law was not so retained. But if not, what barrier is there against lawlessness? A twofold barrier; first, that being "dead to sin," we cannot "live any longer therein

“(Rom. 6:2); and next, that being “married to another,” we can “bring forth fruit unto God.” As dead with Christ, we are dead to sin, and the practical teaching founded on it is, “Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.” (Chapter 6:12) As having life in Christ, we are “alive unto God,” and the practical result ought to be, “that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” (vs. 4)

The law was, of course, perfect for its own purpose; but, working through the flesh, it not only could give no power against lust, but positively created lust. Being “weak through the flesh,” it could not “condemn sin in the flesh.” (Rom. 8:3) But now we, being “married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead,” are able to “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,” and thus “the righteousness of the law is fulfilled in us “(vs. 4). While under law, we are, through the flesh, unable to fulfill its righteous requirements. Freed from the law, walking as those who are dead and risen with Christ, its righteous requirements are fulfilled in us. Thus the attempt to put the believer under the law as a rule of life defeats its own purpose. It is only when we are completely emancipated from it, that its righteous demands are brought out in our lives. For the law, while it gives directions, gives no power. Power comes from the new life in which we are quickened together with Christ. Having the life of the risen Christ, we are able to show forth that life in our walk and conversation.

But it may be asked, Did not Christ fulfill the law? was He not “made under the law?” and if we are to show forth His life in our own, must not we be under the law too? Undoubtedly Christ, as a man born into this world, was “made under the-law.” But we are not “married” to Christ as a man born into this world, but as the man “who is raised from the dead.” It is as united with Christ risen that we have, and are enabled to “walk in, newness of life.” Christ as man met every righteous requirement of the law, even to death, which He endured on our behalf. Is Christ risen and glorified under the law? If not, neither are we; for we are dead with Him, and thus delivered from all out of which He has passed, while our life, as quickened with Him, is the same as His own.

But is not the law appealed to by Paul himself?

Does he not say that “all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, -Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself “? (Gal. 5:14) Does he not quote the fifth commandment in speaking to children, “Honor thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth”? (Eph. 6:2,3) And do not these and kindred passages show that the believer is still under the law? Such passages doubtless show that “the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.” To the Galatians his reference to the law was most apt; for they wished to put themselves under the law, and what more telling than to show them that the law itself condemned them? But surely we can quote the law as indicating God’s mind without putting ourselves under it. Some of our judges have cited the Roman law, because of its admitted excellence, in delivering their judgments; but who dreams that these judges held the Roman law to be binding in our country? If God lays down principles in the law, they must be perfect, and as such Paul quotes them. But this no more proves that we are under the law of the Ten Commandments, than a judge’s reference to Roman law proves that Roman law is the law of this realm. On the other hand, if believers are under the law as a rule of life, why is this rule so rarely named? Why is the apostle constantly urging other motives, and hardly ever even alluding

to that code which, according to theology, is the Christian's real guide? This alone suffices to show how widely the theological dogma of the believer's being still under the law as his rule of walk departs from the true teaching of God's word.

The rule for the believer's walk, then, is Christ, and not the law. He may follow the law ever so diligently, but the result will be that "the commandment which was ordained to life" will be "found to be unto death." (Rom. 7:10) Just so far as his walk answers to the truth that he is "married to another, even to Him who is raised from the dead," will he "bring forth fruit unto God." In all cases our rule of life depends on the position we occupy. A child and a servant both owe obedience to the head of the house, but the child's obedience should flow from his position as a child, the servant's from his position as a servant. An Israelite's relationship with Jehovah was determined by the covenant made at Sinai, and his rule of life was, therefore, the law. Our relationship with God is determined by our having received the Spirit of adoption, and our rule of life is, therefore, Christ, "the first born among the many brethren" to whom we belong, the Son, whose Spirit "God hath sent forth into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father." As dead with Christ, we are dead to the law; as quickened with Christ, we can walk in newness of life; as beholding the glory of Christ, we "are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." (2 Cor. 3:18)

T. B. B.

THE people of God should wait with the girdle and the lamp, which are the beautiful standing symbols of their calling, till the Lord appears—that is, with minds girt up unto holy separation from present things, and with hearts brightened up with the desire and expectation of coming things.

J. G. B.

The Meat-Offering

But further, not only were the component parts of this offering defined, but all that was to be carefully kept out of it was as plainly declared. No leaven or honey was to be mixed with it under any pretext, whilst, on the other hand, salt was never to be absent from it; for with all their offerings they were to offer salt. Grace, of which salt is here the emblem, was always displayed in Christ, from whom corruption of the flesh and mere natural sweetness were wholly absent. Whatever then men might think of Him, calling Him the carpenter's son (Matt. 13:55), and forming their estimate of Him from His mother, and brothers and sisters, people like themselves, God distinguishes between Him and us. Grace, which is lacking in the natural man, was always displayed in Him. Corruption, which characterizes the offspring of the first man, was wholly absent from Him, who is the second man. This marked difference is also manifested in the contrast between the treatment of the oblation of first-fruits, which God commanded Israel annually to offer, and the meat-offering of a new harvest, an ear (not a sheaf) of corn parched by fire, corn beaten out of full ear, or, as some would describe it, garden-land grain. The former could not go on God's altar; the latter could. The former typified God's saints; the latter Christ Himself. (Lev. 2:12-14) Between them and Him how great the difference!

The cooked meat-offering duly dealt with, its residue was removed to be eaten by the priest that offered it (Lev. 7:9), a regulation the reason of which we can understand. For as this class of offering typified the Lord, who experienced trials on earth previous to His death upon the cross, no one but Himself could know what such were; so to the officiating priest, the type of Christ, and not

to all the males of the priesthood, was assigned the residue of such a meat-offering.

Of the compulsory meat-offering the measures were fixed, varying in ordinary cases with the animal offered of the herd or of the flock for a burnt-offering or a peace-offering; viz., a tenth of an ephah for a lamb, two-tenths for a ram, and three-tenths for a bullock. This was the rule to guide the offerer who voluntarily offered an animal for a sacrifice of sweet savor, and this rule held good for the daily, the weekly, the monthly, and the annual celebrations. For Christ in His death and in His life were both to be brought in remembrance before God. His death as a sacrifice of sweet savor was to be foreshadowed, but His life likewise. The former was not to be prefigured without the latter. The order, however, is suggestive. The meat-offering accompanied the burnt-offering or peace-offering; for men can only take up Christ's life before God in connection with His death, reading, as it were, His history in the inverse order. Thank God, we may speak of that holy, spotless life when we own and share in the rich results of His atoning death; for in all these appointed meat-offerings there was typified simply the Lord Jesus as a man without reference to His path of trial upon earth. A dry, not a cooked, meat-offering was therefore presented on such occasions.

One other offering must now be noticed, that for the priests. In common with other prescribed meat-offerings its measure was determined by God; but, differing from them all, half of it was offered in the morning, and half in the evening. Daily therefore was it to be presented, and by the high priest himself. Further, it was a baked, not a dry, meat-offering, baked on a flat slice, and brought in pieces to the altar, on which it was wholly burnt; for as this offering did not shadow forth communion, those on whose behalf it was offered being all the priests, there was no one to eat of it.

By this offering then there was daily presented to God, on behalf of the priests, that which spoke of the Lord Jesus in His life of trial as He ministered here among men. How fitting this was we can understand who form part of the holy priesthood. Aaron and his sons were priests unto God, but the One whose life on earth in ministry could be acceptable to Jehovah was not of Aaron's race, and that meat-offering each morning and each evening really proclaimed it. The perfect Man had yet to come. Now He has come; and whilst Christians, as priests, are to find in the life of the Lord, traced out for them in the Word, that which is food for their souls, we have always to remember the immeasurable moral distance there was between His walk in service on earth and our walk down here. No man was ever perfectly acceptable to God in all his ways but One—the man Christ Jesus, whose life God had thus kept continually before Him. The faithful and true witness, His life which gave full satisfaction to God, is the only perfect example for us. C. E. S.

The Philadelphian Overcomer

The Lord, seeing in Philadelphia a true reflection of His Church, could flow out to it in unstrained affection, establishing it (i.e. Philadelphia) in the precious consciousness of the portion which faith realizes that the bride ever possesses in His unchanging love, while it sings-

“ For thee, His royal bride, for thee,

His brightest glories shine;

And, happier still, His changeless heart

With all its love is thine.”

But, alas! in nothing are we a more accurate reflection of the Church of the apostolic days than in the matter of our history. For is not that which claims to be Philadelphia to-day (and it continues to the Lord's coming, though leavened by Laodiceanism as the last stage becomes characteristic) far below the moral level at which it once stood? Soon, how very soon! the Pentecostal state gave place to “a form of godliness without the power;” and this not alone through the introduction of wood, hay, and stubble, along with gold, silver, and precious stones; but through sloth of heart in those who formed the assembly to grow up into Him in all things who is the head, even Christ. Nevertheless, for this the Lord was careful to make every necessary provision (Eph. 4: 11-13,16); and it was a necessity also to the Church's expression of Him upon earth, whose name it was privileged to bear. And thus has it been with us in both respects. As a consequence of the latter, there is a feeble realization amongst us of the blessings the truth we profess offers, and a still less sense of its claims. Where, therefore, faithfulness to an absent Lord is sought, not only must there be a gracious reiteration of facts already known, but individual responsibility needs insisting upon, the conscience to be kept beneath the light, that the heart may effectually receive; for being on the true ground outwardly by no means implies Philadelphian state, even in believers found there. It is only overcomers, as we hope to see, who as to state merit the Lord's commendation, and are fully capable of entering into the sweetness of His precious words-” I have loved thee.” (Rev. 3:9) Applicable certainly in a primary sense to His Church, but once also corporately enjoyed by the remnant walking in the Philadelphian character.

Through never-failing grace some doubtless will prove faithful in individual and Church responsibilities, living in the power and comfort of “that blessed hope”-as Laodiceanism leavens well-nigh everything, and becomes increasingly manifest even in many on true Church ground-until the Lord comes utterly to reject an unworthy profession. Those most desirous of being found in such a condition then, will not refuse a standard by which Philadelphians may test themselves, and become humbled in the sense of how far below we all are of the standard supplied by Himself, and therefore divine. It is only this which can retain any in the approved condition-that of littleness (vs. 8; 2 Cor. 12:10), and can qualify them for the personal contact with the Lord so fully portrayed in the epistle (Rev. 3:8-12), as well as to be reckoned, in the Lord's matchless grace (certainly not in one's own esteem), amongst the overcomers.

It has often been truly remarked, that there is an evident connection between the aspect the Lord presents towards the Church, and the condition it is found in, at each of the seven stages. Thus, in Philadelphia, because He has found dependence, if He favors and establishes the feeble remnant (vs. 8), He would also vindicate (vs. 9), protect (vs. 10), and crown it (vs. 11); and when His dealings concern more particularly the individual, He will even condescend to stand by the overcomer to strengthen him by a reiterated expression of His sweetest sympathy (see "My God," v. 12), waiving for the moment His place as Son of God (2: 18) "over His own house;" stepping out of His attitude of judgment (may we not say?) to encourage by His blessed companionship any desirous of standing for His glory, as everything becomes more and more involved in that disregard for the claims of His person which characterizes the last phase of the Church on earth.

It is also true that there is at all times a moral connection between the workings of Satan, the condition of a faithful soul, and the dealings of the Lord intended to strengthen it under trial. Thus, throughout the churches, it is not difficult to trace the appropriateness of the promises which the Lord gives to overcomers in each stage, in view of the set of circumstances which characterized the day, and put faithful souls to the test. Not only so, but the pressure of those circumstances on overcomers, in each case, fitted them to receive the promises and encouragements with appreciation. Hence we evidently have, by implication, a key to the state of overcomers in Philadelphia, by the promises given in verse 12. It is also plain that to be such, overcomers must possess the marks of the assembly, in so far as they are strictly applicable individually. Using these means, then, of determining the state of a true Philadelphian, we find, First. "Thou hast a little strength." Blessed that He should notice it, even encouragingly. Whether we are conscious of being in this condition before Him or not, this is His word concerning us. He does not flatter. And how well it would be for us were we in complete unison with Him on so important a point. We should then with joyful patience wait on Him to open doors for service until He might then invite us to share His pleasure in fulfilling the purposes of His love and wisdom in His own way. The overcomer knows the only adequate power for the accomplishment of those purposes, cherishes the self-abasement which can alone constitute any worthy channels of that power, and is rewarded with, "I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God." (Compare 2 Cor. 12:9) The next mark of the assembly-" Thou hast kept my Word "-when applied to the individual, necessarily develops into a variety of detail which the references in verse 12 seem to give by implication on the principle already explained. There (vs. 12) we find the results of the operation of God's word on a soul; firstly, in its attitude towards God; secondly, in its individual testimony in the world; thirdly, in its ecclesiastical connection. Introducing these points into the series already commenced, we have:-Secondly. "pre-supposes a state of soul-in which worship is a delight. (Psa. 27:4) In what other condition could any appreciate such a promise? Could it be of any strengthening effect? And what leads into such an adoring sense of the glory of the blessed God but His Word? showing the connection between this mark of the overcomer and the second characteristic of the assembly. So also in the two following points, each determinative of an overcomer's state.

Thirdly. "I will write upon him the name of my God." Jeremiah said, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts." Consequently upon this he is found in separation from iniquity. (Chapter 15:16,17; compare 1 Peter 1, and 2 Tim. 3: 19) The overcomer also, feasting upon God's

precious Word, and learning conscious identification with the Holy One, occupies similar ground towards the world; and, enjoying the blessedness of such identification, he receives with appreciation the promise, that what he seeks becomingly to maintain now, will be both perfect and manifest by-and-by.

Fourthly. "I will write upon Him the name of the city of my God." To one who has drunk in the Lord's desire, as expressed in John 17:21 -has observed the establishment in power of that oneness by the Holy Spirit, and its manifestation, at Pentecost- meditated upon the loosening effects of Satan's devices by which the Church was split up, to the setting aside of the Lord's desires already referred to, and now sees with sorrow the fruits of fragmentary testimony in the skeptic's sneer, to say nothing of the seas of iniquity through which the professing Church has dragged the precious name of our Lord-what intense satisfaction it is to look forward to the perfect day when everything will be according to His mind; when what has dishonored Him will reappear, dressed by His own gracious hand, in all the unsullied perfections of His glory (John 17:22,23; Rev. 21), the complete expression of Himself! What grace it is which, oblivious of everything, will yet allow us to recognize Him as the Lamb, ever adorable; but more still, will establish us in the precious unalterable consciousness of the everlasting relationship-deeper far than what can be displayed-expressed in the divinely given title, "The Bride, the Lamb's wife!" Identification with this is a truly blessed prospect, but natural nevertheless to the heart familiar with the boundless love which has made such possible-knowing itself "wrought for the self-same thing "by God. Meditating on the glory of such a prospect so molds the heart that, on the one hand, nothing will suit it on earth but a reflection, however feeble, of the divinely-ordered city; and, on the other, it is in a condition to receive with gladness the Lord's promise: "I will write upon him the name of the city of my God."

Fifthly. Returning now to verse 8, Philadelphia had learned Him who is holy and true; recognized Him as King of kings, though not yet seated upon His own throne; and Lord of lords, before whom every knee shall bow; as well as Son over His own house; and it afforded Him a suitable resting-place, by owning Him in His true character and full dignities, though only two or three should be found in any place to meet together thus in His name. (Matt. 18:20) Happy is he who continues faithful to Him, in a scene where ten thousand attractions tend to blind the eye to the glory of Him who in grace took the lowly place here, and because He could not sanction worldly greatness which shut out God, however much its display might invite countenance and approval. To those who overcome the Lord says, "I will write upon him my new name." (vs. 12)

Sixthly. Consistently with the heavenly portion the Church has received as united to her glorified Lord, Philadelphia impugns the notion of Christians taking Jewish ground (" who say they are Jews and are not," &c); sees, in fact, the contrast as drawn by God Himself in Phil. 3:19,20. She accordingly keeps faith with Him at the Father's right hand, "expecting till His enemies be made His footstool,"-keeps the word of His patience, and in return is introduced into the assurance of the Lord's gracious intentions towards His heavenly Bride; viz., to keep her from the hour which earthly-minded ones must have in view (compare Sardis, 3: 3), "the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth." As one with Him who is enthroned above, the faithful soul declines making claims in the world which unrighteously condemned Him-waiving its rights until the day when he can take all with Jesus. And how blessed it is to know He even invites such manifestations of sympathy now in the time of His rejection on earth

Seventhly. The Lord's coming, as well as being the consummation of all our hopes and prospects, may be looked upon as the crucial test for profession. Its usual connection with practical sanctification, the great aim of truth (John 17:17), is well known, and the profession is of little worth indeed, however brilliant the rays of light emitted may appear, if they converge not upon that one point. Lose heart in the Lord's coming, and all is lost that can be lost. 2 Tim. 4:7,8 bears upon this, and explains also the connection between the "crown" and the coming of Rev. 3:11. I ask not, Are we looking for the Lord? but, Do we "love His appearing"?

In conclusion, it is evident the above seven marks do not set forth a Christian standing before God: neither does it definitely treat of godliness of walk before men. They strike home, and discover the inner springs-the living energies of a soul at rest in the presence of God, consciously possessed of "gold;" though not to be occupied with it certainly, more than as a platform upon which it stands, while clutching the links which bind it to the blessed object around whom its divinely-wrought affections entwine, in an intelligent love of which He is the source as well as object. What a portion our hearts have in Christ! Formed for Him, linked eternally with Him, and free even now to enjoy Him-the everlasting delight of His redeemed people.

J. K.

Fragment: Christ in the Heart

It is one thing to be safe in the ark on the Ararat of God, and another thing for Christ to dwell in the heart by faith. Oh, what a quantity of care goes out when Christ is there! If Christ is the Master of the house, and dwelling in it, He does not let the dust and the cobwebs accumulate, but He fills it altogether; and should a sudden start come to the heart, there will be found not fear, but Christ.

J. N. D.

Fragment: Nothing so Near As Christ

I shall find One in heaven nearer and dearer to my heart than any one I know on earth. Nothing is so near to us as the Christ that is in us, and nothing is so near to God as Christ.

Ibid.

I Will Come Again

Nothing is more prominently brought forward in the New Testament than the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This was the first comfort of the angels to the sorrowing disciples: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." (Acts 1:11) And if you turn to 1 Thess. you will find it presented in the end of every chapter as a common doctrine. It was not at all a strange thing-immediately after conversion to the living God-" to wait for His Son from heaven.... even Jesus, who delivered us from the wrath to come." (1: 10) Again, in Heb. 9, we read that, "He appeared once in the end of the world, to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.... and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation." In the Thessalonians it is presented also in the way of warning, as well as the object of the blessed hope of the saints: "For yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. For when they shall say, Peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape." (1 Thess. 5:2,3)

From this we see the amazing difference between the coming of Christ for this, and for those who trust in Him. To the world He comes as a Judge of both quick and dead (see Malachi); but in John 14 we find a wonderful difference in the whole principle and spirit of a believer's expectation of Christ. "Behold, He cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see Him, and they who also pierced Him and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of Him." (Rev. 1) "But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?" (Mal. 3)

Dear reader, let me ask you, Can you stand before Him at that day? Do you think that you would have confidence before Him at His coming? Could you say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him? "this is He whom I have loved and longed for? Men always judge according to what is suited to themselves. In 1 Thess. 4 it is said, "So shall we be ever with the Lord." Now, are you suited to be ever with the Lord? Have you this confidence? If it is founded on anything good in yourself, it is vain ground of confidence. Peter, as soon as he found Himself in the presence of the Lord, felt that he was not suited for the Lord. "I am too corrupt," he said. This was a true judgment of Peter; and love for the dignity of the Lord and for holiness. If you are content that holiness should be lowered that you may get off, you do not care for holiness, though you do for getting off. The moment I have seen the holiness of the Lord, and that happiness is in holiness, there is the immediate feeling of my unfitness for that holiness, though there may be the longing for it, which the Lord will doubtless in mercy answer.

Two things are needed thus to meet the Lord. First, the conscience must be right. I may have the kindest father, yet if my conscience is not right, I cannot be glad to meet him. And, secondly, affections must be there-the Lord must be my portion. If my heart is on literature, or on anything else here, I shall not like to be where Jesus is; I shall rather be here for a time. If you like the world, you are fit for the world. Heaven is just the contrary, and you know it, and therefore you do not want to go there, because it would take you from being here in the world. There is the comfort of

the gospel. It did bring down to men's consciences all that would attract God; but, alas! men no more desired the Lord's company here than they do there. The coming and rejection of Christ here is the plain proof that the world is not fit for Him, and He is not fit for them.

But now we turn to John 14 We find persons here the opposite of all that is in the world. "Let not your heart be troubled." About what? His leaving them. Their happiness, comfort, and joy was in having Christ with them. But now, he says, I am going, but I am not going to be happy without you. There is plenty of room for you. The thing with which He at once comforts their hearts is this, "I will come again." I cannot stay down here in this vile place; I am going to prepare a place for you; but I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also. The Lord reckons on this satisfying their hearts; and their consciences did not hinder. "The Father's house!" Oh, they could go there! "I will receive you unto myself." He knew the chord that rung in their hearts -to be with Himself, the source of all blessing. Thus we get the character of these disciples-they were persons whom the absence of Jesus distressed, and whom the presence of Jesus would comfort, not here, but with Himself.

There we find what begot this character. It was all founded on His own word. We do not care for what does not concern us; but as soon as we see a thing that concerns us, it becomes important, and then we want certainty. Now, it is very blessed to have God's own word for the basis of our certainty. For instance, I am a sinner, how then can I get into the Father's house? Because God has said, "Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more." Well, God is true, and he will not remember them. Do you say I am presumptuous to say so? I do not say so; God says so. And again, in John 5:24: "He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation." And John 3:33: "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true." Thus when the power of the Spirit brings home the Word, I have certainty. Faith is in the Word, but it is about something. Christ is presented, and man is brought to the test. People always judge by their inclination, and not by their reasoning. Now, the effect of the testimony of the Spirit of God when Christ is revealed, is that men are not fit for Him, and their hearts do not like to be with Him.

These disciples had loved the Lord. Christ had attraction for their hearts. There at once we see the object of their hearts' affections. Christ had fixed their hearts. Take Mary Magdalene, for instance. She was all wrong in her intelligence, yet Christ had attraction for her heart. So with the rest of the disciples. They all ran away for fear; but it was love to Christ that brought them into the place of fear. Thus we see that Christ Himself was the object of their hearts. They were the companions of Christ-all fear being gone-according to His love and grace. "Ye are they," He said, "who have continued with me in my temptations." Why He had continued with them; but He speaks as if indebted to them for this fellowship. And being in companionship with Christ in heart, He brings them into all the joy into which He is going-nothing less than the Father's house. What attracts is found in Christ, and then it gets from Him the certain assurance that He is coming, and coming for me. Now, when the heart is on Christ, what a thing it is to know that He is coming! Am I afraid? No; I am looking for Him. And it is to His Father's house He is to bring me. All that makes heaven a home to Christ, will make heaven a home to me. Oh, come, Lord Jesus If I have learned to love Christ, I have learned to love holiness, to love God. God, in Christ, has brought down to my soul all that God is. What shall I get in heaven? Another Christ? another God? No; it is the One we have seen and known. "Whither I go ye know." I am going to the Father, and you have seen the Father

in me.

Ah! but He has not given up His holiness, perhaps you reply. No, indeed, He has not, But Jesus knew all that is needed for me to be with Him And if He will make the heart to love, He will put the conscience perfectly at rest, that I may love Him Will He do that by dulling it? No; He will do something that will enable me to stand in the presence of God, in whose presence I am to find my joy. He reveals fully God in His holiness, and takes away the sin that would hinder my being in the presence of that holiness. And not only does He put sin away, but He purges the conscience here, so that I am enabled to enjoy God in full and free affection. Nothing is more attractive than the death of Christ; but, besides that, it puts away the sin of which I was guilty-an act in which I have no part, an act the proof of perfect love, while it meets perfect righteousness. I had done the sins, and I could not undo them. Jesus said to Peter, "If I wash thee not, thou halt no part with me." This touched Peter's heart. If you are not cleansed according to my cleansing, according to what suits God's presence, you have no part with me. Oh, what a comfort! Instead of saying, Depart from me, Jesus said, "Now you are clean." And in Peter we see the proof of a good conscience. He said to the Jews, Ye denied the Holy One and the Just, the very thing he himself had done fifty days before. Now, a man will talk of every sin but what he is guilty of; he will shirk that. But here Peter was in perfect peace about the very sin he was guilty of; his conscience was perfectly purged.

The happiness of the heart that is touched is to be with Christ; and conscience is purged for being in His presence. Between the Lord's saying this, and coming for them, He had put away sin from God's sight, and from their conscience. "I will come again, and take you unto myself," &c.; and whither I go ye know." There is no uncertainty. We know where we are going to. The soul has found fully the object that has set it at rest, and that will satisfy it up there without fear.

Could the Lord thus address you? Could you say, Oh, that is what I am wanting? Or are you saying, I have got here what I would like to enjoy? Is that being a Christian? A Christian may vary in strength of affection, never in object. I am sure I do not love the Lord enough, but I am sure it is the Lord I love. I have no confidence in my own heart, but all confidence in Him. He has died for me; that is what I count on. He has put away my sins; that is what I need. He is coming again; that is what I am longing for. Dear reader, let me ask you, Was it ever a trouble to you that you had not Christ? Do you know where you are going? It may be you have hope; but have you present certainty? Now we, Christians, have; for Christ is known, and when He is known, there is perfect rest in His word. "I will come again, and receive you unto myself, that where I am, there ye may be also." "Amen, even so, come, Lord Jesus."

The Divine Goodness

psalm 3: 4; 19: 1-5.

How sweet the dreamless sleep
Which God in love bestows;
The mind, as silent as its shell,
In calm and deep repose!
How bright the stainless sky
Of God's own azure, cast
Over a careless, thoughtless world,
Perishing, perishing fast!
How strong the restless sea,
No power but His it knows;
Its bosom heaving nature's sighs,
Its history writ in woes!
How fair the cloudless scene,
The landscape God hath made,
Shred of a beauteous, by-gone world,
Its sheen now hid in shade!
How good that God Himself
Nature and grace display;
How kind, how wise, how great-both now
And through eternal day!

His Will, His Work

“My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.”-John. 4: 34.

There are two points to be observed in the reading of the Old Testament, without which it cannot rightly be understood. The first is, that the gap or interval in time, from the ascension of Christ to heaven till the taking up, or rapture of His own, is never contemplated in its Scriptures; nor is it ever computed as time at all. And the second is, that what is said of the Lord in many cases in these Scriptures, is similar in language to what is said of the Church-His body, in the New Testament. Thus it is that Paul, speaking of the mystery of Christ and the Church, calls these truths, with all collateral ones, “The unsearchable riches of Christ.” (Eph. 3:8)

The searchable things were all there: Incarnation, Life of suffering, Atoning death, Resurrection, Ascension to heaven, Receiving gifts in the man, Coming again in glory, His glorious reign, or Kingdom. All these were to be found in the Old Testament. But the interval in time from the ascension-characterized by the presence of the Holy Spirit dwelling in the Church-as an habitation of God, His abiding with her during her earthly sojourn while Christ is hidden in the heavens, and His coming forth to receive her to Himself when caught up in the clouds to meet Him in the air; these things were not in the Scriptures of the Old Testament; they were “hid in God,” “according to the purpose of the ages.” Nor are they spoken of by any of the apostles or teachers of the New but Paul. Old Testament Scriptures are silent as to them; so are New Testament apostles and prophets-with the exception of him.

I mention one Scripture out of many as to the interval, or gap, of the New Testament times being unnoticed in the Old. The well-known passage from Isa. 61:1,2, first clause, cited by the Lord in the opening of His ministry in the synagogue at Nazareth (Luke 4:18,19), as far as the middle of a sentence, when He closed the book and sat down, causing all in the synagogue to fasten their eyes upon Him. The parenthesis of grace thus falling between that moment and the fulfillment of the next clause-” And the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.” Yet when He foretells the long centuries of judgment which ensued upon His rejection, during which “Jerusalem (would) be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled “(Luke 21:24), He touches upon His second coming in glory, according to Isa. 63:14, connecting with that “day of vengeance “the words -” For the day of vengeance is in mine heart, and the year of my redeemed is come “(Isa. 63:4); also, “For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled “(Luke 21:23); and again these-” Then look up, and lift up your heads; for your redemption draweth nigh.” (vs. 28)

The parenthesis of grace thus lying between that day in Nazareth, and the day of His coming in power and great glory. The parenthesis of glory of which Paul treats, lying again within the other parenthesis of grace of Luke, from His ascension to the rapture of the saints on high, while the “unsearchable riches of Christ,” “the manifold wisdom of God “-in Christ and the Church, are unfolded. These come forth when Christ is in the glory and the Holy Spirit here.

We see this, too, in the portion of the passages of Isa. 49:6-8, cited by Paul in the New Testament, which apply to Christ Himself in the Old, and to the Church, His body, in the New. "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the ends of the earth." This the prophet speaks of Christ. And Paul at Antioch in Pisidia (Acts 13:47), "For so hath the Lord commanded us, saying, I have set thee to be a light of the Gentiles, that thou shouldest be for salvation unto the ends of the earth." Again, "Thus saith the Lord, In an acceptable time I have heard thee, and in a day of salvation have I helped thee." (Isa. 49:8) This of Christ. While Paul, of the Church, in 2 Cor. 6, "We then, as workers together, beseech also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee; behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." In Rom. 8. also, speaking of the security of the believer, "It is God that justifieth; who is he that condemneth? "While Isaiah, of Christ, in chap. 1., "I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that pluck off the hair; I hid not my face from shame and spitting He is near that justifieth me.... who is he that shall condemn me?"

Now while all this is true, and the general matter of the Old Testament is silent as to these things, when it deals with the world and Israel, and Jehovah Messiah's connection with them; there are two Scriptures in the Old Testament which touch upon the counsels of God outside the earth, the line of His eternal thoughts, at which I would now look for a little. I speak of His eternal counsels as those connected with things which are outside all His dispensational dealings with the world. Prophecy connects itself with "times and seasons, and days and years," which belong to the world, and exist while it exists, ending when it ends; then the eternal counsels of God have their fruition, and time has passed away.

In Prov. 8:23-36, where Christ is seen as the Eternal One, the "wisdom of God." He is there seen in two ways. First, as the resource of God; and second, as His delight, the One in whom all the good pleasure of the Eternal was. "The Lord possessed me in the beginning of His way, before His works of old. I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was." Then follows a lovely description of the priority of Him on whom all depended, before the mountains, or hills, or oceans, or clouds were. "Then," says the Eternal One, "I was by Him, as one brought up with Him; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him; rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth "(before it was formed); "and my delights were with the sons of men."

Psa. 40 gives us the other; and while Prov. 8 unfolds to us those thoughts before the earth was, in Psa. 40 the silence of eternity is broken by the words here spoken by the Lord. Time and earth had intervened; sin had entered the fair scene, and man fell; Israel had been redeemed, and had been tried under law; prophets, priests, and kings had been there, and His people all had failed. These blessed words are then heard, and connected with the lowly path of faithfulness of Christ: "Lo, I come to do Thy will, O God."

In the epistle to the Hebrews we find the establishment of this "will." The sacrifices proved wanting, and only recalled sin to remembrance-not putting it away; they are set aside by His one perfect blessed work, and the will of God is done. "He taketh away the first," even these sacrifices, "that He may establish the second," God's eternal will. This had been outraged through' man, under the enemy's power; but could not be turned aside or disannulled. (Heb. 10)

Thus we have in Psa. 40 the “will” of God to be made good in His cross on earth; and in Prov. 8 the “good pleasure in the sons of men” revealed. In Hebrews we have the eternal will established; while in the Ephesians we find the “good pleasure of His will” brought forth from the secrets of eternity, when He is gone on high; and this to the “sons of men,” in whom His “good pleasure,” or “delights,” ever were. “If ye have heard of the administration of the grace of God, which is given me to youward “; and that “Ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which in other ages was not made known to the sons of men, as it is now revealed,” &c. (Eph. 3)

From creation until He came to the earth, Jesus, the eternal Son, the wisdom of God, was ever “by Him “His resource, and His delight.

Did the counsels of the Godhead resolve to create the universe, or to frame the world out of the chaos which is found in Gen. 1:2? The Son was the actor, for “by Him were all things created.” “Without Him nothing came into being that did exist.”

Did man in innocence succumb to the temptations of the enemy, the old serpent, the devil? Did sin and disobedience thus enter into the world? The seed of the woman would bruise the serpent’s head; and in the foretold “bruising of his heel,” and in the death which Adam’s coats of skins required, ere he could walk forth from the garden consciously and manifestly clothed of God-Jesus was again before the mind of the Father. How sweet to see that because of Him, in this first scene of the world’s youthful history, God was the first to move in approaching the sinful pair!

Again, when violence entered in, and Cain slew His brother, it was because Abel, finding himself “born in sin,” outside of paradise, his state as a sinner pressing upon his soul, and recognizing what a Righteous Being required to meet His nature and His claims, he brings “the firstlings of his flock and the fat thereof.” He came with the pure and sinless life of another, but displaying in death the excellency of life. In all this he confessed that he could not provide that which God in His nature demanded, and he as a sinner needed; and God, as it were, seeing that faith apprehended something of His resource and His delight, pronounced him a righteous man.

Did Noah’s sacrifice ascend as a sweet savor in the sight of the Lord, after His judgment of the waters of the deluge, because of the earth’s corruption? He turns at once to His resource, His delight; and says in His heart, “I will not again curse the ground any more for man’s sake; because the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth: neither will I again smite any more everything living, as I have done.” (Gen. 8:21) Again, idolatry enters the scene; and all the world was worshipping demons rather than God. He calls Abram out, and “preaches the gospel “in him. (Gal. 3:8) “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed.” (Gen. 12:3) And when Abraham ascends the mount Moriah, in company with his only son Isaac, his faith entered upon the thoughts of God Himself in Jesus, “My son, God will provide Himself a lamb.” The risen Isaac, “received from the dead in a figure,” speaks in the sight of divine omniscience, of that scene yet to be enacted between the Father and the One then “by Him,” “His delight.” And God, “because He could swear by no greater, sware by Himself,” to fill with “strong consolation” the feeblest heart that flees for refuge to Jesus. (Heb. 6:16-18)

Mark the delight, the suddenness (Ex. 40) with which in after years, when Moses had reared the tabernacle, after the people had made the golden calf, and failed in their obedience to law, God enters, and fills the whole scene so fully, that even Moses himself could not but be an

intruder-none could share His company in that tabernacle, which was the pattern of things in the heavenlies reared up in the obedience of faith, but He of whom every cord and pillar, board and altar, curtain and hanging testified.

Thus and thus was Jesus, God's resource, always "by Him," "His delight," "rejoicing always before Him."

But I need not go further. Step by step, Christ, in type and figure, in parable and shadow, kept God's heart reminded of plans that never could be frustrated; but while hindered by Satan, and man, and sin, only disclosed the inexhaustible resource that Jesus was ever before Him.

The day came when Jesus, though always "by Him," the only-begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, was to divest Himself of the glory He had there, before the world was; and taking manhood in the womb of the virgin, was to be "Emmanuel, God with us;" yet ever His delight, His good pleasure. In the lowly manger in Bethlehem, the babe, wrapped in swaddling clothes, was laid; and the anthem, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure (His delights) in men," is sung.

Thirty years elapse, and Jesus appears amongst the crowd who were confessing their sins in Jordan. The wandering sheep were in the waters, and the Shepherd would go there too. Grace was at work in their hearts, and Jesus would go with the grace; they were confessing their sins through grace, and Jesus would be with that grace, as He, in the Godhead, had produced its fruits. At once we hear the voice of the Father, as we had heard that of the angels at His birth, proclaiming, "Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I have good pleasure." And the Spirit, in bodily shape, as a dove, alights upon Him. Father, Son, and Spirit, seen and heard, for the first time on earth, when He stood in the waters of Jordan, charged with the bringing forth of God's "good pleasure in the sons of men," and establishing on a revolted earth His will!

In a few short years we find Him on the mount of Transfiguration when about to be received up. His own had not received Him; the world, though made by Him, knew Him not. A momentary glimpse of His true glory evokes the words from a bystander, "Master, it is good for us to be here," and the Father's voice again is heard owning His earth-rejected, though heaven honored Son, as "my beloved Son, in whom I have good pleasure; hear ye Him" (Matt. 17:5) He then returns to the scene of His sorrows, and steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem. The seventy disciples return. (Luke 10) He had not given them power over unclean spirits when sending them forth. But faith in Him had caused them to use the value of His name, and to their joy they were answered. They return to Him and say, "Lord, even the devils are subject to us through thy name." (vs. 17) How joy fills His heart, too, as they tell the tale, in the thought of the day of glory, when Satan will fall as lightning from heaven; and even the earth will yield no place for him, while he is chained in the bottomless pit for a thousand years.

But hearken now to what He says in their hearing: "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it was thy good pleasure." (Luke 10:21)

And, lastly, in the gospels, when Jesus would cast the light of God on all that man's ways present (Luke 12), between His leaving them and His return, He speaks of His people as a little flock; but even so they were not to fear, "for it was their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom.

(Luke 12:32)

But to recall what we have touched upon, we have: 1. Before the world was, this “good pleasure” filled the heart of Jesus, “in the sons of men.” (Prov. 8)

2. At the birth of Jesus it was shared by unjealous angels, and the heavenly hosts proclaimed from the excellent glory (Luke 2), “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good pleasure in men.”

3. When He came up out of the Jordan the Father’s voice again proclaims, “In thee I have good pleasure.” (Matt. 3; Luke 3)

4. The same words are heard from the excellent glory; on the holy mount, “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 have good pleasure.” (Matt. 17; Luke 9; 2 Peter 1)

5. And as He descends to His path of service, and sends forth the “seventy,” and receives them as they return, He tells of His Father’s “good pleasure” to reveal these heavenly secrets, not to wise and prudent, but even to babes, whose names were written in heaven.

6. And as He instructs them for their pathway (Luke 12) in this world of sin, He adds His “Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom.” His “delights were with the sons of men.”

At last the hour was come, “Your hour, and the power of darkness,” when all was arrayed against Him, to stay the eternal Will being done on earth, as counseled in the heavens. If in the gospel of Luke we found the “good pleasure” so often expressed, as Luke presents Him a Man, in whom all was centered, it is in the gospel of John we find His heart set, who was presented there as the Eternal Son, to do this Will of God. “My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work.” (John 4) “I seek not my own will, but the will of Him that sent me.” (John 5) “I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me.” (John 6:38) “And this is the Father’s will which hath sent me, that of all which he hath given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up again at the last day.” (John 6:39)

He who expressed His own perfect will but twice in all His earthly path, was now to do His God’s. Once in Gethsemane He expressed it, to lay it down in blessed submission to the Father, “Not my will, but thine be done;” and once again in John 17:24, for the eternal blessing of those whom His Father had given Him, “I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me; for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.” “Before the mountains were settled.... Then I was by Him, one brought up with Him: and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him” (Prov. 8) This hour then came, and Jesus in that hour could repeat, as it were, “Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire: mine ears hast thou opened; burnt-offering and sin-offering has thou not required. Then said I, Lo, I come: in the volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart.” (Psa. 40) And closing in the cross that work, and establishing that will, He cries, “It is finished.” His will is done, and “He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost.”

He died and lived again: He ascended on high in glory, and all now was removed which could frustrate that “will” of God. All was settled forever that established it. The “good pleasure” of the

“will” could now be made known to the “sons of men.” We hear the exponent of it, now by the Spirit, unfold it in our calling on high of God. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ: according as He hath chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love: having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He hath made us accepted in the beloved.” (Eph. 1:3-5) How sweet those words, “accepted,” “taken into divine favor,” “in the beloved.” “Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favor of the Lord.” (Prov. 8)

Now the Ephesian Epistle unfolds these eternal thoughts and counsels of our God. In it we find (as in. Christ and by the Spirit) God most fully revealed and seen. His Church displays Him in these two ways: 1. God Himself to man, to the universe, as God now fully known.

2. Man before Him, displayed according to His counsels, as seen in Christ. His Church, Christ's body, in union with her Head, by the Spirit, now in mystery, and in full display in the day of glory. The Spirit too now gathering to the confession of His name on earth those who are His own, until the day when He with His Church becoming manifestly the center of an ordered universe. As we read that, in the dispensation of the fullness of times, He will gather together in one all things in heaven and earth, in Christ; 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.

What a calling God displayed in Christ, for “in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell.” (Col. 1:19)

Christ displayed in the Church His body, His bride, “the fullness of Him that filleth all in all” (Eph. 1:22), the ordered center of a reconciled universe, the helpmeet, the Eve of the second Adam, in the day of power.

How then is all this to be realized in the soul? How are we to walk in the power of this calling of God? We must be strengthened with all might, according to the riches of the glory of the Father, by His Spirit in the inner man. But for what? What need of such blessed living action of God in us? It is that this Christ, this center of all things, to whom heavenly, earthly, and infernal beings must bow the knee (Phil. 2:10), “may dwell in our hearts by faith!” That the soul's affections may center in Him, surround Him, entwine themselves in Him; that being rooted and grounded in love, no Satan's power can disturb this planting of our souls in the soil of love! Down deeply have struck the roots there, though this will be tried and tested; far and wide the soul has spread its branches. Sorrows but unfold it, and want but finds in it its rich supply. Temptations to disturb it are met by the power of it ministered to the soul. The coldness of our brethren deepens the joy of its being ours. The world's sneer and scorn turn the heart more distinctly to Him who loves. The entranced soul rises to the deeper contemplation of that central Sun, and looks out from Him to the length, and breadth, and depth, and height, which center in Him, and is lost in the fields of illimitable glory. Yet it finds itself at home there, recalled by that well-known love which, as a sinner once it tasted, and found itself at peace with God; as a saint too who failed along the way, and who found its never-dying power humbling to the dust the soul with its unchangeableness; or as a chosen one of the Father before the world was-the gift of His heart to the Son, one “whom thou hast given me.” How deep the wellspring of that love must be to one who was the object of His eternal choice,

whose delights were in the sons of men!

Yet this love of Christ is that which touches the heart, and makes it feel itself at home in those fields of glory. Yet while known and tasted, "it passeth knowledge." Too great for finite hearts to grasp, yet, like the babe which knows its mother's love, unable though it is to explain its power, it is the link of heart with Him whom not having seen, even now we love.

The finite vessel is thus launched upon the infinite sea of light, and love, and God-filled into all His fullness! "Unto Him be glory by the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all generations of the ages of ages [see Greek]. Amen "(Eph. 3:21)

The more one enters upon and realizes what the Church of God is, and, connected with His counsels for Christ's glory, what a place she holds in God's plans for the ordered manifestation of His glory, the more one feels how hopeless is the ruin which lies far and wide around our path. How false is everything which pretends to be His Church on earth! How Satan has succeeded in destroying outwardly all that bears Christ's name! How feebly do those, whose spiritual vision is opened to know somewhat of her blessing, grasp the thought of her place and calling in connection with her Head on high in glory! How few there are who care for more than that which speaks of their own blessing! How few even that have realized their personal blessing at all! How little is the voice of the Spirit heard in the bride, calling on the "bright and morning star "to "come!" How His people may say, even at their best, "My leanness, my leanness; woe is me!"

Yet God would gather a people in these days to the confession of the name of Jesus, and the truth of His body-His bride. He would awaken bridal affections which Jesus looks for in His Church, for which He gave Himself. He has brought forth in living power these long-buried truths. He would awaken His people, and recall them to the state of those who at first looked for and awaited God's Son from heaven. He would form a heavenly company of true whole-hearted souls, whose aims, and life, and work, are for the glory of His Son. Are there not those who would respond to those Spirit-wrought desires? who long to answer in all things to the heart of Christ? Surely there are. Surely when God has again brought these things to light, He will find a people who will value them, and answer to His heart's desire.

F. G. P.

Fragment: Letting Our Light Shine

WE are told in the Word to let our light so shine before men, that they may see our good works, and glorify our Father which is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16) Too often we reverse this precept, and let our works shine that our light may be seen to our own glory. Hence the danger of speaking or writing about our own activities. The intention may be good, but it is seldom done without leading -even if unconsciously- to the exaltation of self. If, on the other hand, we are careful to let our light shine before men, our works, like our blessed Lord, cannot be hid.

The Peace-Offerings

“Though ye offer me burnt-offerings and your meat-offerings, I will not accept them; neither will I regard the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.” Such was God’s announcement to Israel by the prophet Amos (vs. 22) The two former of these offerings we have looked at; we would now consider the peace-offering, as it is called in the A.V., but which would be better understood if translated requitals, or recompenses, as the Hebrew word Shelamim signifies; for, as the reader may see in Lev. 7:12,16, it was offered on private occasions, either for a vow, or for a sacrifice of thanksgiving, and has nothing to do really with the idea of peace.

As with the burnt-offering and the meat-offering, so with the peace-offering, any one in Israel, if so minded, might bring one to God; but whereas the two former were frequently enjoined on public occasions, this last, except at the feast of weeks, was only commanded on special public occasions, such as the consecration of Aaron and his sons (Ex. 29:28), and for Israel on the grand eighth day at the expiration of the consecration (ix), and on the occasion of the setting up of the tabernacle in the wilderness. (Num. 7) Again we read of them when the people took formal possession of their land, in the very place where God had first promised it to Abraham (Josh. 8:31); and when David, by the prophet’s guidance, offered sacrifices on the altar at Araunah’s threshingfloor, where the plague was stayed. (2 Sam. 24:25) So also at Gilgal, when they made Saul king (1 Sam. 11:15); and at Jerusalem, on the occasion of Solomon’s accession (1 Chron. 29: 31), the people in the joy of their heart willingly offered them to God. David, too, sacrificed peace-offerings when the ark entered Jerusalem (2 Sam. 6:17); and the men of Beth-shemesh likewise, when the ark returned from the land of the Philistines (1 Sam. 6:15); at the dedication of the temple under Solomon (1 Kings 8:63,64); on the day of the cleansing of the altar by Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29:31-36); at the memorable feast of unleavened bread, in that same king’s reign (2 Chron. 30:22); when, too, Manasseh repaired the altar (2 Chron. 33:16); and at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem under Nehemiah (Neh. 12:43); these sacrifices were in season. At Bethel, too, before the ark of God, when smitten by the Benjamites; and subsequently, when deliberating about the future of that tribe, Israel offered with their burnt-offerings, peace-offerings before the Lord. (Judg. 20: 21) At family festive-gatherings, too, whether when assembled at the tabernacle (1 Sam. 1:21;2. 19) or at home (1 Sam. 20:6), these offerings had their place; and even the strange woman ventured to present them, the better, perhaps, to ensnare her victim, whom she would then invite to feast with her on the residue brought home to her house. (Prov. 7:14)

Thus it will be seen that, though such offerings formed part of the sacrificial ritual, they were not so frequently enjoined on Israel by the law as were burnt-offerings. Few, comparatively speaking, were the occasions on which by the law they had to be brought. See Lev. 8; 9; 23:19; Num. 7, all of which have been already noticed, and Num. 6:17, where it appears that the peace-offering formed part of the sacrifices which the Nazarite was to bring when the days of his separation were fulfilled. Seasons of holy joy were suitable times for peace-offerings to be brought, though any who were of a free heart might offer burnt-offerings on such occasions instead (2 Chron. 29:31); for whereas the former was an expression of thanksgiving, the latter betokened a fuller surrender to

God, inasmuch as the whole of it ascended up from the altar to Him. But whichever it was, whether a burnt-offering or a peace-offering, the trumpet was to be blown over these sacrifices on the days of their gladness for a memorial before their God; and with the peace-offering, as with the burnt-offering, after Israel entered their land, a meat-offering and a drink-offering were always to be brought as well. (Num. 10:10; 15:12) These two offerings, though thus classed together, were yet widely different. In the peace-offering, a portion only was claimed for God, and the offerer could feast on part of it with his family or friends. Communion between God and the offerer in that which was brought to the altar could by it be enjoyed. The burnt-offering was wholly for God. In the meat-offering, the priest, and the males of the priesthood, had part with the Lord Jehovah. In the peace-offering, the offerer, too, could share, enjoying communion with God in the sacrifice of His well-beloved Son. The grace this proclaims is apparent, yet Israel little understood what it also declared; viz., their relative distance from God, compared with that of those who form the holy priesthood. True it is this could not have been taught before the cross, yet God expressed it symbolically in the regulation about these sacrifices, so that from that memorable day of Pentecost, when Christian position and privilege were first enjoyed and displayed, it might be seen that the latest and fullest interposition of God in grace was no after-thought in His mind, for He had traced it out in the revelation about sacrifices, made known to Israel by Moses when still abiding under the shadow of mount Sinai. Gracious it is on His part to allow His people to have communion with Him about His Son, and none of those who are His people, whether they form part of the holy priesthood, of which Peter writes (1 Peter 2:5), or will be known on earth as of Israel after the flesh, in the day which is approaching, are to be shut out from this privilege bestowed on them in His goodness. But only in the peace-offering can Israel, as portrayed in type, have this fellowship with God. They will learn how the Lord's atonement has met the depth of their need. They will understand what that full surrender was of Christ Himself to die, of which the burnt-offering was typical, but they will also rejoice with God in the death of Christ as set forth in these ordinances about the peace-offering.

In this way, then, they will be allowed to feast with God. Under the law, the offerer provided the animal for the sacrifice. In truth God has provided that sacrifice in which they will learn that they have part with Him. But though the offerer under the law provided the peace-offering, he could only bring of that which Jehovah had expressed His willingness to receive. For a burnt-offering he could bring of the herd, or of the flock, or a bird; for a peace-offering it must be only of the herd, or of the flock. Restricted as to what he might bring, the offerer was not bound down to present only a male. In a peace-offering a female might be brought as much as a male; but of whichever sex it was, the offering had to be perfect, without blemish (Lev. 3:1,6; 22:18-23), though as a free-will offering, the regulation was less strict than when the peace-offering was for a vow. And from a stranger in Israel, too, the Lord would receive a free-will offering or a sacrifice for a vow, and that whether it was presented as a burnt-offering, or as a peace-offering.

The animal selected, the offerer brought it, laid his hand on its head, and killed it at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, or before the tabernacle, as the case -might be. If he brought of the herd, he killed it at the door; if of the flock, he slew it before the tabernacle; and the priests, the sons of Aaron, sprinkled its blood on the altar round about. The blood, the life of the flesh, was thus presented to God. After that the offerer brought near to the altar the fat that covered the inwards, and all the fat that was upon the inwards, and the two kidneys, and the fat that was upon

them on the flanks, and the caul above the liver, and the kidneys, and when the peace-offering was a sheep, the tail as well, all of which the priest burnt as an offering made by fire of a sweet savor unto the Lord. This, and this only, of the peace-offering was offered upon the altar.

The kidneys, the seat of the feelings (Psa. 73:21; Prov. 23:16; Lam. 3:13), and the fat, the expression of human will in the energy of life (Job 15:27; Psa. 22:10;119. 70) are here seen offered to God, expressive surely of Him, who came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him (John 6:38); and who said, when the Father hid things from the wise and prudent, and revealed them unto babes, "Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in thy sight." (Matt. 11:26) And all this was burnt as a sweet savor on the burnt-offering, without which as the basis of every sacrifice there could be no communion between us and God. With the service at the altar began the apportioning of the victim according to the ordinance of the peace-offering. In this the idea of communion is seen fully expressed; for Jehovah, the priest, the males of the priesthood, and the offerer, each had their portion in the one sacrifice. Jehovah's portion was the food, or bread of the offerings made by fire, all of which were a sweet savor unto Him. This is His own statement, expressive of His satisfaction in Christ, of whom the sacrifice was a type -the holy One -whose innermost feelings were perfect in God's eyes. Gracious was it thus to write of the peace-offering, that the person who brought that, and did not bring a burnt-offering, could know that the part which was God's portion was food in His eyes.

(To be continued)

The Old and the New

God never gives up the creature, or the original order of the thing which He has created or established. "For thy pleasure they are and were created," is His rule. Whatever the ruin may be which sin and Satan have introduced, yet all will be infinitely surpassed, when set up again for His glory and our blessing, in the second Adam.

This is true as regards the first heavens and the earth, and the man and the woman, who were made in the image of God, and who walked with their Creator in the midst of the garden of Eden. It further applies to the relations of life in which Adam and Eve were set as one flesh; so that marriage itself is claimed by Jesus (Matt. 19) for "an order of God," as He made them in "the beginning," and will find its perfect fulfillment at last in Christ and the Church. (See Eph. 5:31) It is true "the patterns" of the heavenly things have been sadly dimmed, and even marred by the fall; and "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" has taken deep root, and spread its branches and fruits far and wide amongst the generations of men. But even this interruption by sin has been turned round for the display of the forbearance and goodness of God towards His guilty creatures, in the plans of His government of the world. Ways and means of recovery have ever and anon been employed by God, if man were reclaimable; but all reformatory measures failed, whether by the law, or the kings, or the prophets, and evil has established itself in the earth. "There was none good but one," and He was God! He alone could measure or meet this mighty ruin, and this was met, in the fullness of time, by sending forth His Son, made of a woman, to redeem them that were under the law; and beyond this, God was in Christ "reconciling the world unto Himself," not imputing their trespasses unto them. He who alone could provide a remedy, did so in His infinite love, and "made Christ, who knew no sin, to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." But beside the efficacy of His sacrifice, and our redemption by His blood out of the state and condition we were in, as men in the flesh, and in our sins—"in Him was life, and the life was the light of men," and of the world. God manifest in flesh (Jesus the Lord) had come into the midst of the human family, not to judge and condemn, but as a man amongst men, going about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him. Perfect too as the Son of man in His daily life, He was viewed with delight from the opened heavens, and declared to be "the beloved Son, in whom the Father was well pleased."

One had come forth from God, into the midst of a disobedient and gainsaying people, whose meat and drink it was to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. Led too into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil (that in all things He might stand between men, and what man was powerless to meet), He resisted the tempter by the word of the living God, and finally, in the triumph of that hour, bade Satan go behind Him. Nor did Jesus stand alone in His life of service towards the oppressed and the guilty, but sent forth His disciples into the cities and towns, whither He Himself would come; so that they returned, saying, "The devils are subject to us through thy name."

But the Son of God upon the earth, speaking as never man spoke, and with such a ministry maintained by His own personal glory, through mighty wonders and miracles which He and His disciples wrought, failed to win the confidence and faith of men in the glad tidings of the prophetic kingdom, which the Messiah presented in His own person. They would not accept Him - divine power and grace were all ineffectual-and they crucified their King. Life and light in "the word made flesh" were thus refused, and the love rejected which brought them down into the midst of moral darkness and death in which men lay. Majesty and glory, in the Son of David, were despised; and the throne, the scepter, and the kingdom, alike refused, when presented, as He rode into Jerusalem, the royal city.

In effect, the world broke the link which the heavens supplied, as the only recovering means of present blessing, by refusing the hand and heart that formed it. Goodness, supreme goodness, was driven back to its source in God by the crucifixion of Christ. Righteousness, cast out of the world by the expulsion of Him in whom it dwelt, went up for a home with the Father on high. Sad as this was, it was all that Satan and man could do, and did, by means of the cross; but in thus getting rid of Christ, how little did they see that this last act of combined wickedness was the limit of their power, which expired in the outburst of its own enmity and rage. The glory of Christ's resurrection was its contradiction and reversal by the right hand of God, and now His intentions and counsels have changed their center, and are to begin and be carried out in sovereign grace and Almighty power "from the heavens" above, where the rejected One of the earth has been accepted and crowned with glory. Redemption by blood, the blood of Christ, has been accomplished for the overwhelming ruin under which the whole race lay by the guilt of the cross; and the Lord in resurrection life, and ascension power on high, is declared to be the head and beginning of the new creation of God. Consequent upon this change of divine operation for the glory of Christ, and as regards ourselves, "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." No higher place can be reached than that into which God has exalted Christ, as the head of all principality and power; and we await His coming forth in manifested glory. Moreover, the witness of all this to the Church is the Holy Spirit, which the Father has sent in the Son's name, till the shout calls away the bride to meet her Lord in the air. It is well to be assured thus, by the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that the very next thing is "manifestation in love," and then "display in glory; "for all that precedes, and is necessary to this, has been accomplished. It is this expectation of the heart which makes "the blessed hope" of the Lord's coming so precious and present to it. Nothing but this can make it the ruling passion of the soul, for transformation here, by separation from evil; or for the comfort and joy of knowing that we shall be like nothing else when He does come.

J. E. B.

The Father: a Study for the Heart

With what touching pathos said the Lord Jesus, in closing His valedictory discourse to the little group of eleven true-hearted disciples who clung around Him on the night of His betrayal, "The time cometh, when I shall no more speak unto you in proverbs, but I shall show you plainly of the Father." (John 16:25) How calculated was this to inspire their sorrowful hearts with the faith and fortitude needed to meet the looming desolation! We have a kindred passage in chap. 27:1: "Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee." The former was spoken to the disciples on earth for their comfort; the latter was addressed in communion with His Father when His tearful eyes were uplifted to heaven. In each case (as chap. 16: 26 seems to indicate) the Lord was anticipating the moment when He should have assumed His new place and status in glory as Son of man, and was anticipating too that new order of blessing for us of which His exaltation should be at once the prelude and the pledge.

The period, then future, of which the Lord spoke as "that day," is now present, being this singular, this unique day, in which, to the indulgence of His own heart, He is engaged as blessedly for the Father in glorifying Him, as for us in plainly showing Him before the eyes and hearts of our understanding and our faith. Is it not fitting that we should challenge ourselves, ever and anon, as to how far we have practically verified the Lord's word as to the ministration of the Father to our souls? It is the common heritage of saints now to be the children of God, and to have received the Spirit of sonship, whereby we address Him in the filial love that "Abba" expresses, and have to say to Him as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

But is this all? Is the knowledge of the Father the same thing as the knowing that He is our Father? May we not say that there may be, and in many cases there is, the latter where the former is unknown? Let us, however, first observe with what obvious satisfaction the Lord looked forward to the enfranchisement of their faith. How evident, too, that He was hampered and restrained, bound in spirit as it were, because of their inability to apprehend that revelation of the Father which was nearest to His heart. And thus He anticipated, as one element in the joy set before Him, the approaching time when He should show them plainly of the Father. No more would He resort to mere parabolic teaching as the only way in which He could vividly impress their souls; for the weighty truths which He had already spoken, and the rich disclosures made, should spring into life and significance and potency in that unequalled day.

How little of the Father they knew as yet He proved for the last time in this closing hour. For, telling them of their Father's love, and seeking to connect their hearts thus directly with Him, He added, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; again I leave the world, and go to the Father." On which, so ready and so explicit was their answer, as might have seemed to indicate that at length they had learned something of the Father; but, alas! their concluding words-" by this we believe that thou earnest forth from God"-show but too plainly that the simple lesson of verse 28 must for the present be postponed, to be resumed when He should teach it them afresh from the scene of glory; yea, from that Father's house and that Father's throne. Does it not also show

that all real knowledge of the Father follows the gift of the Holy Spirit, by which we are brought into the sense of relationship to Him? But that wonderful time was nigh at hand when also should be fulfilled the word, "At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you" (chap. 14: 20); the time of His own open showing of the Father to His newborn children. Three things may be noted here. This precious revelation of the Father was throughout Old Testament times a profound secret, impenetrable even to faith. During the gospel history (the days of the Lord's ministry) it was a parabolic subject on which He loved to discourse. But since Pentecost we have it in its plain and perfect solution. May we not say it was the uppermost thought of the Lord's heart throughout His earthly course? How early did He exclaim, "Wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business?" Unwonted words on boyhood lips! And in the days of His ministry how clearly is the moral and spiritual necessity for that ministry marked by His further words, "Neither knoweth any man the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him." Herein we find what the Father's business which so claimed Him was, even that revelation of Him to the babes, which should bring them into fellowship "with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ."

This brings us back to our thesis-that the Lord's desire was to show us of the Father. The longed-for time for this arrived when the Holy Spirit, "the promise of the Father," was sent down by Him from the new place of His assumption, that of the Father's throne, which He had acquired as the fruit and the guerdon of His having finished that Father's business here.

Is it, then, enough that we can say we have the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of adoption, and can lisp, "Abba, Father"? On the contrary, it is this which qualifies for that. It is my possession of the Holy Spirit which fits me for acquiring and enjoying that knowledge of the Father which is indispensable for fellowship with Him. First, I know He is my Father. This is what His grace accords me in the gift of the Holy Spirit, whereby I enter upon the conscious and increasing blessedness of realized relationship, the greatest boon to my new-born nature. But just as it is possible for me to know the fact of my natural relationship to one whom I might be very far from really knowing, in which case I should be without the comfort it should afford me, so also as a child of God I may have hold of the truth as to relationship, without having any adequate apprehension or enjoyment in unction and power, of the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, as plainly or openly made known by Him who has eternally dwelt in His bosom. Yet without this how can there be fellowship with the Father and with the Son of His love? Fellowship between those who know not each other's objects and interests, each other's joys and delights, each other's feelings and emotions, each other's purposes and ways, each other's aims and desires, is a name, but not a reality. And how could we have true fellowship but by the eternal Son of the Father introducing us through the word into the secrets of that Father's heart, and conducting us into the well-spring of His affections, that under His own tender tutoring we may attain in growing measure that knowledge of the Father which Himself alone immeasurably possesses? What a problem to study; what a subject to learn-the eternal Father What a Master who teaches-the eternal Son What an unction and power for acquiring-the eternal Spirit! Happy learners who matriculate in such a school, and thrice happy students who graduate under such a Teacher, and take degrees in such a subject! Surely this only could adequately meet the Lord's word to His Father, "That thy Son also may glorify thee." In the work of His grace, carried on from that glory in which He is constituted Lord and Christ, He undoubtedly glorifies that Father who sent His Son to be the Savior of the world (1 John 4:14); but how much more when in patient assiduity of loving service He tutors the hearts of those that grace has won,

in ever-growing knowledge of, and ever-deepening love to, Him who, as Father, is bringing His many sons to glory!

And lastly, what answer do we render to the precious grace of Him who hath called us into the fellowship of His Son Jesus Christ? How can we have fellowship with the Son but as we have His thoughts of the Father? And how have His thoughts of the Father, but as we receive into our hearts as a coveted and cherished deposit those blessed unfoldings of what is in the word touching the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which the Son of His love, with the fond delight which encircles such a subject, unremittingly ministers by the Holy Spirit? Have we ever taken our place at His feet in the spirit and attitude of true discipleship-like David sitting before the Lord-that He might impart to us something of the Father as yet unlearned; some sweet outpouring, as He sits at the well, from that deep, divine fount of infinite bliss of which Himself has eternally drank? Or have we tacitly assumed that all being contained in the words of Scripture so familiar to us all, there is nothing left for Him to tell or for us to learn, and thus have deprived ourselves of the highest blessing within our reach? What would conduce so much to brighten after a heavenly fashion the pathway of our heart's experience as flashes of light and love struck by the Holy Spirit from the heart of our Father? What would tend more to illuminate with heavenly sunlight that future which to many a saint is but a dim perspective of neutral tint, converting it into an enchanting prospect bright with every glorious hue, than to catch, through the ministration of Christ concerning the Father, a divinely-wrought impression of the real character and undying blessedness of the Father's presence in the Father's house? Ought we not, then, to ask ourselves to what extent the Father is a leading factor in the heart-history of His saints, the sons He is bringing to glory?

W. R. D.

Do not hide your face from any difficulty. Look at it in the face; but see it in the light of the face of Christ.

People complain that there is so little outward power in their walk. Ah that is because they are receiving so little from Christ.

G. V. W.

The Lord's Prophecy Concerning Jerusalem

Two things are familiar to most attentive readers of Scripture. Who has not observed the variations often occurring in the accounts of the same event given by the different evangelists? These variations, over which the infidel ignorantly triumphs as proofs of their human imperfection, are to the believer among the clearest marks of their divine perfection,. The object of the Spirit, who records the same event or the same discourse with these striking variations, is to bring out in each case a different phase of truth; and in all instances the variation in the narrative or the report is in divine harmony with the scope of the various gospels He has indited.

A second thing, obvious to careful readers, is that many, if not most, prophecies have a double fulfillment. David and Solomon were each, in different ways, types of Christ. Hence many prophecies, especially in the Psalms, while referring directly to them, point forward, in a far fuller and more important sense, to the Lord, whom they partially foreshadowed. So, too, the prophecies about Babylon, while foretelling the capture of the city by Cyrus, have clearly a wider range, carrying us on to the final overthrow of that Gentile rule of which Babylon was the golden head.

These observations will help us to understand the variations between Matthew and Luke in their accounts of our Lord's prophecy concerning the temple and Jerusalem. In the earlier part of this prophecy (Matt. 24:4-28; Luke 21:8-24), though it is clear that the two evangelists are recording the same discourse, yet such are the differences that it is difficult to suppose they are speaking of the same event. If, however, our Lord's words have a double application, both the resemblance and the variations are at once explained. Such is actually the case. The earlier part of this prophecy refers, first to the capture of Jerusalem by Titus, and then to the troubles preceding the coming of the Son of man. The Spirit led Luke to record all that related to the former event, and Matthew all that related to the latter. In two reports of the same discourse thus given there must clearly be a close resemblance of arrangement and language; some expressions, applicable to both events, common to both narratives; others, much alike, yet varied to harmonize with the object which each reporter had in view; others again, occurring in one and omitted in the other, according as they bear, or do not bear, on his general design. Such are the resemblances ' and differences found in a comparison of the two passages before us.

Indeed the questions which draw forth the discourse, as related by the two evangelists, are very different. In Matthew, Jesus had just spoken of the Jews' house being left desolate, and of His own departure till they should receive Him as coming "in the name of the Lord." Then, being pointed to the temple, He foretells its ruin, on which the disciples ask, "When shall these things be? And what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the aye?" Here the leading thought is as to "the end of the age," and the Lord's reappearance after His predicted withdrawal. In Luke, however, Jesus has not been speaking of His departure or return, but simply foretelling the overthrow of the temple. He is therefore asked, "When shall these things be? And what sign will there be whoa these things shall come to pass?" The disciples are therefore asking about two quite distinct things. No doubt they really asked about both, but here in the question, as ' afterward in the

prophecy, Luke confines his report to matters relating to the destruction of the temple, while Matthew, in harmony with the context and his usual dispensational character, gives attention chiefly to the later events connected with the Lord's return and the end of the age.

But if it may be objected, our Lord is, in Matthew's report, speaking of events in distant ages, how could He use the second person, saying, "Take heed that no man deceive you;" and again, "Ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars"? In the first place the words had a present application, as seen in Luke, and were therefore spoken in the second person, which form is naturally retained even where the remoter application is more prominent. Again, the disciples, in asking about the Lord's return and the end of the age, were regarded as Jews asking about their own national affairs, so that this form of address was perfectly suitable. Men constantly speak of "our victories," or "our prospects," in referring to the deeds or prospects of their countrymen in past or future generations. And if such a mode of speech is intelligible in ordinary discourse, in prophecy it is not only intelligible, but habitual. Thus Isaiah says, "Strangers shall stand and feed your flocks, and the sons of the alien shall be your plowmen and your vinedressers. But ye shall be named the Priests of the Lord." (Isa. 61:5,6) Everybody knows that this does not mean the Jews of Isaiah's day, but of far-distant generations, and yet nobody finds any difficulty from the prophet's writing in the second person. The same principle will apply to our Lord's discourse.

There is evidently a great resemblance between the condition of things accompanying the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, to which Luke refers, and the final troubles of the Jews, to which Matthew refers. The features which have long since become history as to the earlier events will re-appear in the later. False Christs, wars, coin-motions, and fearful natural phenomena, are common to both periods. In the first few verses, therefore (Luke 21:8-11; Matt. 24:4-8), there is but slight variation between the reports. The only material differences are that in Luke, whose thoughts were on events but few years distant, our Lord is recorded to have said that "the time draweth near," while Matthew, who refers to the later fulfillment of the prophecy, omits these words; and again that Matthew says the false Christ "shall deceive many," alluding to the great national apostasy at the end of the age, whereas Luke, while giving the warning, records no such prediction, for the Christians in Jerusalem were in fact not deceived by the pretensions of the impostors who arose at the time of the revolt against Rome.

The next section of the prophecy, in both accounts (Luke 21:12-19; Matt. 24:9-14), foretells the sufferings of the faithful, and though both periods are marked by great persecutions, there is a far wider difference in the reports of this part of the discourse than of the former. Matthew, speaking of the persecution of the faithful witnesses before Christ's advent, says, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you, and ye shall be hated of all nations" (or "all the Gentiles") "for my name's sake." (vs. 9) This is what the believing Jews will suffer on account of their testimony to the coming Messiah in the last days; but it would be incorrect as an account of what the early Christians endured. They were not hated by the Gentiles as Gentiles, but by all men, whether Jews or Gentiles; and indeed their chief sufferings and persecutions came from the Jews. To these sufferings our Lord refers in Luke, where the description is far more general. "But before all these things, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony." (vss. 12, 13) Comparing this passage with Matthew, there are two important differences. The persecution in Matthew is contemporaneous with the wars and

disturbances previously spoken of, for our Lord says, "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted." In Luke, however, the persecution spoken of precedes the fightings and commotions which had been mentioned in the earlier verses, and our Lord's language is, "But before all these things shall they lay their hands on you." This distinction is in accordance with facts. The great persecution of the Christians by the Jews was not during the civil wars which ended in the fall of Jerusalem, but before them, and this is the subject alluded to in Luke. On the other hand, the great persecution of the faithful Jews by the Gentiles, which is the subject spoken of in Matthew, will be during the terrible wars and convulsions preceding the Lord's glorious appearing. The second difference is that while Matthew ascribes the hostility to the Gentiles, saying, "Ye shall be hated of all the Gentiles for my name's sake," Luke speaks of a persecution arising in part at least from the Jews, for he says that they should be delivered "up to the synagogues," as well as cited before kings and rulers. He therefore adds (vs. 17), "And ye shall be hated of all men (not all the Gentiles) for my name's sake." So, too, though hatred, persecution, and betrayal are 'spoken of in both evangelists, the character is different. Luke is foretelling the sufferings which the early Jewish Christians should endure at the hands of their countrymen and nearest relatives, and his prophecy is simply a description of what shortly after took place, "And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death." (vs. 16) In Matthew, however, the persecution spoken of is a very different one, originating from the Gentile oppressors of the nation 'before the Lord's advent in power. Here, therefore, the feature of family dissension is omitted, and the prophecy simply says, "Then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." (vs. 10)

The remainder of the reports of this section of the prophecy are entirely different, each of the evangelists recording matters altogether omitted by the other. Luke says, "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist." (vss. 14, 15) This was a special promise given to the disciples, which we see strikingly and repeatedly fulfilled in the Acts of the Apostles. But there is nothing to show that such will be the case with the Jewish believers in the last days. They will be silenced, banished, almost destroyed, and only delivered from entire extinction by Christ's sudden and glorious appearing. In Matthew, therefore, there is nothing at all answering to this portion of the prophecy as recorded by Luke.

On the other hand, Matthew names features of the last time which have nothing corresponding with them in Luke's prophecy. He says, "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." (vss. 11-13) Here prominence is given to false prophets and their deceptions. In Luke, where the warning is intended for believers, before the siege of Jerusalem, these are not mentioned. But to the Jews awaiting Christ's return, the danger from this source will be exceedingly great, and therefore the warning is specially emphasized, and the extent of the deception specially foretold. Again, in Matthew it is predicted that "because iniquity shall abound the love of many shall wax cold; but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved." Luke, who is recording the parts of the prophecy relating to the events before the destruction of Jerusalem, entirely omits these verses, because no such apostasy as that which is here foretold then took place. But such an apostasy will form one great feature of the days spoken of in Matthew's prophecy, when numbers, who begin to wait for the coming of the

Messiah, will grow cold, and faint under the persecution and oppression to which they will then be subjected. The verse, "He that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved," is often used to show that believers have only a conditional security depending on their own faithfulness. It has, however, nothing to do with the subject, but refers only to the Jews waiting for a national redemption before the Messiah's advent. Some of these, God's elect, will stand faithful to the end. Others, seduced by false Christs or false prophets, or wearied out with the sufferings besetting the path of the faithful, will turn aside, and perish with the unbelievers.

Again Matthew adds, "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations (or all the Gentiles); and then shall the end come." (vs. 14) In Luke the "end" contemplated is the destruction of Jerusalem, and it is well known that before that event the gospel was not preached to all the Gentiles. In his report, therefore, these words are wholly omitted. But in Matthew the "end" is that about which the disciples had asked, "Christ's coming, and the end of the age." And before that event the gospel will be preached to all the Gentiles. It is not, however, the gospel of God's grace, but "the gospel of the kingdom," a term never applied to Christianity, and referring to the proclamation of the kingdom of the Messiah which will go forth before His appearing. This goes forth not merely to all nations, but to all the nations, or Gentiles, as apart from the Jews; a distinction obliterated under Christianity, but of the utmost moment when the Lord is about to establish his earthly kingdom, with Jerusalem as the center of His government, and Israel as the head of the nations.

Thus in all details, notwithstanding the striking resemblances, the variations in the reports of the two evangelists show that they are really dealing with quite different subjects. The still more striking difference between the "abomination of desolation," and the siege of Jerusalem by the Romans, we must reserve for consideration in another number.

T. B. B.

The First Thought of Christ in Resurrection

Remark that the first thought of Christ, when heard from the horns of the unicorn, is to declare the name of God and His Father to His brethren-now glorious, but not ashamed to call us brethren. Perfect in love, attached to these excellent of the earth, He turns, when once He is entered into the position of joy and blessing through a work which gave them the title to enter, to reveal to them what placed them in the same position with Himself. Thus He gathered them; and then having awakened their voices to the same praise as that which He was to offer, He raises the blessed note as man, and sings praise in the midst of the assembly. Oh, with what loud voices and ready hearts we ought to follow Him And note, he who is not clear in acceptance and the joy of sonship with God, in virtue of redemption, cannot sing with Christ. He sings praises in the midst of the assembly. Who sings with Him? He who has learned the song, which he has learned to sing as come out of judgment into the full light and joy of acceptance. J. N. D.

Was Balaam Converted?

In the Christian Friend and Instructor of last year, p. 269, we read, "As with Balaam so with Job, there were those outside the immediate circle of Abraham's family who knew and worshipped the Almighty." Again, p. 283, we read, "In the world outside God used an unconverted Balaam," This is an apparent contradiction. But it is clear from Rom. 1:21, &c., that a certain knowledge of God may exist apart from conversion or the working of divine life in the soul. Balaam, speaking in Num. 24:16, speaks there, I judge, more of what he had learned of God since being invited to come to Balak than of any of his previous knowledge of Him gained in Pethor; and for these reasons it is apparent that Balaam's character as a soothsayer or diviner was well known. Balak, when he first sent to him to come and curse Israel, sent his messengers "with the rewards of divination in their hands." (Num. 22:7) Also, there was no knowledge of God's ways with Israel, His people, in Balaam's mind at the moment. God forbade him to go, and says the people are blessed; then allowed him to have his way (for he loved the wages of unrighteousness, says the apostle Peter); then stood in the way as his adversary, with a sword drawn to kill him, forcing thus from the prophet the cry, "I have sinned." When come to Balak he does say, for God had already warned him, "Peradventure the Lord will meet me" (23: 3); but there is evident doubt about it in his mind, and the second time he does not say whom he goes to meet. (23: 15) In ch. 24: 1, the Spirit records that "he went not, as at other times, to seek for (or to meet) enchantments," including in "other times" his two former efforts. All this shows, I think, clearly that there was another power than that of Jehovah which was influencing his mind at this moment, though it is also clear that he knew this power to be impotent against God. His language in 23: 23, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel," would indicate two things—the futility of his efforts, and also what he had learned in the hands of God. Farther, soothsayers, and those who use divination, are an abomination to the Lord (Deut. 28:10-14; Lev. 20:6,27); and this is Balaam's description in Josh. 13:22, "Balaam the soothsayer." When he came to Balak, Balak took him at once to the high places of Baal (22: 41), and it was there that Balaam proposes, "Build me here seven altars" (notice the words "me" and "here"). There they unitedly offered their sacrifices. (Chapter 23:2) Can we suppose this to be the action of a prophet of Jehovah? Then Balaam's own words, as, in "the vision of God," he pondered the blessed end of His people, were, "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his. (23: 10) Again, "I shall see Him, but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh." (24: 17) They remind one of Luke 16:23, and Rev. 1:7, and imply anything but a heart then at perfect rest with God. The words Balaam "rose up and went and returned to his place" (24: 25), too, are very suggestive, where he perished as a soothsayer among the Lord's enemies, at the hands of His people (Josh. 13:22), who were Commanded to cut off all such as an abomination in His eyes.

Moreover, in the New Testament, Balaam is classed among those to whom is reserved "the blackness of darkness forever," by both Peter and Jude. (See 2 Peter 2:15-17; and Jude 11-13) Terrible end of one with whom there was a certain knowledge of God, coupled with a love of honor and reward on earth, making him a servant of iniquity and unrighteousness, deceiving himself, and

yet calling Jehovah the Lord his God. (22: 18)

Finally, as to Balaam worshipping Jehovah, as another has said, we must not confound Christian worship to-day with the worship of God in the past, nor with what will be found on earth again in the future. The hour "now is" when the true worshippers worship the Father, and when they that worship God must worship Him in spirit and in truth. (John 4) None can worship now save those who worship thus, and in order to it there must be divine life in the soul; but this was not a necessity in the past. Thus we see that all Judah and Jerusalem worshipped the Lord. (2 Chron. 20:18) Were they all converted? Saul worshipped the Lord. (1 Sam. 15:25,31) Nor will conversion be a necessity in the future. Men in the millennium will worship Him, and yet be unconverted. (Psa. 22:27-29; and Zech. 19: 16. See also Jer. 26:2-6; and Zeph. 2:11)

H. C. A.

I AM standing with the open grave of Christ behind me-just risen out of it with Him, my eye fixed on Him before me, darting forward to the glory, waiting for Him to come.

G. V. W.

The Peace-Offering

In this sacrifice, then, Jehovah had but a portion. Had all gone up as a burnt-offering, the offerer would have been assured of his acceptance, but would not have enjoyed communion with God in the sacrifice. Now it was 'the Lord's desire that he should enjoy this. So He gave these regulations about the peace-offering, and thus connected special festive seasons of any of His people with the acceptance of the sacrifice on the altar. In the wilderness this was clearly seen; for a man could not kill an ox, a sheep, or a goat for, his family's food without the appointed portion of the animal being presented to God. Death was the due desert of any one who acted otherwise. (Lev. 17:3--6) Feasting was to be associated with the worship of God, and not with idolatrous rites. What ground of rejoicing could there be for us sinful creatures, had not the Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross? Seasons, then, of joy were to be closely connected with the sacrifice on the altar. This was to be remembered. But idolatry 'was rife around the children of Israel, and they were tainted with it. (Acts 7:42,43) To keep them from offering sacrifices to devils, the Lord thus closely associated feasting with the sacrifice on His altar.

In the land He equally watched over them; but the altered circumstances necessitated a new revelation. Supposing the tabernacle or temple was too far from them, if minded to kill any of the herd, or of the flock, they were free to do so to eat flesh; but the blood was to be poured out, and not eaten. If, however, they were near enough to the sanctuary to offer peace-offerings on such occasions, they were still to offer them. (Deut. 12: 20-25) Thus they might enjoy the fruits of Jehovah's goodness at any time in the land, and in any place; but no religious rite could be connected with such feasting unless they were near enough to God's altar. And of none of their holy things, or of their vows, could they eat, except at the place where God's altar was located for the time being. (Deut. 12: 25-32, 14: 23-26) Of flesh killed at home, both the unclean and clean could eat. That was in no sense a sacrifice, and on no pretense were they to treat it as such. When it was a peace-offering, the unclean could not eat of it (Lev. 7:20), for one in that state could not have communion with Jehovah.

The peace-offering dealt with aright at the altar, the priest who offered it had his appointed portion assigned to him, which the offerer was commanded to give to him. It was the priest's due; but God would not leave him to claim it: the person who brought the sacrifice was to give him the right shoulder, and to Aaron and his sons, the males of the holy priesthood, he was to give the breast. (Lev. 7:29-35) The Lord claimed these portions, the right shoulder to be heaved, and the breast to be waved; and then, as His, gave them to the priests. And this ordinance, as regards the officiating priest, was never to be abrogated. In the wilderness it was his, and the land likewise (Deut. 18:3); but when in the land, the two cheeks, and the maw, or stomach, are mentioned as his portion also. The right shoulder, typical of strength, was given to him who typified the Lord Jesus; for who but the One who gave up His life on the cross could really know what the strength was that was needed for that? The heart, the seat of the affections, typical of the love of Christians, assigned to the holy priesthood, now represented by Christians (1 Peter 2:5), who especially share in that love. For God does in the Old Testament foreshadow blessings for a portion of His people above and

beyond those allotted really to Israel. In the special place of privileges of the Aaronic priesthood we see this. In the free-will offering at Pentecost we can trace it. In Eve's place with Adam we recognize it. In the fellows of Christ (Psa. 45:7) we learn it. And here in the type we behold it. The love of Christ to His own is a special blessing for all of us who are Christians. He loved His own which were in the world. (John 13:1) He loved them unto the end, and we prove it in His lowly service to us. He loves them still (Rev. 1:5), and we are to know His love which surpasseth knowledge (Eph. 3:19), which Saul and John knew well.

Following the rest of the animal to the offerer's home, we learn for how long he might eat of it, with what he was to eat it, and who could not partake of it among his household or friends. All this is detailed in the law of the peace-offering. (Lev. 7:11-21) If offered for thanksgiving, it would only be partaken of on the day it was offered. If brought to the altar for a vow, it could be partaken of on the second day as well, but never on the third. If a man was moved to make a vow, it would arise from a more deep-seated, or from a fuller sense of Jehovah's goodness than that which prompted a thanksgiving-offering; hence whilst really in spirit rejoicing before God, he could have communion with Him. But where that had died down God would not accept the outward appearance apart from the heart's communion. Any attempt at such a thing would be abomination in His eyes (chaps. 7: 18; 19: 5-8), and death would be the only punishment one guilty of it could expect. To be on the ground of law before God was no light thing. But though we are on the ground of grace, God's nature does not alter, nor can He accept as communion what is not such in spirit and in truth. Whosoever a man was minded to bring his meat-offering, if he was not defiled, God was willing to receive it. At all times He would allow His people with a due regard for His nature to have communion with Him. But sustainment of real communion in the heart of the creature was not permanent, and He would remind the Israelite and us also of that.

With the sacrifice, or literally, on it, an offering of unleavened cakes mingled with oil, and unleavened wafers anointed with oil, and cakes mingled with oil of fine flour, was prescribed; and with (literally on) the cakes lie was to offer for his offering leavened bread with (or on) the sacrifice of his peace offering; and one out of the whole oblation, a heave-offering to the Lord, the offerer gave as directed to the officiating priest. Communion with God on the ground of the death of the sacrifice, the peace-offering distinctly teaches us; but not merely on the ground of that death; for as the offerer owned the death by killing the animal, so now those only can really have fellowship with God who own that Christ's death as a sacrifice for them has really taken place. No communion, then, can be known between any of us and God, apart from and without a real recognition of the death of Christ for us; for the offerer laid his hand on the victim's head before he killed it. But if the Lord has died, He first lived; so His life in the unleavened cakes was typified of as well as His death; yet the order is suggestive. His death is first here portrayed, then His life; for the unleavened cakes were offered with (literally on) the sacrifice of thanksgiving. No communion between God and His people could have been enjoyed had not His Son died. How continually are we reminded of the moral distance from God that we were all in through the fall! But how gracious of our God to teach it us by the provision He has made to remove it, showing at once the reality and the measure of it, since nothing but the death of Christ could annul it. But who are those privileged to have fellowship with God? Creatures born in sin, in whom sin is. This the leavened bread typified. In the unleavened cakes we have figured the perfect man; in the leavened bread fallen man. The difference between the man Christ Jesus and all of us, we are never allowed to

forget; nor need we, nor would we wish it, since on the ground of that which He is, and that which He has suffered, we stand before God, and have fellowship with Him; just as the leavened bread was offered with the unleavened cakes, and with the sacrifice of thanksgiving of the peace-offering. Apart from the Lord Jesus we could not stand before God.

This leads on to the consideration of the condition in which this communion could be enjoyed. Beyond the heart's occupation with Him from whom all blessing comes, the Lord, as we have seen, would not acknowledge it as real; and what was not real was offensive, an abomination in His eyes. (Chaps. 7: 18; 19: 7, 8)

Further, if the flesh of the sacrifice had touched any unclean thing it would not be eaten, and those only who were clean could eat of the sacrifice. The holiness of Jehovah was to be remembered and acknowledged at the Israelite festive board. So any one unclean from the working of his own flesh, or defiled from contact with some unclean thing, as the uncleanness of man, an unclean beast, or any abominable unclean thing, was precluded from sharing in the feast on pain of death for disobedience. Was this principle confined to Israel? Does not 1 Cor. 11:27-32 read us a solemn lesson in connection with it? Governmental dealing had removed some of the Corinthians for a sin, in principle, akin to that against which Lev. 7:21 warned the children of Israel.

Privilege to have fellowship with God, feasting with Him on the fat of the inwards of any animal offered in sacrifice, was peremptorily denied them as food. That which the fat symbolized was for God. How perfectly in Christ was that the case, the example to His people of what should characterize them. On the other hand, the blood of no living creature could they eat; for life belongs to God. The recognition that life belonged to God is binding on all men. The acknowledgment that the will should be in subjection to God ought to characterize His saints. God has forbidden blood to all. He forbid the fat of the sacrifice only to His people. The Lord give all His saints to enter more into this!

C. E. S.

WE should be like a vessel under the droppings of heaven, always kept full out of His fullness.

The Anthem of the Angels

<R LUK 2: 13-14)Two things here present themselves-the angel who comes to the shepherds of Judea announces to them the fulfillment of the promises of God to Israel; the choir of angels celebrate in their heavenly chorus of praise all the real import of this wondrous event.

“ Unto you,” says the heavenly messenger who visits the poor shepherds, “is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.” This was proclaiming good tidings to them and to all the people.

But in the birth of the Son of man, God manifest in the flesh, the accomplishment of the incarnation had far deeper importance than this. The fact that this poor infant was there, disallowed and left (humanly speaking) to its fate by the world, was (as understood by the heavenly intelligences, the multitude of the heavenly host, whose praises resounded at the angel’s message to the shepherds), “glory to God in the highest, peace on earth, good pleasure (of God) in men.” These few words embrace such widely extended thoughts that it is difficult to speak suitably of them in a work like this; but some remarks are necessary. First, it is deeply blessed to see that the thought of Jesus excludes all that could oppress the heart in the scene which surrounded His presence on earth. Sin, alas! was there. It was manifested by the position in which this wondrous infant was found. But if sin had placed Him there, grace had placed Him there. Grace superabounds; and in thinking of Him, blessing, grace, the mind of God respecting sin, that which God is as manifested by the presence of Christ, absorb the mind and possess the heart, and are the heart’s true relief in a world like this. We see grace alone; and sin does but magnify the fullness, the sovereignty, the perfection, of that grace. God in His glorious dealings blots out the sin with respect to which He acts, and which He thus exhibits in all its deformity; but there is that which “much more aboundeth.” Jesus come in grace, fills the heart. It is the same thing in all the details of Christian life. It is the true source of moral power, of sanctification, and of joy.

We see next, that there are three things brought out by the presence of Jesus born as a child on the earth. First, glory to God in the highest. The love of God, His wisdom, His power, not in creating a universe out of nothing, but in rising above the evil, and turning the effect of all the enemy’s power into an occasion of showing that this power was only impotence and folly, in presence of that which may be called “the weakness of God;” the fulfillment of His eternal counsels; the perfection of His ways where evil had come in; the manifestation of Himself amidst the evil in such a manner as to glorify Himself before the angels-in a word, God had so manifested Himself by the birth of Jesus that the hosts of heaven, long familiar with His power, could raise their chorus, “Glory to God in the highest,” and every voice unites in sounding forth these praises. What love like this love? And God is love. What a purely divine thought, that God has become man! What supremacy of good over evil! What wisdom in drawing nigh to the heart of man, and the heart of man back to Him! What fitness in addressing man! What maintenance of the holiness of God! What nearness to the heart of man; what participation in his wants; what experience of his condition! But beyond all, God above the evil in grace, and in that grace visiting this defiled world

to make Himself known as He had never yet been known!

The second effect of the presence of Him who manifested God on the earth is, that peace should be there. Rejected-His name should be an occasion of strife; but the heavenly choir are occupied with the fact of His presence, and with the result, when fully produced, of the consequences, wrapped up in the person of Him who was there (looked at in their proper fruits), and they celebrate these consequences. Manifested evil should disappear; His holy rule should banish all enmity and violence. Jesus, mighty in love, should reign, and impart the character in which He had come to the whole scene that should surround Him in the world He came into, that it might be according to His heart who took delight therein. (Prov. 8:31)

This quotation leads to a glorious apprehension, both of what was then doing and of our blessing. The special interest of God is in the sons of men; wisdom (Christ is the wisdom of God) daily Jehovah's delight, rejoicing in the habitable part of His earth before creation, so that it was counsel, and His delight in the sons of men. His incarnation is the full proof of this. In Matthew we have our Lord when He takes His place with, the remnant, as this is fully revealed; and it is in the Son's taking this place as man, and being anointed of 'the Holy Spirit, that the whole Trinity is fully revealed. This is a wonderful unfolding of God's ways. (See as regards a smaller scale Psa. 35:10,11)

The means of this-redemption, the destruction of Satan's power, the reconciliation of man by faith, and of all things in heaven and earth with God-are not here pointed out. Everything depended on the person and presence of Him who was born. All was wrapped up in Him. The state of blessing was born in the birth of that Child.

Presented to the responsibility of man, man is unable to profit by it, and all fails. His position thereby becomes only so much the worse.

But grace and blessing being attached to the person of Him just born, all their consequences necessarily flow forth. After all, it was the intervention of God accomplishing the counsel of His love, the settled purpose of His good pleasure. And Jesus once there, the consequences could not fail. Whatever interruption there might be to their fulfillment, Jesus was their surety. He was come into the world. He contained in His person, He was the expression of, all these consequences. The presence of the Son of God in the midst of sinners said to all spiritual intelligency, "Peace on the earth."

The third thing was the good pleasure, the affection of God, in men. Nothing more simple, since Jesus was a man. He had not taken hold of angels.

It was a glorious testimony that the affection, the good pleasure, of God was centered in this poor race, now afar from Him, but in which He was pleased to accomplish all His glorious counsels. So John 1, "the life was the light of men."

In a word, it was the power of God present in grace in the person of the Son of God taking part in the nature, and interesting Himself in the lot, of a being who had departed from Him, and making him the sphere of the accomplishment of all His counsels, and of the manifestation of His grace and His nature to all His creatures. What a position for man; for it is indeed in man that all this is accomplished! The whole universe was to learn in man, and in what God therein was for man, that

which God was in Himself, and the fruit of all His glorious counsels, as well as its complete rest in His presence, according to His nature of love. All this was implied in the birth of that Child of whom the world took no notice. Natural and marvelous subject of praise to the holy inhabitants of heaven, unto whom God had made it known! It was glory to God in the highest.

J. N. D.

Fragment: the Cause of Restlessness

What is at the bottom of restlessness with us is, wanting to be somewhere or somewhat the Lord does not want us to be.

Fragment: Our Wicked Heart, Christ's Blessed Heart

When Peter meant his best, he found out what a wicked heart he had. When he did his worst, he found out what a blessed heart Christ had.

G. V. W.

Transfiguration

The word translated “transfigured” in the scene on the mount is only found four times in the New Testament Scriptures—Matt. 17:2, Mark 9:2, Rom. 12:2, 2 Cor. 3:18. The first two of these passages refer to the same thing; and hence, we may say, it is used once respecting our blessed Lord, and twice concerning believers. There is, no doubt, a significant connection between these applications.

First, then, we find that when the Lord had taken Peter, James, and John his brother, and had brought them up into an high mountain apart, He “was transfigured before them, and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.” (Matt. 17:1,2) Without entering at this time into the special character of this scene, its relation to the period at which our blessed Lord had arrived in His ministry in the midst of Israel, or its dispensational significance, we may, in a few words, consider what this transfiguration was in regard to Himself personally. When He ascended the mountain in company with His disciples, He was, to all outward appearance, but a man amongst men. To the carnal eye there was nothing to distinguish Him from Peter, James, or John. Whatever those whose eyes were anointed saw, or we have since learned from the Scriptures by the teaching of the Spirit of God, there was nothing to indicate any difference between the body which God had prepared for Him and the “earthen vessels” of His disciples. But while on the mount this wondrous change (termed transfiguration) occurred. What, then, was its nature? May we not say, that it was His essential purity or holiness breaking forth and transfusing the vessel in which it was enshrined, so that He stood before His disciples as a being of light? For “His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light.” This vessel—His body—shrouded at other times these rays of His beauty and glory, but now, permitted to stream out unhindered, they penetrated through and irradiated both His body and His garments, so that He was actually and livingly glorified before their eyes.

If this were so, Christ, as He was in His transfiguration, is the presentation of what believers will be when they are glorified with Him. Hence, indeed, Moses and Elias, since they appeared in glory when they talked with Him (Luke 9:30,31), typify saints in this condition; and herein lies the significant connection in the use of the word on which we are commenting. Christ on the mount shows us what His people will be when He comes to receive them unto Himself; but then this mighty change is morally commenced in them while here. Thus, in Rom. 12:2, the apostle says, “Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed (transfigured) by the renewing of your mind,” &c. This Scripture shows that our transfiguration must commence from within; for the apostle enjoins nonconformity to the world, and transfiguration by the renewing of our mind. Confining our attention to this single point, the question may well be put, But how is this to be accomplished? Passing now to 2 Cor. 3:18, the answer is found. There we see Christ, not on the mount, but glorified at the right hand of God. All the glory of God shines forth from His face, and His face, unlike that of Moses when he talked with the children of Israel, is unveiled. Moreover, all believers are brought into that place where they can gaze on that glory. “We all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord.” Then we learn the further thing, that it is by beholding we “are

changed (transfigured) into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” This is the moral effect of having Christ in glory before our souls. He is the standard or model; and we, while beholding, are through the power of the Spirit gradually transfigured on towards the likeness of Him on whom we gaze. We say “on towards,” because while here in the body we can never be completely conformed to the glorified Christ. It is therefore a gradual moral transfiguration; every ray of His glory that falls upon our souls being made, through the operation of the Holy Spirit, to have this effect.

But, as we learn from other scriptures, when the Lord comes “we shall be like Him: for we shall see Him as He is” (1 John 3:2); for then even our bodies will be changed into the likeness of the body of His glory. (Phil. 3:21) Then, according to the purpose of our God, we shall be “conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren.” (Rom. 8:29) A passing glimpse of the glory of the One to whom we are to be conformed has been vouchsafed even in this scene. And while we wait for the full accomplishment of this wondrous thought of the heart of God, the blessed responsibility rests upon us of being “transfigured “daily by the renewing of our mind; and we learn that this responsibility can only be met by the blessed occupation of gazing continually upon the glory of the Lord. Thus engaged, we are “transfigured “into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord; and while so employed, we wait every moment in the expectation of the time when we shall be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, when our transfiguration will be finished, when we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is.

What grace! what mercy! what love! For of Him, and through Him, and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

E. D.

The Destruction of Jerusalem and the Abomination of Desolation

We lately glanced at the earlier verses of our Lord's prophecy concerning these events as recorded in Matthew and Luke, noting the variations in their reports, and tracing these variations to the different objects before the mind of the writers. The prophecy itself had, like many others, a twofold application, referring immediately to the approaching destruction of the city and temple; and remotely, but no less directly, to the events preceding the establishment of the Messianic kingdom. Matthew then speaks only of the later event; Luke is specially occupied with the earlier; while, therefore, the resemblance between the two is very close, the differences are also very striking. Thus Matthew speaks of the faithful being hated of the Gentiles, of false prophets arising and deceiving many, of the love of many waxing cold, of the salvation of those who endure to the end, and of "the gospel of the kingdom" "being first preached to all the nations. This agrees with what Scripture elsewhere teaches about the last days before Christ's appearing, but is inapplicable to the Christians before the siege of Jerusalem. Luke therefore omits these parts of the prophecy, but says that "the time draw eth near," speaks of a persecution arising largely from the Jews, and records a special promise of wisdom in addressing the tribunals, while he fixes the date of the persecution before the wars previously foretold; in all which he differs from Matthew, but exactly coincides with what occurred before Jerusalem was taken by the Romans.

It is in the next part of the discourse, however (Matt. 24:15-28; Luke 21:20-24), that the most marked differences appear. The prophecy, as recorded in Luke, simply foretells what occurred about forty years later. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains; and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter there into. For these be the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck, in those days for there shall be great distress in the land, and wrath upon this people. And they shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations: and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." (vss. 20-24) Nothing can be simpler. The prediction is exact, and the directions given are precisely those followed by the Christians residing in the city when Titus's army approached Jerusalem. No exhortation is given to special haste, and in fact no occasion for special haste existed. Every reader knows that the Christians, forewarned by this prophecy, left the city; that the city was destroyed, and its inhabitants either killed or carried into slavery. Jerusalem then became a prey to the Gentiles, who have ruled over it and kept it in subjection ever since. This closes the earlier portion of Luke's prophecy.

Matthew, however, speaks not a word about Jerusalem being "compassed with armies," but about "the abomination of desolation" "standing "in the holy place." "When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:) then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains: let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that

give suck in those days!" (vss. 15-19) Some have thought that the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place referred to the Roman standards brought into the temple. But this only took place at the end of the siege, when all chance of flight had long been cut off. For the true meaning of the phrase we must turn to the prophecies of Daniel, to which reference is here made. Daniel receives a communication concerning the time when "thy people (the Jews) shall be delivered." (Dan. 12:1) Among the marks of this salvation approaching it is said that "from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days. Blessed is he that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days." (vss. 11, 12) Did any special blessing come to the Jews or to the Church 1335 days after the fall of Jerusalem? or, if the days be taken as years, was there, after that number of years, say at the date A.D. 1405, any event which is pointed to in this prophecy? If not, then the setting up of the abomination of desolation is clearly not the destruction of Jerusalem.

What, then, does it signify? Daniel, in another prophecy, names a period of seventy weeks, which is to end in the restoration of Jerusalem and the people of Israel. These weeks are universally understood, and obviously meant to be understood, as periods of seven years. After sixty-nine of these, Messiah is cut off without receiving the kingdom. This brings us to the death of Christ, leaving one week yet unfulfilled. The series is then interrupted for an indefinite period, during which "the city and sanctuary "are destroyed by a Gentile power, and war and desolation are appointed "unto the end." This exactly answers to the treading down of Jerusalem "until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled," as foretold by Luke. But after this interval we read the history of the remaining week; that is, the last period of seven years, as yet unfulfilled before the restoration of the people and city; "and in the midst of the week," we are told, some person or power "shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations he shall make it desolate." (Dan. 9:24-27) Now, that this is the same thing as the setting up of the abomination of desolation is clear, for in the passage already quoted that event is contemporaneous with the making of "the sacrifice and the oblation to cease." The time, if not the nature, of the event is therefore obvious. It is in the middle of the last week, or about three-and-a-half years, before the deliverance of the Jews and the restoration of Jerusalem by the setting up of the Messiah's kingdom.

Details, giving us a fuller insight into the character of this period, are supplied in the book of Revelation, where we read that "the holy city "will be trodden down of the Gentiles "forty and two months" (chap. 11: 2) -the half of the seven years spoken of by Daniel; that the faithful remnant of God's earthly people are persecuted by a ruler who "continues forty and two months;" that this ruler receives idolatrous worship, and an image or abomination is set up to which all are required to bow down (vss. 14, 15); that the faithful then flee into the wilderness, where they are sheltered by God for the same period of three and a half years. (Chapter 12:6,14) This exactly corresponds with that we read in Daniel, and with the events connected with this setting up of the abomination of desolation as foretold in Matthew. There is, however, nothing in these prophecies connecting itself with the siege of Jerusalem as foretold in Luke.

Indeed the only resemblance in this part of the prophecy, as recorded by Matthew and Luke, is that in both cases the faithful are warned to flee. But even here the differences are remarkable. No doubt, even in the less hasty flight spoken of by Luke, before the Roman army reached Jerusalem,

women in the condition named in the prophecy would find escape difficult or impossible. The lament over their fate is, therefore, common to both; but here the resemblance ends. In Luke the flight is not to the mountains, nor marked by extreme haste. In fact the Christians retired with no special rapidity to the city of Pella. But when the abomination of desolation is set up, not an instant must be lost, the flight must be with all speed, and even the most trifling delay will be fatal. The place of refuge, too, is not a sheltering city, but "the mountains," for the rage of the idolatrous power will pursue them, and it is only as specially shielded by God that they can escape its fury. Both the rapidity of the flight and the sojourn in the desert are typified in the Revelation, where "to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness." (Chapter 12:14)

Of all this there is no trace in the prophecy as recorded in Luke. But if we turn to Luke 17:30,31, where the Lord is speaking of "the day when the Son of man is revealed," we find the exhortation-"In that day, he which shall be upon the housetop, and his stuff in the house, let him not come down to take it away: and he that is in the field, let him likewise not return back." Here the language of the two evangelists is almost identical; but in this case Luke is not speaking of the siege of Jerusalem, but of the revelation of the Son of man. This makes it clear, therefore, that Matthew is speaking of the same time.

Matthew's prophecy goes on, "But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath-day; for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be. And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved; but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened." (vss. 20-22) To this there is nothing answering in Luke's record. Nor could there be. We can understand the scruples of godly Jews, under the law, such as those who will be awaiting the Messiah's return, about making their flight on the Sabbath. But what hindrance would the Jewish Sabbath have been to the flight of the Christians before the siege of Jerusalem? Again, terrible as were the sufferings connected with the siege of Jerusalem, this was not the most awful crisis in the history of the people.

Daniel expressly says that "there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, even to that same time: and at that time thy people shall be delivered." (Dan. 12:1) Our Lord was obviously alluding to this time; for not only does He quote Daniel's very words, but it is clear that there cannot be two periods of unparalleled suffering. But the time spoken of by Daniel immediately precedes the deliverance of the people. The Lord, therefore, is here speaking, not of the siege of Jerusalem, but of His own return for the salvation of Israel. How, moreover, could it be said that the sufferings connected with the fall of Jerusalem threatened the destruction of all flesh, or were shortened for the elect's sake? It is manifestly, therefore, of another period and other sufferings that our Lord is here speaking.

The rest of that part of Matthew's prophecy now before us warns against the deceptions of false Christs. "Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there; believe it not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect. Behold, I have told you before. Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, he is in the secret chambers; believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be. For wheresoever the carcass is, there will

the eagles be gathered together.” (vss. 23-28) All this is omitted in Luke. Nothing of the kind occurred before the siege of Jerusalem, and it formed no part, therefore, of the prophecy as reported by him. On the other hand it is, as we learn from other Scriptures, exactly the state of things which will prevail before Christ’s appearing in power and glory for the establishment of His world-kingdom.

The remainder of the prophecy, as handed down by the two evangelists, refers to this great event. In Luke, however, this portion of the discourse begins abruptly, without note of time; for, in fact, he passes by a rapid transition from the siege of Jerusalem to the coming of Christ. But in Matthew the continuity of this last event with what has gone before is unmistakably marked, for his report goes on without break-” Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.” (vss. 29, 30) Thus again it is clear that while Luke, in his report, has been speaking of the siege of Jerusalem, Matthew has had before him a totally different subject; namely, the events immediately preceding the revelation and kingdom of Jesus Christ.

T. B. B.

The Sin-Offering

Pursuing our investigation into the history of sacrifice, we now come to that one called the sin-offering (chattath), and which, next to the burnt-offering, was more frequently called for than any other; though till the law was given this sacrifice had no place in any ritual. Offerings for sins committed were previously known. Job offered them, and the Lord accepted them (Job 42); but a sin-offering, distinct in its treatment from that of a burnt-offering, was only appointed by the ritual which the Lord instituted by Moses. Now, this is in perfect harmony with what we have already traced out. The institution of animal sacrifice was of God. The knowledge that blood could shelter men from divine judgment was also from God. Now, we learn of the aspect of the Lord's atoning death, in which He is viewed as the sinner's substitute, made sin for us, who in Himself knew no sin; but in this, as in other cases, the type falls short of the antitype. The sin-offering was for the most part for sins committed through ignorance, the only exception to that being the case of an unwilling witness in a court of justice. For the man who sinned presumptuously there was nothing to expect, according to the law, but death. (Num. 15:30,31) That God could provide a sacrifice for a sinner the law of the sin-offering indicates; but it also shows us that more is really wanted than the law could provide. A substitute to make atonement for even presumptuous sins is the only thing that could meet our case; and, thank God, nothing less than that has He provided by the death of His Son on the cross.

Provision for sins of the deepest dye manifests the abounding grace of our God. The call, on the other hand, under the law for an offering for a sin done through ignorance proclaimed the holiness of God, and the call for an offering for every such sin told out plainly that God would not pass over even one, unless a sacrifice was offered up for it. "I was not aware of it," the offender. might truly have said, but the law was inexorable; for Jehovah could make no compromise with evil. Little sins then, as people speak of (measuring their sins by a standard of their own), we shall look for in vain in God's law, or God's word; for apart from the death of His Son no sin could ever have been forgiven. How brightly, then, His grace shines out who has provided such a Lamb for the sacrifice! Brightly too did His grace shine out under the law, limited though it then was in its provisions; for instead of cutting off by death every one who sinned, God made a distinction between an act of frailty, which is sin, and the presumptuous deeds of a man who would act after the dictates of his own evil will. Had the Lord acted simply in righteousness, every sinner must have been cut off; for there is no child of Adam who has not sinned (1 John 1:10); and king Solomon bears witness that in his day no one kept the law perfectly. (1 Kings 8:46) The Lord then provided the sin-offering-a token that on the ground of an accepted sacrifice He could act in grace towards one who had sinned.

We pass, then, now from the consideration of those sacrifices which the people were allowed to bring, to those which they were obliged to present when the circumstances of the case permitted of it. What they were the law set forth; for if it was Jehovah's prerogative to declare what sacrifices He was willing to receive as the voluntary expression of His people's thankfulness, it clearly was for Him, and Him alone, to announce what those offerings were to be which could meet the claims

of His holiness. And this He did, classing those sins for 'which sin-offerings could be brought in two categories; viz, sins against any of the commandments of the Lord, which ought not to be done, i.e. violations of natural conscience; and sins which were made such by special divine enactment. The former are treated of in chap. iv., the latter in chap. 5: 1-13. As regarded the former, the Lord took note of the responsibility of the offender. With reference to the latter, He took account of the sinner's ability to procure an offering for his sin. How gracious was this! In chap. 4. the circumstances under which the sin was committed determined the question, whether or not the offender could avail himself of the Lord's gracious provision; for the Lord therein provided only for sins against any of the commandments of the Lord which ought not to be done, when committed through inadvertence, or in error, as *sib' gagah* means, rather than ignorance. In the cases specified in chap. v. ignorance was for the most part the reason why an offender in the ways described was permitted to draw nigh with his offering. In each case the commandment was clear which the person had broken; hence nothing less than blood-shedding could meet the necessities of the case. Measuring his sin, as man is apt to do, by the circumstances under which it has been committed, the guilty one might have thought lightly of his offense, in extenuation of which he could rightly urge the plea of inadvertence. But God, as we have said, measures sin by a different standard. His holiness therefore must be cared for, and the measure of the offender's responsibility may also have to be taken into account, as we learn from chap. 4.

Whoever had sinned through inadvertence, the death of the appointed sacrifice had of necessity to take place. Life had to be taken for the offender to be saved from death. Blood had to be presented to God for the guilty one to be forgiven. But a greater degree of responsibility attached to the anointed priest, the whole congregation, or even the ruler, than to the common person, when any one of these different classes had sinned through inadvertence. Now, this is not according to man's ordinary judgment of such things, who, provided the matter does not personally concern himself, is wont to deal more leniently with the great ones of the earth who offend than with one of the common people. Not so God who judges righteously.

The sin known and owned, the offender or offenders approached with the prescribed offering, which for the anointed priest, or the whole congregation, was a bullock, for a ruler a he goat, but for one of the common people a female kid, or a female lamb; then laying his or their hands on its head, the offerers killed it before the Lord. Thus whether a burnt-offering was brought, a peace-offering, or a sin-offering, identification of the offerer and the offering were in each case openly declared. But in the last the offender's guilt was, as it were, thereby transferred to the sacrifice offered up in his stead. After that the priest's work began in the dealing with the blood, and here one essential difference between the sin-offering and the burnt-offering, or peace-offering, comes out. In the case of either of these latter the blood was simply sprinkled round about on the altar; in the case of the former it was dealt with in various ways, being sprinkled first of all where the standing of the guilty one was, which under the law was not the same for every individual.

For the anointed priest, or for the whole congregation, whose standing according to the law was the same, the blood was sprinkled seven times before the veil in the sanctuary, after which some was put on the horns of the golden altar, the altar of incense, and the rest was poured out at the bottom of the altar of burnt-offering, the brazen altar in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. For a ruler, or for a common person, the blood was carried no farther than the altar

of burnt-offering, some being put on its horns, and the rest poured out at its base. The blood poured out spoke of the life (for the blood is the life of the flesh) being poured out before God. That sprinkled on the horns of the altar, whichever altar it was, spoke of the standing according to the law of the guilty one before God; and that sprinkled before the veil shadowed forth more nearly propitiation by blood, which in type was only made annually on the day of atonement. Propitiation, standing, and substitution, the life of the sacrifice, poured out for the sinner, all these are really needed for an offender to be accepted before God. All these, fully set forth in type only on the day of atonement, were but faintly traced out as often as the anointed priest or the whole congregation had sinned through inadvertence, and brought their sin-offering in consequence; whereas the guilty person, who represented nobody but himself (for the anointed priest represented the people), learned that his standing was made good by blood, and that a victim had been provided in his stead.

After that, the altar received its portion, which was the same in the case of a sin-offering, or trespass-offering, as it was in that of the peace-offering, and all that was thereon burnt was a sweet savor unto the Lord (chap. 4: 31); for it spoke of what the Lord Jesus Christ was in Himself, so contrary to what man is, even though he may be a saint of God, as David owned when he said, "Thou desirest truth in the inward parts." (Psa. 51:6) But he had not answered to that. Of the Lord it is said, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness;" and truth, meekness, and righteousness characterized him. (Psa. 45) Perfect in His inmost soul, the trials of the way, the opposition of enemies, the lack of intelligence among His disciples, the loneliness of His path and position, nothing that He passed through, nothing that He suffered at the hand of God, nothing that He experienced from man, brought forth from Him in word or deed aught that was not perfect nor in season.

In the wilderness He would wait for God. (Matt. 4:4) In service He would bow to the Father's good pleasure. (Matt. 11:25,26) In the garden He would yield up His will to the Father. (Luke 22:42) On the cross He justified God. (Psa. 22:3) Reviled, He reviled not again. Suffering, He threatened not. Rejected by Jerusalem, He wept over her. Crucified by His creatures, He prayed for them. With the cross before Him, He could yet be occupied with His own people; and on the night previous to His crucifixion He instituted the supper for them. Passing through the agony in the garden with none, not even Peter, to watch with Him; such was the Lord Jesus, perfect in everything, thus proving that He was without blemish, fitted to be the sinner's Substitute on the cross, and the sacrifice which God could accept; for the sin-offering was to be without blemish (chap. 4: 3, 23, 28, 32), typical of the perfectness of the true sacrifice, the Lamb of God.

All done at the altar that had to be done, the offerer could return to his tent, not uncertain about his condition, but assured of divine forgiveness; and of this the Lord Himself assured him "It shall be forgiven him" declared it (chap. 4: 20, 31, 35; 5: 10, 13, 16, 18; 6: 7), God's gracious announcement when atonement had been made; but, let the reader mark, not before it was made. Forgiveness there was, but only on the ground of a sacrifice, and when that sacrifice had been offered up; but the moment atonement had been made, ere the offerer left the altar he could know on the authority of the word of his God that his sin was forgiven. In accordance with this order in the type, the Lord Jesus on the day of His resurrection announced it to His disciples, by telling them what they were to preach to all upon earth. How willing and desirous is God to set the sinner at home before Him! How that can be done righteously, without compromising His holiness, the

sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, of which the sin and the trespass-offering were but types, alone makes plain; and to make it evident that the guilty one's forgiveness depended solely on the atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, forgiveness of his sin was declared as soon as all the work at the altar was completed, and before the sin-offering was all disposed of. God had received His part, and the blood had been duly dealt with; but the victim to which the offerer's sin had been transferred was not yet put out of sight.

Before considering that, let us look at the provision for sins, which were made such by special divine enactment. (Chapter 5:1-13) Here the offerer's ability to bring an offering was taken into account. The normal one for sins of this class was a female of the sheep or of the goats, just the same as the sin-offering for a common person who had sinned in the manner defined in the previous chapter. If such a sacrifice was beyond his reach, he might bring two birds, young pigeons, or turtle-doves, the one for a sin-offering, the other for a burnt-offering. If they were also beyond his reach, the Lord would graciously receive the tenth part of an ephah of fine flour instead. In a land where every family owned some ground, no one would be so destitute that a tenth of an ephah of flour would be beyond their reach. A sacrifice, or an offering, the Lord told them He must have; but the pecuniary value of it He graciously provided should not be above the ability of the poorest to procure. Could a sin have been passed over without an offering, surely that was the opportunity for announcing it, when the offerer was too poor to procure a living creature for God's altar. But no hint is there in the Word of such a thought on the part of God. With a sin-offering of God's appointment the offender had to approach the altar, if his sin was to be forgiven. How jealous is God of His holiness! But how wonderfully gracious is it to declare what is needed on the sinner's behalf! No one in Israel was left in doubt about this, and no one was placed by a sin described in this chapter (5: 1-13) beyond the pale of divine forgiveness.

Turning now to the treatment of the victim after the work at the altar was finished, we learn that it varied with the appointed dealing with its blood. "No sin-offering" (was the divine command) "whereof any of the blood is brought into the tabernacle of the congregation to reconcile withal in the holy place, shall be eaten: it shall be burnt in the fire." (Chapter 6:30) There were then two ways of disposing of the victim, either the priest eat it, or it was all burnt. If eaten, the priest who offered it eat it, and all the males of the priesthood could share it with him, but in a holy place in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation, for it was most holy. If burnt, it was burnt in a clean place outside the camp, where the ashes were poured out; for we read, "And the skin of the bullock, and all his flesh, with his head, and with his legs, and his inwards, and his dung, even the whole bullock shall he carry forth without the camp unto a clean place, where the ashes are poured out, and burn him on the wood with fire: where the ashes are poured out shall he be burnt." (Chapter 4:12) How precise these directions, and how complete. Every part of the animal was to be burnt; nothing of it was to be preserved. Either to be burnt, or to be eaten; such was the command concerning it. Why was this? God was here teaching the non-imputation of guilt to the sinner for that sin, on account of which he had just brought the sacrifice. Laying his hand on the head of the animal he confessed over it his sin. The victim was thus charged with that sin, and when either eaten, or burnt, the sin could no longer be found; for the victim to which it was transferred was nowhere to be found. So when Moses sought for the goat of the sin-offering offered up for the people on the eighth day of Aaron's consecration, which in the ordinary way Aaron and his sons should have eaten, it could not be found, for they had burnt it. (Lev. 10:16)

Thus God provided in the sin-offering; first, that a sacrifice should be offered on the offender's behalf, such as He could accept; next, that the guilty one should be forgiven, and should know it; and thirdly, He taught him that no imputation of guilt could ever rest on him for that sin, which was by the priestly dealing with the victim put away, since the animal could no longer be found. Man's thought, how often is it the case, is to deny his guilt, in order to cover it up. God provides that the sin dealt with by sacrifice, if sought for, shall not be found. Under law every sin could not be thus put away. Now by the blood of Christ all are thus dealt with for those who believe on Him. Who would stand out against the proffered mercy, and attempt to justify themselves, rather than be justified by God?

Of public and special sin-offerings we also read. On the day of atonement, of course, the sin-offering was in season, and on that day it took precedence of the burnt-offering, and some of its blood was taken within the veil for the high priest to make propitiation for the sins of the people, and to make atonement with it for the sanctuary as well. Again, if the congregation, or any individual, after Israel had entered their land, had sinned inadvertently by not observing all the commandments enjoined on them by Moses, a sin-offering was called for, and had to be brought for atonement to be made. (Num. 15:22-27) Further, on the recurrence of every feast, and on each day of their feasts, a sin-offering to make atonement with the appointed burnt-offering was to be offered on God's altar (Num. 28: 29); and with the offering of the two wave loaves a sacrifice for sin was appointed (Lev. 23:19), in addition it would seem to the special sin-offering commanded for that festal day. (Num. 28:30) Nor could any month begin its course unless a sacrifice for sin was brought for the people. (Num. 28:15) On the Sabbath-day, however, no such offering was demanded. That day spoke of rest-God's rest in creation-ere sin had defiled this scene; but the new moon spoke of renewal, thus looking on to the future. But how could there be renewal in connection with gladness unless a sin-offering was provided, and accepted? On those public occasions, then, which had special reference to man's blessing or man's acceptance, they were forcibly reminded by a sin-offering of that which they needed. But on the sabbaths, and at the offering of the wave-sheaf, which typified the Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the burnt-offering was in season, and a sin-offering was not required.

On special occasions also was this sacrifice appointed. Throughout the week of the consecration of Aaron and of his sons, on each day there was a sin-offering offered up for them. And on the grand eighth day, when, for the first time in the history of Israel, they had a high priest qualified to represent them before God, a kid of the goats for their sin-offering was presented to the Lord. (Lev. 8: 9) So, too, when the Levites were set apart for their work, a sin-offering, a kid of the goats, Aaron offered up on their behalf. (Num. 8) And when the princes of the tribes brought each their offerings, commencing with the day that the tabernacle was fully set up, and on the eleven succeeding days, each brought a sin-offering with them. The leper, too, on the eighth day of his cleansing had need of such a sacrifice; and the Nazarite, on the completion of his vow, and the happy mother, when the days of her purification were accomplished, had likewise to own the holiness of God, and the grace which provided that of which they had need. (Lev. 14; Num. 6; Lev. 12) Thus when the service specially appointed had respect to those who brought the offerings, a sin-offering was in season.

So much for the past. In the future such offerings will be again called for. (Ezek. 44: 45) In the past they looked onward to the true sacrifice. In the future they will point back to it. For in themselves

there was no inherent efficacy (Heb. 10:4), but of that of which they were types, the efficacy is everlasting. Hence there is no real difficulty in understanding that animal sacrifice will by-and-by form part of the earthly people's ritual of worship, even when the Lord shall be reigning over them in power and blessing. And since that sacrifice is of abiding efficacy, of which they were but types, we can understand Hezekiah's action in offering a sin-offering for all Israel (2 Chron. 29:23,24), though the captivity of part of the nation had already commenced, and that of the remainder of the ten tribes only awaited the fulfillment of the word by Ahijah to Jeroboam's wife. (1 Kings 14:15,16) Great as had been their sin, the true sin-offering can atone for it. In the same spirit surely it was, that the returned remnant (Ezra 6:17;8. 35) offered twelve he goats as a sin-offering for all Israel. They counted on the efficacy of that sacrifice, then future, to which we look back. And now looking up, as we can, to where He is who offered up Himself, we know of God's acceptance of His sacrifice; and from the truth as to His person, thus manifested, we are assured of its abiding validity for all who believe on Him.

C. E. S.

The Call of Abraham

Quite a new principle was brought to light when God began to deal with Abraham; i.e. the principle of calling out. God distinctly called Abraham.

Many other things are connected with Abraham, as father of the faithful, and a pattern model man, to show forth God's dealings: he was the first that God called forth out of his own country. One of the first principles of truth to a soul lies in the discovery that Abraham made; that is, the personal existence of God, and an invitation from Him to keep in His company—"Come unto the land that I shall show thee." Many may not have denied the existence of God, but as to any personal connection, it would never have entered their minds unless He had revealed Himself. Others had faith too, but it did not come out like Abraham's. Abel showed his by offering a lamb. Again, we get Enoch's call, but his heart was above before he went on high. Noah's lot was cast in exceedingly evil days; he believed God, prepared the ark, and was carried out of one earth to another. (We do not get Lot called apart) Abraham is among an idolatrous people, and God comes and calls him, saying, "I have a place for you, and there I will bless you and make you a blessing in every way, and you shall know what it is to have the living God as your help in every time of need."

I want you who are old, and you who are young in faith, to set to your seal that God has introduced Himself as a living Person to your soul. Directly we have Jesus Christ, we have God, and all our associations are connected with God. Faith produces different effects; the moment you bring in anything save God and His word, that is not faith. The path of faith is never the path of nature; nature takes quite a contrary course. "What! Abraham's kindred. might have said, "a stranger, a God we do not know, has told you to leave us all, and you are going forth in a mist, not knowing where He is going to take you to." God had spoken, and Abraham as an individual had to act on His word, and God did accredit His own word to Abraham. It then became a question whether Abraham could say, "I will put aside all the reasonings of my friends, and listen only to Thee." When did his faith fail? When he came to a difficulty, and stopped to consider for himself, and settle for himself, which way to get out of it. God had told him the way, but he got upon circumstances and off faith. First, he had been told to leave all; if it came to that he must go without Terah. He did not leave all, he takes with him Terah and Lot, and the effects become evident; he had to stop till Terah died, and he could not get on till Lot was separated from him.

God will not give up with His people, He will have patience till they know it will not do to depart from His word. Not until after Terah died did Abraham come to Canaan; first, he had to get rid of Terah, and then of Lot. If I interrupt the word of the Lord in any one part, it lowers the tone of my whole soul unconsciously. There was Lot, and besides a famine came. There was corn in Egypt; Abraham says, "I will go there." The littleness of faith carries him there, and he gets into the thick of the fight, loses Sarah-where is she? He is at his wits' end, and what can he do? Nothing; departure from the word has brought him into all this, and what was to help him out of it? God's own word. Again he is sent forth in the power and presence of God.

Remark in the 8th verse, when called to go out, by faith Abraham obeyed, and went forth, not knowing whither he went. Nothing tries and searches human nature so much as uncertainty; we cannot bear suspense (there is relief in the worst certainty); but that is just God's principle of acting with us. He does not want you to know how to face famine. He does not want Abraham to know how His promises are to be made good: his seed was to be as the stars of heaven; how was this to be, seeing he had no child? God has given him everything but that; silver and gold, flocks and herds, and three hundred trained servants. He was a man most remarkable in his day, and all seemed to say to his heart, "Who is to inherit all this?" It ever seemed to be bringing to his heart the thought that he had no children, and poor Sarah tried to smuggle a child into the house, but that was not an Isaac. The question was continually raised, "Where is your city? where is your seed?" He had to wait a long time, and it came at last by a miracle wrought of God. The very prosperity of Abraham forced him to hang on God. Who is to be the heir? the man-servant? No, wait; hang upon God.

Remark in the 9th verse, the pilgrim and stranger character kept up: dwelling in tabernacles was the mark of a stranger and a pilgrim. Tents were made for Israel in the wilderness; they did not have houses till in the land of Canaan. God's dwelling in the wilderness is a tent, in the land a temple. Abraham dwelt in a tent; Lot did so too at first; but he did not keep up the pilgrim character. First, he pitched his tent towards Sodom, then sat in the gate, and had a house in Sodom. Abraham kept it (looked for a city); he knew there was such a city, and the Holy Spirit adds, "Whose builder and maker is God." Remark how this man's faith was sustained. He can look above everything counting on it. There it was; he had not yet got the fulfillment of the promise, but he was to have it; but he had a faith sustained by God's word. As heavenly pilgrims, we cannot say we have got what we hope for; but the time is coming when we shall go right into heaven, and cease to be pilgrims and strangers down here.

Is our faith set above? If God and you are keeping company, do you think He will let you have a single need unsatisfied? Oh, what a jealous God He is! What a wall of fire round about us! When He separates anyone to Himself, He plants the blood of Christ right behind them. If He had spoken to us of His glory, and told us not to mind earthly things, should not our associations be, not of ties of nature down here, but of His company, His country, His interests? Waiting as people who do want to keep up their character of strangership, plainly confessing by their walk and ways that they are pilgrims on their way to a better country? Even poor Jacob could not help being a pilgrim. How came Jacob to be in a condition to receive wages of Laban? Because he got off the ground of being a pilgrim. He had a deal to say at the end of how long and how dreary his life had been, whilst Abraham's whole pathway is strewn with blessings every step. God was with him. Jacob too dwelt in a tent. If God has revealed Himself to your heart, and spoken to you of future glory, separating you unto Himself, He would not like you to be passing through the wilderness "hardly bested," not with Jacob's experience talking of the great things you have to give up. He does not like that. He wants you to be like Abraham, saying, "Look at all my blessings; look how close God has set me to Himself, and see how He is going to fill all my circumstances, to make me rise over all my difficulties, and make His own presence so sweet to me, that I would rather be in difficulties with Him than out of them without Him."

We learn what God is by Abraham's walk. Look, too, at Paul, when moved out of everything: when in difficulties of all kinds he always had a song to the praise of God's grace. What a difference

between God saying, "Here is something good for you," and your holding out your hand and taking it, and saying you are not good enough for what God gives you. Christ would not give Himself to us in resurrection till He was given to the Father. He must come down to us as the Father's gift. Whether it be sorrow or joy, if it is God's gift, we can say to everything else, "That is not good enough for me." Did God's people lack power in His company to feel that He was their portion? The very country not theirs till God had given it to them? What you must be looking out for is God's gift at the present time. If anything bright offers itself (not God's gift) do not take it, it will not have sweetness, you will not find God in it. Let Him be first, and you keep behind Him. If a pilgrim, you will not be thinking of settling in houses, you will hang all your hopes on the place where the Son is; but do not take anything but God's gift to you at the present time. If God has prepared a city for me, should my mind be absorbed by anything down here? Abraham refuses to touch a single thing, and the moment after God says, "I am thy shield and exceeding great reward." We never read of His being the God of Lot. He promised to be Abraham's God to Lot, and fetched him out of Sodom; but Lot was not in tile way to talk of Him as "my God." What! the God of a man settled in Sodom? No! but the God of pilgrims and strangers. The same untiring grace and love; but God could not blazon it abroad that He was the God of Lot in Sodom. There was no planning with Abraham. When we deal with God we cannot make plans; directly we make a plan we get our feet entangled.

You and God must go together; there can be no planning if with God. The trial God puts Abraham to in regard to offering up Isaac is very remarkable. God tries hearts often in the same way. I do not know anything more heart-searching than this that Abraham had put before him, but he left it with God to settle all his difficulty. It was just the test whether he was hanging on God or not. Yes, he was; and he gives up Isaac, his hand is stretched out to slay, but God comes in; it was not in the heart of the Father to let that father slay his son. Oh, what a feeling must there have been in Abraham, the feeling of all blessing from first to last being in the approbation of God Himself, the feeling in the soul that the faith given by God had been tried and not found wanting! How God does try our faith in many ways! Do you know what suspense is? Do you know what it is not to see your way on? And if you put forth a single thing to help yourself, does He not move it out of His way? To be kept in suspense is one way that we may be compelled to wait upon God; to look to, to hang upon Him, in the being satisfied with that God, so as to leave all to Him for the fulfillment of our desires.

To be in suspense, to be a pilgrim and a stranger, not to take anything, but wait till God gives. Oh, a man walking with God will have a happy, a blessed experience! Otherwise there will be only sorrow and disappointment, as Lot and Jacob found.

G. V. W.

The Seventeenth Psalm

The 16th Psalm gives us the inward spiritual life of Christ, and so ours, ending in the highest joy of God's presence.

The 17th, considers this life practically here below, and in respect to its difficulties with man opposed to what is right. The state of the soul is still marked by entire dependence on God, but as to integrity towards God, and as against man, the soul can plead righteousness. Still it does not avenge itself, but casts itself entirely on God, and thus gets the fruits of His righteous dealings. This supposes the righteous path (as man) of the divine life, which therefore can appeal to God's necessary judgment about it, knowing what He is, and also trusting in Him; but even here deliverance is sought, not vengeance, only the disappointing the plans of wickedness. If we have not walked uprightly, still confidence in God is our true place. He spares and restores in mercy most graciously; but this, though other psalms take it up, is not the subject of this psalm. Here it is the righteous life which God looks at and vindicates against the men of this world; for it is Christ and Christians as far as they live the life of Christ. Immediately, as ever, it is Christ and the remnant. Jehovah hears the righteous, and the prayer which goes not out of feigned lips.

Remark, that in this psalm the life of Christ is supposed and found to meet opposition and oppression in the world from the men of this world. We have seen how separated it was, associated with the excellent of the earth, passing as a stranger through it, though humanly in it. But then faith-and this shows how entirely Jehovah is still looked to-sees that the men of this world are the men of God's hand. They serve to prove the heart and, in us, who are ever in danger to slip into the world, to keep us strangers in it. Still God delivers from them. Christ for blessed reasons was not delivered; yet as freely giving Himself. The heart has the sense of righteousness here, and hence counts on deliverance; but there is no spirit of vengeance. It is the Spirit of Christ Himself, and hence above the spirit of the remnant, and much more the Christian spirit. There is the consciousness of righteousness and of integrity, but entire dependence on the Lord in respect of it, not as regards justification-it is not the question here-but confidence. "I know nothing of myself," says Paul, "yet I am not hereby justified." Again, if our heart condemn us not, then we have confidence towards God. So Jesus: "The Father hath not left me alone, for I do always those things that please Him." There is the consciousness of righteousness and confidence in God. And the heart appeals to Him because of righteousness. And all this is right, thinks rightly of God, and trusts to God that He will not be inconsistent with Himself, and cannot be. If there be desire of vengeance, we have sunk below this.

Remark the further traits of the conscious life. It is not merely righteous walk, but a proved heart, where the secret movements of the heart are alone with God. When the reins instruct, God proves, but nothing is found. This, absolutely true of Christ, is true of the Christian as to the purpose of his heart, and so far as he keeps nothing back, nothing reserved from God. This can be, though then in utter humiliation, where even there has been failure. "Thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee." So in Job. He held fast the consciousness of his integrity-not that he had not failed.

The short-comings of nature had to be checked and judged, and this he only did when humbled in the presence of God. He had for a long while, as God witnesses, held fast his integrity in every sense. He did as with God all through, but did not know himself as this was needed. Christ ever walked so, and the provings of His heart only found integrity in God. There was purpose. His mouth also should not transgress. He was a perfect man, as James says. Next, as regards the works of men, for He walked as a man in this world, this word was His absolute rule. By it He kept Himself from the paths of the destroyer. But there is no pride, but entire dependence on Jehovah in the right path. "Hold thou up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." Such was the practical life of Christ in this world. This was His life and walk in itself.

In what follows from verse 6, it is shown in looking to God as regards the opposition and oppression of the wicked. He looks for Jehovah's loving-kindness as his sole stay in presence of His enemies. This, again, is perfection. His path was with God; no yielding to please men and be spared; no complaint that he had not his portion in this world. He sees the success and prosperity of the men of this world without envy. Faith fully tried is faith still. If we trust the Lord, and have Him for our portion, we have courage to walk in His path, and not find nature satisfied; but this is faith. If there be not so, there will be some craving after what the natural heart could have, and so danger of yielding, in order to have what nature craves and the world gives-after all, husks that perish. But the human heart must have something. If it has the Lord it suffices, but this tests it. Here we have perfection in respect of the heart and path in this world. The great secret is to have the heart filled with Christ, and so be in the path at God's will. Thus there is no room for will and acts which harass the soul, and of which self is always the center, as Christ is in the heart walking in faith. Hence His presence in righteousness is what is before the soul as the blessed result. It is in righteousness. It is not the absolute joy in God of Psa. 16, but the righteousness which gives joy in His presence for those who have suffered for it, and by it, here below in God's paths, in an opposing world, and absence or denial of self.

"God is not unrighteous to forget." "It is a righteous thing with God to recompense... to you who are troubled rest with us." And the heart, too, is satisfied, not here exactly with what God is, but with what we are. "I shall awake up after thy likeness," so "we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." We are predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He may be the firstborn among many brethren. Holy delight in God, having Him always before the face, leads to perfect delight and joy in God when His presence makes it full. Faithfulness, internal and external, to God in the midst of an opposing and perhaps oppressing world, leads to righteous recompense of glory and God's presence in righteousness. Both are perfect in Christ, and through Christ, the portion of the saints. Verses 7, and 11, give the general application to those associated with Christ; still, though applicable to the remnant, the psalm gives the proper perfection of Christ, and so of the Christian. Deliverance now is looked for in this psalm, not in 16. There it was the perfect passage of life with God through death, up to fullness of joy in Him in His presence. Here righteous deliverance from men is looked for. And for this - though we may be honored with martyrdom according to the pattern of Christ's sufferings- the Christian may look. "The Lord shall deliver me," says the apostle, "from every evil work, and preserve me to His heavenly kingdom." The soul may confidently and entirely trust God, as against all the machinations of the wicked, as walking in the path of righteousness. God saves such by His right hand. He may trust for restoration if it has failed; but there is a path of righteousness which Christ has traced here below in a world of sin,

and left the blessed track of His steps, and the witness of the movements of His heart, for us to walk in and live by.

J. N. D.

Letters on Profession and the Work of Grace

My Dear Brother, You touch upon the root of the matter towards the end of your letter, where you say, in reference to profession or confession, that you believe it means in the Scriptures the manifestation of a real inward thing, and not an outward thing where the inward is wanting; for there you own the distinction which exists between the inward and the outward, though I do not think you are right in holding that Scripture puts them as you say. I believe the Word shows that they are distinct, and that while profession should be true, i.e. a true indication of what one believes and is subject to, at the same time, this has not been, and is not always the case with those who profess. The general principle of the distinction between the two things is given in Rom. 10:10: "With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation."

When the Scriptures speak of life, or of the heart being purified, it is in connection with the grace of God, which makes that a sure and perfect work (see Acts 15:7-9; 1 Peter 1:18-23); so He says, "My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any (man or devil) catch them out of my hand; "and this security rests on His divinity. "I and the Father are one." (John 10:27-30) But profession is generally connected with privileges, and responsibility is always pressed where these are seen. Thus Heb. 3 says, "Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling"-not "partakers of life"- consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession," not "of our salvation;" and the whole epistle proceeds upon this ground, showing the privileges which professing Christians enjoy, and their responsibility in view of these, and therefore the epistle is full of warnings and ifs.

Thus chap. 1. shows that we have been spoken to by no less glorious a person than the Son of God (it is not a question of having received His word by faith, but of being addressed by such an One, and therefore responsible to pay attention and adhere to what He has said), and so the warning in chap. 2: 1-4 comes in, "we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip," and "how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? "&c. Chapter 2 shows who is the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, and the call to us to "consider "(it is not to follow) Him comes in. (3: 1, 2) Chapter 3 then shows who it is that our profession (in v. 1) brings us into connection, not union, with (as it is His "house," not His "body," which is spoken of), and we are His house "if we hold fast," &c. (vs. 6) For this reason we are to "take heed, lest there be in any one of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God." (vs. 12) If the people were looked at as the possessors of life this never could be said. When the Hebrew Christians are spoken to on that ground in the confidence which the thought of grace inspires, as in chap. 10: 39, the language is quite a contrast to this.

Paul had been giving a solemn warning in chap. 10., lest after knowing what the work of Christ had accomplished, viz., that it had opened free access to God (and not as it had been under law), any should draw back and give that up; but in verse 39, he turns and expresses the confidence which he had through grace in the Hebrew Christians. "We are," he says, linking himself with them, "of

them which believe to the saving of the soul," which is of course quite different from saying, "We are those who have made a good profession." Where the latter word comes in in chap. 10., it is said (vs. 23), "Let us hold fast the profession of our faith," &c. In chap. 3., further, verse 14, "We are made partakers" (or "fellows," not "members") "of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence," &c. Then the example of Israel is adduced (A). 15-19) to bring in a warning (iv. 1) lest we should not enter into the rest which Christ leads into, as some of the Israelites entered not into the rest in their day.

Chapter 5 speaks of Christ's glory as priest, which is put before us as something which we should know practically; and chap. 6. follows with a warning lest those who had come into connection with such privileges should fall away from them (the thought is not that they had been brought to Christ and might fall away from Him. 6: 1-8), though again Paul's confidence in the Hebrew Christians as those who had more than mere possession of privileges comes out in verses 9-12. Then 7., 8., 9., and part of 10., are all taken up with unfolding Christ in various characters, to show in other lights the great privileges of Christianity, and they are all summed up in 10: 19-21, to press in verses 22-31, the responsibility on us, who profess faith in it all, to "hold fast," and the warning in case we do not.

Then, as I have pointed out, there was much in the case of the Hebrew Christians to reassure Paul's heart about them as really saved and possessors (not simply professors) of faith, and so this comes out in verses 32-29. The characteristics of true faith are thereupon brought out in chap. 11, and practical exhortation follows on this ground; but this not being so distinctly privilege as what the former part of the epistle teaches, the warnings are not so severe; but they are there, showing that the people were addressed as responsible, and not as possessors of life. (12: 1, 3-5, 12-17, 25, 29, &c)

I have touched upon this before entering upon your questions about Israel, because it is well to see that Scripture establishes the general principle before we come to any applications of it.

We see, I may also note, in 1 Tim. 2:10, "good works "named as that "which becomes women professing godliness," showing that the profession was not looked upon as necessarily a pledge of a true heart; for the good works give evidence that it, viz., the profession, is true. The good works are the adorning which is suitable or becoming to a true profession, and the thought therefore is not that the profession itself is the evidence that the women are godly.

In Rom. 1:22, and Titus 1:16, we see men professing one thing while their lives give evidence that their hearts are very different from their profession. And in Rom. 14:11, and Phil. 2:11, we see that there are many who will confess Christ, but not be saved, or not have any love for Him in the future. So I think it plain that Scripture shows that profession and life are not confounded, and that profession is not presented as the manifestation of a real inward thing, but is a distinct and external thing requiring evidence to prove whether it be true or false.

With regard to Israel, if Heb. 11:29 had said, "By faith Israel, or the Israelites, passed through the Red Sea," &c., it would have been strong evidence that the nation had possessed faith when they did so, whatever might have become their condition afterward, because that chapter describes the characteristics, and bears testimony to the action, of true faith; but the verse does not say so. It merely says, "By faith they passed through the Red Sea," &c., the former verse having spoken of

Moses and the passover, where it says, "By faith he kept the passover and the sprinkling of blood," &c. Thus verse 29 stands by itself, and speaks only of those who had faith, not of all who passed through the sea; and it is purposely indefinite in the expression "they," which is used (Israel not being mentioned at all), because in chap. 3. of the same epistle, it is expressly said that some of them "believed not" (vss. 16-19), and that they "could not enter into the rest because of unbelief." There is this difference between the passing through the Red Sea and the entering into Canaan, that in the former, God did everything, and the people only looked on and experienced His deliverance; the word to them being, "Stand still, and see the salvation (or deliverance) of God," i.e. God undertook for the people without any question as to their state, which indeed did not give much evidence of the calmness of faith. (See Ex. 14:10-13) Whereas in the latter, entering the land involved conflict and exertion on their part, and so results depended upon their faithfulness as responsible. (Num. 33:50-56)

If you read verses 1-9, with 29-31. of Ex. 4, and verses 30 and 31 of Ex. 14, you will see that what is spoken of is the people's believing the evidence of what they saw; a very different thing from faith which connects the soul with God, because, as I once said to you, we see the same sort of "belief" in those who were certainly not saved, in Ex. 8:16-19; John 2:23-25; Acts 8:6,9,10,13,20-23.

We must not forget also that the deliverance in Ex. 14, though in type it was the deliverance of God from spiritual enemies, and though where there was faith this result might be recognized as the proper fruit of connection with God, yet actually, or in fact, it was deliverance from visible enemies, and faith was not required to ensure a share in it. God did not deal with them on the ground of faith in delivering them, but on the ground of His promise and grace in fulfilling it to them in spite of their being evil; and, moreover, the words which you quote from Ex. 14:31, were spoken of what was subsequent to the passage through the Bed Sea, and describe the state of the people consequent upon what they saw in that passage and immediately after it, and not their state before that "baptism" took place.

In Ex. 4:29, Moses and Aaron gathered the elders of the people, and in verses 30 and 31, these are called "the people," and "the children of Israel" are seen thus in the persons of their representatives, and get credit for what they do, although in fact they may have, and must have, formed a small number compared with the whole nation. They were the heads of the people, and represented the people then and always. This is a principle of frequent occurrence in the Scriptures, and an instance illustrating it is seen in Israel's future history. In the day that is coming it is said, "All Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26); but when we examine the prophecies which treat of that time, we find that only a very small "remnant" of Israel will be blessed, the great majority of the nation being cut off in judgment. (See Isa. 6:9-13; 10:20-23; 41:17; 52:12; Jer. 23:3; Ezek. 6:8; 14:22; Joel 2:28-3:21, &c) This remnant, however, gets the place and blessings of Israel, and is thus the representative of the nation.

The subject of 1 Cor. 10 is privilege, and the responsibility which flows from partaking in that to those who partake, whoever they are. So the passage, "did all eat the same spiritual meat," and "did all drink the same spiritual drink," &c., says something about the meat and the drink, but nothing about the people who partook of them except that they did partake. They participated in all these privileges; i.e. baptism unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea, the spiritual meat and the

spiritual drink which were provided (and true as well as false ones did so, “they did all eat the same,” &c), and yet many of them were proved in the long run to have been unworthy partakers, and we are to take warning by them, lest after partaking of our privileges we should sin and be destroyed as they. There is no thought of the possession of life, or of God’s grace and its results in the chapter, but there is that of the privileges enjoyed by the people, and, even in spite of these, their course with its results.

Heb. 3, to which you refer, does describe this evil course of theirs-” they do always err in heart, and they have not known my ways; ““ howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses “provoked Him, but “to whom swore He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not?”-and in view of this description I can only believe that these never had faith; for although they saw God’s acts they did not know His ways, and the end merely showed out what was their state all along. To say that at one time they had faith and were right in heart, and that subsequently they lost the one, and went wrong in the other, seems to me not only to be at issue with their history, but also to shut out altogether the work of grace in any soul, because this wherever it exists is perfect and eternal in its effects.

I may just note, before closing, that Matt. 25:14-30 and Luke 19:12-26 show how the Lord acknowledges and deals with false profession. It is plain that the wicked servant’s condemnation is, that while he occupied the position of a servant he never did one bit of service; i.e. that he really was no servant; but the Lord in reckoning with him does not condemn him as no servant, but rather takes him up on the ground of his profession, acknowledges it, and condemns him as a (wicked and unprofitable) servant.

F. J. P.

The Trespass-Offering

From sins of inadvertence, violations of natural conscience, and those which become sins by statutory enactment, we pass on to another class, which under the law are called a trespass (metal), and had to be met in the manner revealed to Moses.

Trespasses might be committed against God, or against one's neighbor, so two revelations were vouchsafed to Israel respecting them. The first, in Lev. 5:14-19, treats of trespasses against the Lord; the second, in Lev. 6:1-7, of trespasses against a neighbor; and both have this feature in common, that besides the sacrifice which had to be brought, a money payment as well was enjoined on the offender as compensation for the harm that he had done.

Of course every trespass was a sin, though every sin was not a trespass. A recompense being demanded showed that the rights of the one sinned against were not to be ignored; but a sacrifice being also enjoined, showed that a trespass against one's neighbor was not a matter which could be hushed up, or compromised, without any acknowledgment of the guilt before God. The injured party received back that of which he had been wrongfully deprived, with a fifth part of its value in addition, a fine imposed on the offender by the law of his God. But besides the restitution to the injured party, the death of the appointed victim had to take place to make atonement for the guilty person, that he might be forgiven. The forgiveness of his neighbor was one thing; the forgiveness of God was another thing, and with nothing less than that was the offender to be contented. Thus the Lord would teach His people, that their acts of sin had to be viewed in connection with their responsibility to Him, and not merely as they might affect the one sinned against on earth. Many a man might be defrauded without much personal inconvenience to him flowing from it; but a trespass committed against such an one was a trespass against Jehovah, and could only be atoned for as the law directed. How fully were the rights of property to be respected by those who were privileged to be called the people of the Lord. Are Christians sufficiently alive to that of which the Israelite under the law was constantly reminded?

A trespass-offering then supposed the commission of an act by which the Lord or the man's neighbor had been wronged. Of this class of sins we have several examples in the Old Testament. A wife unfaithful to her husband was guilty of a trespass against him; for she defrauded him of his rights. (Num. 5:12) Aaron, too, and Moses were guilty of this sin at Meribah-Kadesh, when they did not sanctify the Lord in the midst of the children of Israel. (Deut. 32: 51) Similarly Achan, and after him Saul, were convicted of a trespass when they kept back from the destruction to which God had devoted them-the one some property of the Amorites, the other some of the spoil of the Amalekites. (Josh. 22:20; 1 Chron. 10:13) Again, Uzziah was a trespasser in the holy things of the Lord when he presumed to officiate at the altar of incense, a service only lawful for the priests. (2 Chron. 26:18) And Ahaz and Manasseh stand out as shameful instances of trespassers; for they turned their backs openly on the worship of God. (2 Chron. 28:19,22; 29: 19; 33: 19) But not only were individuals guilty of such a sin; for the nation was convicted of it, both when they turned to idolatry before the Babylonish captivity, and when the remnant intermarried with the people of the

countries around them, after the Lord had in mercy allowed them to return to their land. (1 Chron. 5:25; 2 Chron. 36:14; Ezek. 20:27,28; Ezra 9:2,4;10: 6; Neh. 13:27) Separation to God should have characterized them, but in that they had grievously failed. Lastly, Zedekiah is charged by Ezekiel with this sin (17: 20) when he broke his covenant with the king of Babylon, to which the Lord was made a party, by his swearing in God's name to keep it.

These are instances of trespasses which God could not pass over, and for the most of which the law could provide no sacrifice. The returned remnant did, it is true, offer a trespass-offering for their failure in the matter of the strange wives. (Ezra 10:19) To Manasseh grace was shown when he repented. But the leprous king and the faithless monarch were monuments, as long as they lived, of the evil of such a sin in God's eyes; whilst Moses and Aaron, Achan, Saul, and Ahaz, experienced God's governmental dealing in being removed by death as a visitation on them for their sin. And Israel, exiles to this day, a people without self-government, and even national existence, are witnesses of the grievous consequences of trespassing against their God. Witnesses, too, are they of the law's inability to meet their case, whilst awaiting the coming of that day when the blessed results of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ shall be applied to them, brought to own their sins, and to turn to the Lord.

In all these cases the distinctive feature of a trespass is discerned. God or man was defrauded of their rights by a wrong done to them. In the case of the individuals, where the law could not provide a sacrifice, the temporal consequences of their sin could never be averted, unless God was pleased, as in Manasseh's case, to act in sovereign grace. In the case of the nation, they will learn by-and-by that their trespasses, to atone for which the law could make no provision, have been fully met and dealt with by the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ shed on the cross. Meanwhile under the law, God did provide a sacrifice, that trespassers of a certain class might be sheltered from the consequences of their acts, and be assured of divine forgiveness. These are specified in Lev. 5:14; 6: 7.

A person might sin through inadvertence in the holy things of the Lord, or he might have sinned ignorantly in such matters; for the sins referred to in verse 17, seem to have respect to those mentioned in verses 15, H. Inadvertently, or in error, he might have committed a trespass, or he may have acted in ignorance; nevertheless he had sinned, so a trespass-offering he was commanded to bring. Again, if he had lied to his neighbor concerning any matter of trust, or deceived him, or had sworn falsely for the purpose of defrauding him, a trespass-offering was demanded by the law, and that offering was to be a ram of the flock, which when duly dealt with at the altar, the money payment having also been made, the guilty one could go home with the assurance from Jehovah Himself of the forgiveness of his sin. So careful was the Lord to impress that on the offender that three times in these few verses is it stated. (Chaps. 5:16,18; 6: 7) For whether he had to bring a sin-offering or a trespass-offering, if the appointed sacrifice was brought, and the demands of the law complied with, the guilty one was assured of forgiveness on the part of the Lord. Absolution from the priest was not the question. No priest of Aaron's house could absolve a man from his sins, but he could tell him what Jehovah had promised, and assure him of it on the authority of the written revelation by Moses.

Having seen what constituted a trespass according to the law, we would now trace out some of the distinctive features of the required offering; for in each of the offerings at which we have looked,

the ritual prescribed had in it something different from the others. For a burnt-offering, a meat-offering, or a peace-offering, as we have seen, the offender had a choice, though only a choice within the range prescribed for him by the Lord. For a sin-offering as treated of in Lev. 4, God took account, as we have noticed, of the responsibility of the offender. For a sin-offering as enjoined in chap. 5, the Lord took into consideration the ability of the sinner. In the case of a trespass-offering, on the contrary, there was but one sacrifice appointed for every trespass, without any alternative to meet the offender's temporal circumstances. A ram of the flock was the only sacrifice the law appointed, an offering of less pecuniary value than a bullock, but of greater value than that of a lamb; for since the trespass indicated that either God or man had been defrauded of their rights, a ram, which reminds us of consecration, was the fitting offering to be appointed. With the sacrifice a money payment was demanded (this too was peculiar to this offering), depending in amount on the value of the harm done, with a fifth part of the value added to the sum which had to be paid.

Was it a trespass in the holy things? In that case the money payment went to the priest. Had any individual been injured? The money due was paid to that person, or if dead to his representative; and if he left no representative, then it was handed to the priest. (Num. 5:5-8) What justice was here displayed? No one was to take advantage of another, even though he were his brother; and if he did defraud or wrong him, he committed a trespass against the Lord. (Lev. 6:2) The injured party's rights the offender had to acknowledge, and to make amends for the harm done to him. But he had to do with the Lord about that wrong, and his presence at the altar with a ram was a confession of it. Death then could never be pleaded by the guilty one as barring any claim for restitution or the need of confession. Jehovah did not pass away, nor did the priesthood die out; so the Lord's claims had to be acknowledged, and restitution had to be made. Had it been left to man to draw up regulations in cases of trespass, some might have carefully provided for the recognition of the claims of the injured party, and have passed over all consideration of that which was due to God. Others might have stipulated for a sacrifice, and where death had intervened, have released the offender from all claim on him for compensation. With God's law how different. Time would not diminish the gravity of the offense; for it was a trespass against the Eternal One. Circumstances could not lessen the sinner's obligation to make restitution, so He who sat upon the throne, the Righteous One, insisted on that being done, ere atonement could be made for a trespass against a neighbor. The claims then of divine holiness were maintained, and also met in the ram when sacrificed. The demand, too, for a just recompense to be made by the offender was not suffered to remain unsatisfied; yet the guilty one was also cared for in the provision made for his forgiveness. How correct was David in his judgment when he said to the prophet Gad, "Let me now fall into the hands of the Lord; for very great are His mercies." (1 Chron. 21:13)

Amends then had to be made for the harm done, and where the wrong was one done to a neighbor, the restitution or payment of the fine is spoken of, ere the sacrifice which had to be brought is mentioned. (Lev. 6:1-7) This order is not without significance. Where God had been defrauded, the sacrifice which He required, that He might be seen to be righteous in acting in grace toward the offender, is put in the foreground. When anyone injured his neighbor, the Lord taught the trespasser that He could not receive his offering, unless he first provided the proper recompense for the one whom he had wronged. The principle here illustrated abides unchanged. Dispensations may pass away, new regulations for the worship of God may be needed; but the

recognition of a neighbor's rights God cannot allow us to forget; nor will He accept the sacrifice of the man who, from whatever cause, would ignore them. (1 Thess. 4:6-8; Matt. 5:23,24) The ram brought to the altar, we learn from the law of this offering how it was to be dealt with. (7: 1-7) As with the sin-offering and peace-offering, its inwards only were burnt on the altar. In common with the sin-offering and meat-offering, it was most holy. Differing from the peace-offering, but in this resembling the sin-offering, the males only of the priesthood could eat of it; and the priest that made atonement therewith was to have it. Lastly, in common with the burnt-offering and peace-offering, its blood was only sprinkled on the altar round about. Thus the regulations respecting each offering are seen to be different. Resembling others in some points, no two were alike in all. Yet all typified one sacrifice, that which has been offered up, and accepted, even Him who is the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world, whose death therefore will have wide-reaching results, far beyond what any sacrifice under the law could prefigure. They were shadows, but the body is of Christ (Col. 2:17) They dealt with man's need; His deals with sin as well as with sins. By His precious blood atonement has been made for sins. By His sacrifice on the cross the sin of the world will be taken away. How suitable was it that the priest who offered the offering should have it, so that the sin which was transferred to the sacrifice should never rise up against the offender. The offering put out of sight, because eaten, the sin could never be remembered. How perfectly has God provided for this! (Heb. 10:17)

We have seen what constituted a trespass-maal-and in what manner such a sin could be dealt with. It will not therefore surprise the reader to learn that at no public festival was a trespass-offering-asham-appointed to be offered; yet a leper could not be cleansed without one (Lev. 14:10-14), nor could a Nazarite, who had defiled the head of his consecration, renew that consecration, till he had brought a he-lamb of the first year for a trespass-offering unto the Lord. (Num. 6:12) In both these cases God's rights had really been infringed. The leper teaches us what God's professed people ought to be for God, but had not been; the Nazarite shows us what one specially devoted to God should be to Him. But in neither case was harm done, so we have no money payment insisted. upon.

For centuries such sacrifices have ceased; for there was only one altar on which they could be offered, that called the altar of burnt-offering. By-and-by that altar will be reared up afresh, and hallowed again for acceptable worship to the Lord. Then trespass-offerings will be brought, as before, to God's altar at Jerusalem (Ezek. 40:39;42: 13), and the priests will boil what remains of them in the appointed place (46: 20), and eat them as they were commanded of old. (44: 29) But Christians, living between the time of the cessation of sacrifice on the altar and its renewal, know now what the earthly people will then learn-that propitiation has been already made once for all, and substitution in its fullness and reality is a thing of the past, though never to be forgotten; for Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins, and He Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree. (1 John 2:2; 1 Peter 2:24)

C. E. S.

Inside the Veil

If dwelling inside the veil, I say, Oh the immeasurableness of the love of God in what He has done. How can I repay Him? I am preserved from ten thousand things which would have affected me if not there. I am in another place; as one said, "I am doing a great work, and I cannot come down." I am not trying what I can squeeze out of this or that little circumstance for myself. I am saying, Why, God has given me everything He could give in giving me His Son. What return can I make Him? Cannot I give up this or that little thing for Him who gave His Son for me? It makes it seem as nothing. It is because we are not dwelling there, that some little thing seems very great to give up; or perhaps some little disappointment, then we shrink from the cross, and we are not ready to rise and go forth to meet it, because not living in heaven, not occupied with all the vastness of the blessing that is ours.

G. V. W.

The Ministry of New Covenant

<R 2 COR 3:6)That God has not put us under covenant need scarcely be affirmed, yet that in some way or other we get new covenant blessing will scarcely be denied. Speaking generally, any terms by which God sets man in relations of a definite character with Himself may be called a covenant. But Scripture speaks especially of three. The “everlasting,” that of the bruising of the woman’s seed, and the final overthrow of the power of evil; the “old,” which was a covenant of works, and thus conditional, which had, however, grace mingled with it, and which was ordered at Sinai; and the “new,” which is purely of grace, and thus unconditional. This last is, in Heb. 8:8, distinctly seen to be one that has to be made “with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people, and they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more. In that He saith, A new covenant, He hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” But when we turn to chap. 10, we find this quotation from Jer. 31 summarized in these words: “I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more;” and this is distinctly constituted a part of the blessing of Christian believers. So that while it is not made with us, but with the two houses of Israel, we are participants in the blessings of this new covenant, though evidently neither put, in a forensic sense, under this nor any other.

Now, the Lord spoke of the new covenant as in His blood, and the apostle, in Heb. 13, speaks of “the blood of the everlasting covenant,” which it is clear was, as much as the other, the precious blood of Christ. The basis, and the only basis, of all unconditional blessing is thus exhibited in connection with these two covenants. God’s original promise of blessing to man through the bruised Seed of the woman, and which embraces in its scope all the blessing, of whatever kind, that has or shall come to man in all ages, and the specific blessing which shall by-and-by be enjoyed by Israel and Judah, and by that re-united nation only, are alike unconditional, and could be unconditional because alike founded on the infinite virtue and eternal efficacy of that blood concerning which the Lord said, “This is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many.” Thus, whenever we partake of the cup, having the remission of our sins, having the sense of their forgiveness so that there is no remembrance of them any more between God and us, having His law in our inward parts, and God a known God, that cup is the pledge of these new covenant blessings, and the blood which it symbolizes is the blood of that new covenant, that blood which is the basis of God’s righteousness in grace now, and in glory hereafter.

It is consequently not a little important, inasmuch as to most minds covenant and conditions go along together, and conditions imply competency to fulfill conditions, that we should clearly see

that, as believers in Christ, we are not judicially set under any kind of covenant, or under conditions of a covenant character. On the other hand, it is happy for us to observe that we have the blessings which the new covenant, when established, will bring to Israel, every one of them already ours, received from Christ in glory! The apostle could fittingly speak of himself as an able or competent minister of the new covenant; for while it is not yet established, because the veil is upon Israel's heart, it is by anticipation (for all things are ours) ministered to the Church of God. And this is really the character which the gospel takes in the 4th chapter; viz., Paul's ministration of the unconditional blessing of the new covenant to the Gentiles, and which glad tidings, if hid, were hid where Satan had cast a veil of moral blindness over his votaries; but where received, was because God, who spake light out of darkness, had shone into hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Referring to chapter 3, he speaks of those to whom he wrote as Christ's epistle ministered by the apostle, the writing of the Spirit of the living God, not, as of old, upon stone tables and ordained by angels, but on the fleshy tablets of their hearts. And the apostle had confidence before God about this; for, disclaiming personal competency for such service, he avows his competency to be of God, who had made him a competent minister of the new covenant, not of letter, but of spirit. Then rising higher, with one inspired touch he marks the contrast between the two things; the letter condemns, but the Spirit giveth life-thus bringing forward the Spirit of God objectively, to whom he returns in the 17th verse, after the digression of verses 7-16, which form a parenthesis, and at which we will now look for a little.

We have here what constitutes the ministry of the new covenant as contrasted with the old. The latter, it is admitted, "began with glory" (see new translation), for it began when Moses' face shone so brightly that the children of Israel could not bear to look upon it. But this was after he had smashed the first tables in holy (may we not say judicial?) indignation, and formed the second in his character as mediator, receiving these written upon with the finger of God on the ground of redemption foreseen. Thus, when he came down this time among the people, he carried the law in his arms and the grace in his face. (Compare 2 Cor. 4:6) But the latter was a flash of glory they were unprepared for, for men in the flesh are more at ease under law than under grace. But the veil was not only necessary on their part, seeing they could not bear the glory of the mediator, but on God's part, so that they "should not fix their eyes on the end of that" which in Christ is annulled. (See verses 13, 14) The apostle then is speaking in contrast. He does not here say that the old covenant was glorious, but that the glory it was introduced with was merely temporary; and even that was too much for Israel; moreover the flash of glory it began with did not alter the fact that it was a ministry of death. The ministry of the new was that of a life-giving Spirit, and it subsists in glory, having a glory that shall never be done away. Another contrast is between the ministry of condemnation, which had a measure of glory, as we have seen, and the ministry of righteousness which abounds in glory. Thus the former covenant ministered condemnation and death, but God glorified it in grace (on account of mediatorship, and in connection with the person of the mediator) with a measure of temporary glory accompanied with a veil. But for us the new covenant is a ministration of the Spirit (His person, His gifts, His operations) and of righteousness; is crowned with immeasurable or surpassing glory; and is without a veil either upon our hearts or upon the face of the Christ who is our Mediator, and the true Moses gone into the presence of the Lord. For, be it remarked, when Moses "went in before the Lord to speak with Him, he took the veil off until

he came out.” (Ex. 34:34) Typical there of Christ surely, but also of our own blessed place and portion now in Him; for there is no veil upon our hearts (alas! there is upon Israel’s), and there is no veil upon our faces either, any more than there is upon Christ’s, when we go in before the Lord. So, also, when Israel shall turn to the Lord, there will be no longer any veil-they will find it is taken away.

There the parenthesis ends, and two things follow connected with verse 6, and which form a corollary to our subject; viz., the liberty of the Spirit which His presence, unless He be grieved and restrained, will certainly secure-a thing totally foreign to the law, which only wrought bondage; and secondly, transformation, equally unknown under that covenant. There could be no transformation in the absence of a transforming object. That object could only be a glorified Christ; the Spirit of God could present no other. Beholding whom (having the face upturned like a burnished mirror to Him upon whose face is no veil, but the glory of God, shining) His image is produced in us, such transformation from glory to glory being by the Lord the Spirit.

This, then, constitutes Paul’s ministry of the new covenant, its present ministration to the Church before it is yet made; viz., that of the Holy Spirit and of divine righteousness in immeasurable and unending glory from a glorified Christ on high; liberty in the presence of the Holy Spirit, and no veil either on our hearts or on the face of Christ, beholding whom we are transformed by that same Spirit practically into His image from glory to glory! In the higher character it has to us it evidently reaches to the reproduction of a glorified Christ in His saints on the earth; that is to say, not our standing before God in glory, but the direct effect of the glory upon our state here.

May the fruit of this wonderful ministry be more and more seen in us, to His present and eternal praise.

W.R. D.

Wherefore Didst Thou Doubt?

“ If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross,
and follow me.”

“Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you.”

“For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.”

Why do we hesitate or fear

To trust His perfect will?

When waves of trouble are most near,

Is He not nearer still?

Are not the waves beneath His feet?

The winds at His command?

Forgetting self, how safe, how sweet,

To trust His heart and hand

For if He must chastise indeed,

It costs Him more than all

The pain we feel; were there no need,

His strokes would never fall.

And if He takes some precious thing

That we too fondly grasp,

'Tis to Himself our hearts to bring

In nearer, closer clasp.

He loved and pitied us when low

Was our estate, and lost;

For us He went through seas of woe,

Foreknowing all the cost.

It needs but from Himself to learn

His love from first to last,

To find our hearts within us burn,
Our cares on Him to cast.
If care or doubt, we have to own,
Doth still within us lurk,
Have we complete deliv'rance known
By Christ, and by His work?
With Him we died, and now through grace
Our lives are hid above
With Christ in God-oh, wondrous place!
Loved with the selfsame love.
With Christ in God, Christ on the throne,
Dovelike we fold our Wings;
The heart finds rest in Him alone,
And trustfully it sings-
“ I would not choose, e'en if I might,
So sweet it is to be
Walking by faith, and not by sight,
Because He cares for me.”

M.

Notes on Naaman

Evangelists of all kinds have ever delighted to expatiate upon this striking story of grace. There is not therefore a more familiar incident in all the range of Scripture. It would, however, be a great mistake to conclude on this account that we have learned all the lessons it was intended to convey: indeed, the danger is ever to be avoided of supposing that we fully comprehend any portion of the word of God. The expression of a divine and an infinite mind, we shall never on this side of eternity be able to sound its depths, or to scale its heights: "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (1 Cor. 13:12) Bearing this in mind, we offer without hesitancy a few notes upon some of the points of this most interesting narrative.

Touching Naaman himself, it is evident that he is a type of man at his best estate; or, to speak more exactly, he is presented first according to the estimate of man, and then according to that of God. Three personal particulars are emphasized. He was a "great man;" he was also a successful man, "honorable, because by him the Lord had given deliverance unto Syria." And he enjoyed a good repute from his own personal qualities—"He was also a mighty man of valor." (vs. 1) These three things in combination give a perfect human picture, and would make their possessor the object of admiration or envy in any worldly circle. Naaman in the eyes of his fellows would have attained the summit of human ambition. The world had nothing left to give to this valiant, successful, and rewarded soldier. He ought therefore, if it were possible, to have been a supremely happy man.

But looking at Naaman from God's point of view, judging him according to God's estimate, what is the result? It is summed up in one word—he is a leper. Ah, how sad the contrast between God's thoughts and man's! The one whom men admire, caress, and envy, is pronounced by God to be a poor leper: "For there is no difference: all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:22,23) The leprosy is the type of the evil in the flesh, which has broken out, and covered the whole man with the pollution and guilt of sin. Naaman thus, as seen of God, is nothing but a poor guilty sinner; and just because he is such, he is the fitting object of God's sovereign grace and mercy.

It is evident, it may be remarked in passing, that we have in the whole narrative a foreshadowing of this dispensation. One sentence, indeed, in the first verse reveals it. It says that the Lord had been working by Naaman on behalf of Syria—Syria, the open enemy of the people of God. This shows the awful condition into which Israel had fallen, and doubtless prefigures the times of the Gentiles. This fact gives a special character to the dealings of God with Naaman as recorded in this chapter.

First, then, we have man as a sinner, and thereon we have the messenger with the glad tidings of salvation. Two remarks may be made upon the second point. First, the messenger of blessing to Naaman. It was a little maid, brought away captive from the land of Israel, and she waited on Naaman's wife. She was therefore, as to her position, humble, and if not despised, yet of no

account in the esteem of the world. Thus it ever is in the day of grace. The preacher of the gospel, if he occupy his true place, must ever be lowly and mean in the presence of the pride of man. An apostle could say, "We are made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things unto this day." (1 Cor. 4:13) That she was of the chosen people may well prefigure Israel's mission to the Gentiles in a future day. Then, secondly, there is the message. If but simple and brief, it is yet the announcement made by our Lord to the woman of Samaria. The little maid says, "Would God my lord were with the prophet that is in Samaria! for he would recover him of his leprosy." (vs. 3) The Lord said, "Salvation is of the Jews." (John 4:22) The message is one and the same. Nay, it is even Paul's also; for he speaks of the "gospel of God, concerning His Son, who was made of the seed of David according to the flesh," &c. (Rom. 1:1-4)

The message was not in vain. Naaman went in and told his lord; and from this point we have traced out the path of a soul from darkness to light. The first effect of the gospel he had heard was seen in his desire to possess the proffered blessing. It met his need in that it held out to him the promise of being cured of his leprosy. But immediately, as is the case with numberless souls, he falls into the error of supposing that he could earn, or purchase, the coveted blessing. Grace is never understood by the natural man. Naaman prepares himself with a letter from the king, ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment. Surely, with the influence of a king at his back, and with so much money, he will be successful in his quest. Ah! do we not all remember when we acted on the same principle, only to find ourselves in a worse plight than ever.

The next mistake he makes is in applying to the king of Israel. The king, as the responsible head of God's people, ought to have been the channel of blessing. That he was not, only reveals the nation's state; and that the king did not know where blessing is to be found, showed his own apostate condition. But neither the state of the nation nor the ignorance of the king can prevent the outflow of grace to this poor Gentile. God will glorify Himself in spite, yea, in the midst, of His people's failure.

When Elisha, the man of God, "heard that the king of Israel had rent his clothes, he sent to the king, saying, Wherefore hast thou rent thy clothes? Let him (Naaman) come now to me, and he shall know that there is a prophet in Israel." (vs. 8) Elisha in his ministry is a type, in one aspect, of the power of Christ in resurrection. Anointed to be prophet in the room of Elijah (1 Kings 19:16), the mantle of Elijah, with a "double portion of his spirit," fell upon him from his master, when ascending to heaven in a chariot of fire. (2 Kings 2:9-11) He therefore in his ministry became the sole channel of blessing to those whose hearts grace might open in the midst of idolatrous Israel.

In response to the message of the prophet, "Naaman came with his horses and with his chariot, and stood at the door of Elisha." The leper is bent upon obtaining the blessing; but it is evident that he is not yet in a condition to receive it. Horses and chariots are ever in Scripture the symbols of pomp and pride. Naaman therefore will have to go down, down much lower, ere he can be healed. He has learned that the influence of the king was of no avail, and now he must be taught that his own rank and grandeur are obstacles rather than aids; for there is no respect of persons with God. But since he has come to the door of Elisha, whatever the state of his soul, the message of salvation cannot be withheld. He was a seeking soul, and such are never repelled. "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean." The prophet could not go out to Naaman; for that would have been to falsify their respective positions;

but he sends out to him this gracious announcement of the means of healing and cure.

Mark the effect. "Naaman was wroth." And why? First, because Elisha had not treated him with greater personal consideration. Sitting outside in his chariot, he thought that the prophet would have come out to him, and then and there called upon the name of the Lord his God, and moved his hand up and down (see margin) over the place, and recovered the leper. (vs. 11) Naaman as the leper would have Elisha to cure him as his servant. Ah, no The sinner must take the place of the suppliant-yea, as having nothing and deserving nothing-before he can be a recipient of grace. Besides, who was Naaman, to dictate to the prophet the method in which he should proceed? It is ever the same; the sinner expects to be saved in his way.

But Naaman is offended in another respect. Why should he be required to go to the Jordan?

Abana, Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, his own country, were far "better than all the waters of Israel" "in his estimation; might he not wash in them and be clean? These rivers represent the sources of earth, and thus teach us that Naaman was willing to be cured in a human rather than in a divine way. In other words, like many a poor sinner since, he would be reformed rather than be born again. How many fall into this snare! They will accept the necessity of a moral change, but not of the new birth; for the first makes everything of man, while the last makes everything of God. So Naaman will not be healed on such terms, and he "went away in a rage." (vs. 12)

His servants now step upon the scene. Who they were we know not; but whoever they were, they had divine intelligence. "My father," say they, "if the prophet had bidden thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it? how much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash and be clean?" (vs. 13) These words-words which need to be used again and again wherever the gospel is preached-were carried home with power. The strong, proud man is now humbled, and he "went down and dipped himself in Jordan seven times, according to the saying of the man of God." (vs. 14) Jordan signifies death; and the meaning of Naaman's act is simply this, that he bowed under the just judgment of God against man's sin; he accepted death as the expression of God's righteous judgment upon the sinner; and in that he dipped himself seven times, we are taught that he did it without reserve-perfectly, if you will-acknowledging to the full God's claims upon him, and bowing before the sentence of death which He had passed upon the sinner. It was the submission of the sinner to the rights of a holy God. As a consequence- for it will be remembered that Elisha acts in the power of Christ in resurrection, and therefore in the efficacy of His death before God-grace flows out without let or hindrance. Naaman's flesh came again like unto the flesh of a little child, and he was clean. He was born again through the water of the Word (which brings death to all that we are as men in the flesh) and by the power of the Holy Spirit. God had met and blessed Naaman in the exercise of His sovereign grace (see Luke 4:27); for the moment Naaman dipped himself under the water of death, God was free to act according to His own heart of love and compassion.

There follow several distinct evidences of the change which Naaman had undergone. A brief indication of these will suffice. First, "he returned to the man of God, he and all his company, and came and stood before him." (vs. 15) Formerly, as we have noticed, he remained at the door of the prophet; now the horses and chariot have disappeared, and he stands before Elisha. In other words, he took a low place-for to stand in the presence of another is, in the East, to take the place of a servant. The humility of Naaman thus revealed the change. Secondly, he confessed with his

mouth. Having believed with his heart, he now confessed with his mouth the God of Israel. Thirdly, he desired to express his gratitude to Elisha, though the prophet could not, without falsifying grace, receive the blessing at Naaman's hands. Fourthly, he purposes-whatever his ignorance-to be a worshipper; or rather, he is constrained by the sense of what he has received to say that henceforth he would only sacrifice unto the Lord. Lastly, he has an exercised heart. The worship of the true God and of idols cannot co-exist. Naaman at once feels this, that the knowledge and worship of the true God must of necessity exclude all recognition of false gods. Hence he speaks to Elisha of his difficulty in regard to his attendance upon his master in the house of Rimmon. That which makes everything manifest is light; and the true character of the worship of Rimmon thus stands now revealed to Naaman's soul. What can he do? He must go with his master: so much would be his duty. He therefore seeks to pacify his conscience, to soothe his exercised soul, by saying, "The Lord pardon thy servant in this thing." It has occasioned surprise to many that the reply of Elisha should be, "Go in peace." But not for one moment must it be supposed that this contains an implied sanction upon Naaman's entering the house of Rimmon. By no means. The prophet with divine wisdom-which we would do well to imitate-refuses to anticipate the difficulty. He saw that Naaman was exercised; and he knew that if Naaman felt the difficulty before he left his presence, he would feel it much more by the time he arrived in Syria. This answer meant, "Depart in peace; He who has so graciously met you will still be with you, and will give you grace and strength when the need arises." In other words, he committed and commended him to the Lord; and we may be quite sure that Naaman never entered the house of Rimmon.

The incident closes with the sad and lamentable conduct of Gehazi. With a heart untouched by the exhibition of God's grace and power towards this stranger, he only thought how he might use him to his own selfish ends. Covetous, he by deceit and falsehood obtained what he sought, without concern that by his wicked conduct he might be confusing Naaman's conceptions of grace, and thus be dishonoring the God of Israel. His sinful act might make the Syrian think, that after all the gift of God could be paid for, if not purchased. Hence the severity of the punishment which fell upon him "The leprosy, therefore, of Naaman shall cleave unto thee, and unto thy seed forever." E. D.

Letters on Profession and the Work of Grace

My Dear Brother, In Eph. 2, I read, "God who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) and hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace, in His kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast."

Now this Scripture is noticeable, because it puts before us complete salvation entirely as God's work, without the necessity or possibility of anything on our part, and also as a fully accomplished thing for us now. In general in the other epistles we have the salvation of our souls known to us as a present thing by faith, and we wait for the deliverance to be extended to our bodies. Here, however, in Ephesians, we are viewed as already "seated in heavenly places in Christ"-seen as in the full present possession of all that is ours in Him; and it is here, where the whole extent of the work is in view, that salvation is in the most explicit way entirely referred to grace. There is no

question of our doing anything in the matter, because we are “dead in trespasses and sins,” and it is all His work from that point.

Now, this is a direct illustration of the work of grace as applied to sinners, and it is of course founded upon what we may call the work of grace for them; that is, the death of the Lord Jesus on the cross. No man asked Him to do that work, and it was entirely His own grace which (as Rom. 5 teaches) found in man’s sin the occasion for the display of His love. He is sovereign in the acting of His grace towards sinners-” The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit “(John 3:8); and as 1 Peter 1:3-9 teaches, it is both He who is the beginner of the work in us, and the One who maintains us unto the end. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time,” &c. See also Col. 1:12-14 and John 10:27-30: “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: and I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father’s hand.”

Now, all this illustrates what I called the work of grace. There is a divine work wrought for, and a divine work wrought in, man; and it is all outside of merit or work on his part, though of course accompanied by exercises in him, and is therefore entirely of grace. Responsibility to answer in life to it, and to show that it is true, follows the profession of His name who has done this work (as in Rom. 10:10-13 and 2 Tim. 2:19, &c); and Christians may be, and are, spoken to in the Scriptures (as I showed in my last) on the ground of what they are responsible to exhibit, leaving out for the moment the question of whether salvation is true of them or not; while, on the other hand, they may be and are spoken to (as these Scriptures herein quoted show) on the ground of participating in that divinely-accomplished work,.

Now, it is quite plain that a person may profess faith in Christ, and yet utterly fail to maintain that character of life and walk which become indispensable to one who stands on that ground; while it is equally plain, that wherever there is true faith in Him, i.e. wherever He is owned in the heart (as in Rom. 10:10), the soul is eternally safe, or, as the Scripture expresses it, “has everlasting life, shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life,” and is one of “the sheep” who “shall never perish.” (John 5:24; 10:27-30) To say that one could be right in heart with God, and then fall away from this so as to be lost, is thus to say that a man may have eternal life and lose it; that is, that after all it may prove to be not eternal life. And it is to say also that it is possible for some power to catch His sheep out of His hand in spite of His affirming the contrary.

In some Scriptures, as the epistle to the Romans, the responsibility of man as man (God’s creature) to live a good and proper life, and even to seek God, is brought up for the purpose of convicting all men that they “have sinned and come short of the glory of God;” and salvation is presented as satisfying the need in hint which this truth when believed is sure to produce. The contrast between the former life of those who are justified and brought “unto Christ,” and their life subsequent to this, or to the profession of this, necessarily comes out in this line of truth. Again in other portions, as Philippians and Hebrews, we have the responsibility of Christians as Christians

brought out, and this is always measured by the place they are in, either professedly or really.

All these truths have their places divinely given, and are useful and precious parts of divine truth, while that which grace, or God in grace, works remains true, and is the heavenward side, and not the earthward side, of the same truth.

We are told to “hold fast the form of sound words,” and there are of course truths which we may convey to one another in expressions, which are not perhaps precisely copied from Scripture, without departing from this injunction. Were we to object to every expression which is not to be found in the Bible, we should have to object to much that is good and true, and used to convey precious truth. For instance, we do not find in Scripture the word “person” applied to the Father, or to the Son, or to the Holy Spirit, and yet what better word have we for conveying the truth of their blessed individuality? “Trinity” is also not a word in Scripture, but does it not convey the truth?

We must not forget who said, “The letter killeth,” and we must therefore be careful to hold the truth, and not mistake for this mere acquaintance with correct phrases. Mere effort of human mind can take these up, but the living truth must be received in the simplicity of children by faith; and it sets free no less from error than from the bondage to forms which our minds always seek to bring us into.

F. J. R,

Propitiation

That God could pass over sins, the Old Testament teaches us, and the saints of those days abundantly proved it. That He is righteous in doing so, the New Testament shows us (Rom. 3:21-26); for the blood, sprinkled once on the mercy-seat, vindicates His holiness and His righteousness, and enables Him consistently with all that He is to act in mercy and forgiveness to those on whose behalf it has been put, as it were, under His eye, and on the place of His throne. Hence there are two questions which have to be settled ere the sinner's conscience can be at rest in the presence of God. Can he be forgiven? And on what ground can a holy God exercise His prerogative of mercy and forgiveness? That the offender could be forgiven, if the case admitted of a sin-offering or trespass-offering being brought to God's altar, we have already seen. Now we would consider why, according to the teaching of the divine Word, God could righteously forgive; for nothing short of God's righteousness being manifested in forgiving our sins can really set us at rest before Him. Of old the sinner had a witness of it as he brought his sacrifice to God's altar. (Rom. 3:21) Now that righteousness is fully manifested, "even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all, and upon all them that believe." But this leads us on to the consideration of what is called propitiation—a term not met with in the Old Testament, but one with which we are made familiar by the writings of the New Testament. (Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10)

Now we are not to understand by this that God needed to be propitiated by the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, in order to reconcile Him to us. We, not God, needed the reconciliation (Rom. 5:10,11; Col. 1:21,22); and the presence on earth, and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ are a sufficient refutation of such a doctrine. The incarnation, and the atoning death of Christ, both give the lie to it. He came, given by God (John 3:16), and sent by the Father. (1 John 4:14) It was God, rich in mercy, who for the great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, quickened us with Christ. (Eph. 2:4,5) Of us we read that we are reconciled to Him by the death of His Son. God, too, commended His love towards us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Rom. 5:8) So wrote Paul, concerning himself, and those who with him shared in the salvation of God. To speak then of propitiating God by sacrifice would be to belie the teaching of revelation, and to deny what He is whom we know as our God. Such a thought would do for a heathen, but not for Christians; and the fact that the heathen have such notions only indicates how utterly man, by the fall and its results, is astray as to all true knowledge of the character and nature of the Divine Being.

But if He needs not to be propitiated, and can pass over sins, and forgive them, does He think lightly of them? The death of His Son on the cross, and His being there forsaken of God, when made sin for us, sufficiently shows what is God's abhorrence of sin, whilst the giving up His Son to die for sinners, proves, as nothing else can, the greatness of His love to them. To be propitiated on their behalf He never needed; yet propitiation was requisite, for He can only act in grace consistently with all that He is. And propitiation by blood is the only thing that could meet the case; for blood is the life of the flesh, and by it atonement, of which propitiation forms one element, is made for sins. Propitiation, therefore, had to be made, though God needed not to be propitiated.

The ground had to be laid, on which God would be righteous in accepting a guilty person before Him. For when one thinks of propitiation, we think of that which has to do with God's nature, and God's throne. It is not the meeting of the sinner's need, though that results from it, but the providing that God should be able to act in grace to the sinner, without compromise of anything that He is, that is meant by propitiation. Hence the making it was an act God-ward, not man-ward, and one done in the sanctuary, when the high priest was alone with God. And intimately concerned as Israel were with all that was done on the day of atonement, the first work in the sanctuary had relation to the claims of God's holiness, and not to the need of the sinner. By whom propitiation really has been made, and the abiding value of it, the New Testament teaches us; but in the Old we have traced out for us in type how it was made. To this we would now turn.

There is an order in God's book, and He gives His revelations when and how He pleases, though He does not give a syllabus of the contents of any book, but leaves us to gather that from a study of its pages. So in Leviticus we are first taught the way of approach to God, which is by the death of His Son, and the institution of priesthood and of a high priest who represents the people before the Lord. After that, we learn principles of walk, which should characterize those who are redeemed, typically treated of in the regulations about clean and unclean animals in chap. 11. Then come regulations about defilements, and the rites for purification from them. Then at length we have the revelation about the day of atonement, teaching how sins can be dealt with before God, and uncleannesses likewise. (Chapter 16:16) Thus the deeper question, and really the prior one, being the foundation of all that preceded it, is taken up last in order in the book. For God in His goodness to His people shadowed forth the way of approach to Him, and the provisions for those who had sinned or were defiled, ere He set forth on what grounds alone He could be righteous in having them before Him. The whole subject, for it is a great one, is taken up therefore in order, first what man needed, and then what enables God to meet that need. To this last we now come, as far as treated of in the Old Testament in the rites appointed for the day of atonement, in which we have set forth how propitiation is made, and in a clear way too what substitution really is. To the former of these we must for the present confine ourselves.

In previous revelations in this book we have met with, as occasion called for it, the Lord's gracious announcement, "It shall be forgiven him" (Lev. 4:5, 6), or "He shall be clean" (12. 14. 15), according as the matter had reference to sin or to defilement. In Lev. 16, we have no such assuring utterances; for we are to learn rather how God's nature is cared for, and all that He is vindicated and satisfied through propitiation by blood.

Death then must take place for propitiation to be made, and a high priest is needed to deal with the blood when taken into the holiest of all. Hence the sinner is wholly cast on the service of another to procure for him a standing before the throne of God, though such service could have no place unless death had previously taken place. Obedience therefore on his part, or devotedness of the highest order, could never procure for him that which as a sinner he needed. Self in no form, under no name or guise, can be of any avail when it is a question of making propitiation. The distance between God and the sinner can never be bridged over, and approach to the throne be permitted to the offender without condign punishment overtaking him, unless another, the high priest accepted by God, has accomplished what he alone can effect inside the veil. We need therefore the ministrations of another—a priest to care for God's holiness, and make good a standing for us in righteousness before the throne. And as none but the high priest can do that—the high priest, too,

of God's appointment (Heb 5: 4) -those only who are willing to be indebted to the ministrations of the Lord Jesus Christ, the great High Priest, can share in the propitiation made by Him.

But it is propitiation by blood, His blood; for He and He alone is the sin-offering, God's lamb, whose sacrifice God can accept, and, we can add, has accepted. No standing then could there be for any of us before the throne unless the sacrifice for sin had been slain; no standing, too, could there be for any of us unless the blood had been, as the type teaches us, taken within the veil. Those who reject the sacrifice of Christ have no sin-offering on the ground of which they can come to God, and no propitiation can there be made by virtue of which they will be able to stand in the divine presence. Obedience, repentance, devotedness, supplication, none of these can vindicate the claims of God's holiness; none of these can justify Him in freely and fully forgiving the sinner. Now this side of truth is very much forgotten. Man thinks of his sins, and the consequences to himself, and wants those consequences averted; but he forgets, unless divinely taught, that God's nature has to be cared for, and His righteousness in acting in grace made good through propitiation by blood.

A high priest was requisite for this, and the Lord instructed Moses about it. In garments of white, indicative of the spotless purity of the Lord Jesus Christ, Aaron went into the holiest once every year with the blood of others; i.e. of bulls and of goats, the type, but in this falling short (and how short!) of the antitype, who, pure Himself, entered in by His own blood. (Heb. 9:12) Not in virtue of His blood, as if He had no right of entry otherwise; but what characterized Him was entrance by His own blood, as that which characterized Aaron was entering in by the blood of others. (Heb. 9:25) Inside the veil, with the cloud of incense rising up between Aaron and the mercy-seat, on which the cloud of glory rested, and in which cloud the Lord appeared (Lev. 16:2), the high priest prepared to do his work, death having already taken place. Now that work was speedily done; but how effective was it when done! No prayer was uttered that we read of; no invocation was needed, when the high priest sprinkled of the blood on the mercy-seat and before it. The service was a silent service. All Aaron's eloquence, all his entreaties, could not have added one iota to the merits of the blood; nor could Aaron have understood what was its value and preciousness to Jehovah. Prayer then was not called for; no need was there for one single word to be spoken; for the blood had a voice for God, which He well knew, and could listen to. Aaron therefore first sprinkled of it on the mercy-seat, and then seven times before it. With that his work within the veil was done.

Once was it sprinkled on the mercy-seat, and that was the first act of the high priest. He put it on the throne of God, and where the cherubim, the supporters of His throne, looking down as they did to the mercy-seat, could see it, and gaze on it; and he left it there. This was enough for God. The moment, as it were, that He saw it, the action of the throne, which must otherwise have been going out righteously in judgment, was stayed; and those on whose behalf the blood was brought in, would not be dealt with in judgment as they deserved. The blood of the sin-offering thus put on the mercy-seat, was never wiped off; it remained throughout the year ever before God. Then sprinkled seven times before the mercy-seat, the sinner's perfect standing before the throne was assured to him. All this time the people were without; they could not enter the holiest. The high priest alone could, and he did the work there all alone. He did it, and came out; for he was only a type of Him who remains within the holiest, having found eternal redemption. (Heb. 9:12) The Lord abiding within the heavenly sanctuary assures us of this.

This work was never repeated, as long as the time lasted for which it was made. As typical of the true work of propitiation it was done every year; but its value the last day of that year was just as great as on the first. Now it has been done once for all by the great High Priest, who entered in once into the holy place, having found eternal redemption. Thus God is perfectly glorified, and able righteously to act in grace towards the greatest of sinners. The blood on the mercy-seat bears witness to this. A perfect standing too before the throne is secured for all who believe on the Lord, by His blood, sprinkled, as it were, seven times before it.

C. E. S.

(To be continued)

The Living Link With a Living Christ

The word of God links the soul with Christ as He was and is; it just gives one a written Christ. See in Matt. 5 “Blessed are the poor in spirit;” and who so poor in spirit as Christ? “Blessed are the pure in heart;” and who so pure as He? “Blessed are the meek;” and who so meek as He? “Blessed are the peace-makers;” He was the great peace-maker, the very Prince of Peace. The first thing, of course, is to have Him as the living Christ for the salvation of the soul; and then, through the written Word, we get the spiritual perception of what this Christ is. It is the simple expression of Christ Himself, of Him who was the express image of God-” was made flesh, and dwelt among us, so that we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only-begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth;” and when we thus get the Spirit’s testimony to Christ, the heart clings to Him as the “holy” and the “true.” Thus the Christ found in the Word governs the affections; for we dare not, and would not, be without or depart from this written Christ. This living link to a living Christ is the only safeguard against them that would seduce you. A holy Christ in whom we have the truth is the blessed strong moral assurance of the soul when a mixed and lifeless Christianity is powerless against delusion, and when the same causes make the professing church incapable of discerning a plain path, when there is not faith enough to do without the world, and mixture is everywhere. Then a holy and true Christ is the assuring guide and stay of the soul. To Timothy Paul said, “From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation, through faith which is in Christ Jesus;” and surely there can be no better knowledge to be got than the knowledge of Christ. This was the point in John’s epistle. The father in Christ knew “Him that is from the beginning;” he could tell what the true Christ was; he knew “Him that was holy, Him that was true.” It is not development that is needed, but merely the getting back to the simplicity that is in Christ-to know Him truly that was at first revealed, Him that was from the beginning. Therefore if my soul is attached to the Christ of the written Word, the Christ that I have loved down here is the same Christ that I am waiting for to come and take me up there.

J. N. D.

Notes of a Gospel Address

It is remarkable how individual the experience given in this psalm is. The writer of it had been taken up by God as a shepherd boy, and put on the throne. There he committed three of the most awful sins that the law of God condemned—adultery, murder, and corruption. He used the very throne to which he had been raised from the sheepcote, the throne of Jehovah, not only to display his own shame, but to put dishonor on Jehovah Himself. But when his soul had passed through the process described in this psalm, with God, he was thrown down not only as a poor sinner in the presence of God, but right on to that great master-thought of God's mercy—His mercy and compassion.

Have you been in the same class David was put into? in that place where the creature is under God's eye, and knows himself there, and finds all the hypocrisy and double-dealing of his evil nature trying to push off the mercy which is his portion for eternity? We must be in it in one way or another. Why? Because God the Holy Spirit makes a quotation from this psalm, when speaking of God's principles of dealing with man in His gospel now, and it gives out the principle of blessing at God's right hand. In Rom. 4 we get Paul's statement of God's principles of blessing. He does not bless a man according to his works. In God's dealings with man, He finds all the positive evil in man, and not only says, "If I am to bless you, it must be with-out works," but the blessing is the very test of the character of the man whose works are bad. The mercy of God is the only pathway for Jew or Gentile into the favor of God.

Verse 1. "Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered." What do we understand by being "blessed"? The primary idea of the word is "prosperous." A prosperous man before God is one who knows his sins, and finds the answer to them in God; such a man is marked by happiness. When we look at man, not only as in time, but for eternity, there is no man so prosperous as he who says, "I have nothing but sin in myself, but all my rest is in God." That man has something to sing of in which, whatever way he turns, he finds some fresh note of gladness and joy connected with it.

"Transgression forgiven" - "sin covered." Transgression is quite different from sin. Transgression is when a person has wandered from a marked path; sin is the principle of self-willed independence in the heart of man. David made discovery of both these things in himself, so that they did not suit the heart of the creature in the presence of God. Directly he got them forgiven and covered, then he could understand what prosperity it was, to find that all his wanderings might be sung of as connected with God who had forgiven them. Have you some knowledge of having come short of the glory of God? Has God come in and said, "I have nothing to reckon to you, nothing against you." Do you find in yourself the principle of self-willed independence? It often breaks out still in the child of God, though in a different form from what it did in David or Job. God says, "I know all about it; but I have put my hand upon it, and covered it. Your ground of confidence is not that. I do not know about it." Does God know all about the transgression and the independence? Paul, all rapturous of Christ, and wanting to serve Him, had to go back and learn it all, though the sins were

all forgiven and covered by God.

It is a searching question to put to one's own soul, How far I know that, as a creature standing before the Creator (apart from the work of redemption), there is nothing in the mind of God concerning me but iniquity -nothing fit for His presence? When the eye of God comes down on me, when I look at what my nature is, do I know what it is to say, "It is iniquity"? I ought to know it, if it is the Lord's pleasure not to impute it. (vs. 2) He does not impute it if I am a believer, but asks me what I think about Christ, who bore the punishment, being in glory now; would I rather have a good thought about myself? What a different ground for a saint to be on to say, "I know all; nothing can ever rise and startle me now. I know it, for it was all imputed to Him eighteen hundred years ago, and judged by God on the cross."

"In whose spirit there is no guile." (vs. 2) Guile has nothing to do with guilt; guilt is the condition of a man having transgressed who has not found an answer to his sin. Guile is artifice. While David was trying to patch himself up, he was forgetting that his sin was all exposed before his people. To think that he could try to be before God as an unruined creature, when he, the man after God's own heart, had taken the place of a model sinner! It would not do. God says, "I know all the iniquity, but I do not impute it; why then wear a false appearance any longer? I know, and make you know that I know, and do not impute it." A man can take his place before God, not as a guileful sinner, but knowing God as the One who says, "I have mercy of my own." As soon as David knew of mercy, he could get up and walk without any attempt to cover over anything.

Verses 3, 4: Often a process goes on in the mind (and a terrible experience it is), when the natural man will not recognize God's mercy and compassion as the ground on which he is placed and accepted before God, and is trying by artifice to pass things off, and cover up the heart a little better than it was covered before. "My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long." (vs. 3) These are figures used to show the pain of the lesson David had learned. Has the Christian got to pass through that now? Not in the same way, because the first thing presented to our mind is Christ crucified, dead and risen again for us. When I read the epistle to the Romans, I find Paul learning the ruin of human nature and the creature; and through the bearing of those doctrines on himself he was put through a very deep process, and brought down entirely to his wits' end. "O wretched man that I am who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" (Rom. 7:24) People do not often see that the difficulty is not in things around, above or below, but in themselves. "Who shall deliver me from myself?" Has God then saved me from myself? Yes; he that is identified with Christ, is identified with Him in crucifixion, death, and burial; and therefore it is that I am to reckon myself dead. "But I am not dead," you say, "I find myself alive." This is true as a matter of fact, and hence it is because you are associated with Christ's death before God that you are called upon, not to say that you are, but to reckon, yourself dead. This is often only reached through a great struggle, because the principles of the truth are not fully established in our hearts.

The way that David obtained deliverance was in just simply opening his bosom and pouring all out that was there. What have you to give to God? What has man to give? One thing (though he may start at the thought)-sin and sins! That is all! If ever you gave God anything that He accepted, it was your sins.

There is a great deal of appearing in the best colors before man. God wants reality. If He has one leading trait, it is that He cannot lie. God attaches so much importance to reality that He cannot do

away with it for a moment. David had not reckoned upon this. But what did he do when he found God's ground? God says, "Are you on the ground of making yourself out a little sinner? You, my representative on the throne, how can I say it is a little thing you have done? I am upon the ground of mercy." Directly this got hold of David's soul, and he was driven into God's presence, he opens his bosom and pours all out.

Have your souls got there? What is to startle me if my soul is in this place, that I do not know on earth a person in nature more completely come short of the glory of God than my own self? But just because God was not ruined when I was, He says, "I shall take occasion by your very ruin. The very fact of your being a sinner is the motive of My coming out to glorify Myself. You know My Son has died for such, and is at My right hand." Am I in this place? What further discovery can come out, if to my mind the blood of the Lord Jesus shed on Calvary is the measure of my sins and the iniquity of my nature? If God wants a people, whom does He choose? A righteous people? No; a people who, when all earth shall be under the power of darkness and sin, shall be able to slip Satan, and live for God in spite of what they are. God has a people who find they cannot get along unless they know their ruin, and how God has even turned that to His own glory, and know God as a refuge from their ruin. There is a height in Him altogether beyond the creature ken to measure. Who could have thought of such a thing as that the unruined God - should come in and say, "I know how to turn your very ruin to my glory. I am altogether above you in the range of my thoughts. I shall do as I choose. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy." Who is to say to God, Stop? He is the only one who can say, "I will;" and it will stand. What else does it show? God as the God of resources! What seemed utterly impossible, has been accomplished. The attributes of His being could so blend as to meet the sinner. But He was a God of resources. He had one Son, and in Him on the cross all the rays of the character of God could be shown out; and God stands forth inviting, attracting, alluring, commanding the ruined creature not to stand out for the first Adam, but to come to God and give his sinnership, his sins, on the ground of the Person and work of Him whom God delighteth to honor. The beauty of the Lamb, who sits on the throne of God, is part of my felicity as a poor sinner. Is that a ground that will break down?

No. When the heart is simple in the renunciation of everything one has as a mere creature, and gets on the ground of Christ's work in salvation and redemption, Satan himself has nothing to say. If all the devils come, if my conscience accuses me, they can say nothing to what God has said against me when He put His Son on the cross. I can say, "What do you think, Satan, of that? That Christ bore my curse." I have boldness before God, when the Lamb is my boldness, ruined in myself, not worth speaking about; but my ruin is taken occasion of by God, because God wants a people on earth who can speak well of Him, walk as His Son walked, and resist Satan. If this is to be, you must know your ruin, you must take God's experience of what His divine counsels were about the sin found in us, and you will find a standard of ruin, a standard of happiness for the Christian, that in the darkest, deepest pit in which he may be, he has the mercy of God, and the power of the Holy Spirit sealing on the heart the bright light of the truth, that God has found an answer to the ruin.

G. V. W.

Fragment: Prayer

“ Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.” One feels that the want of this is the cause of weakness. If we said half as much to one another, and twice as much as we do to God, it would be better. Many a thing that we say to one another, if said to God, would produce a different effect. I never can get out of this place of dependence-praying because my heart longs to pour out and cast itself on God, but not for the sake of praying.

The Three Raisings of the Dead

Three times only, as far as we know, did the Lord Jesus, while upon earth, raise the dead to life; viz., the daughter of Jairus, the son of the widow of Nain, and Lazarus. Each of these cases has its special characteristics and instruction. The daughter of Jairus had but just expired when the Lord entered the chamber, and turned the weeping of the night into the joy of the morning. The son of the widow of Nain was being carried to his grave when the procession of death was arrested by the Prince of Life; and Lazarus was in his tomb, had been dead four days, ere, at the bidding of Him who was the Resurrection and the Life, he came forth again into the, light of day. Thus did Christ vindicate His power as the Son to quicken whom He would, for "the hour," said He, "is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and they that hear shall live." (John 5:25)

There was a divine reason, too, for the selection of these cases. Had the Lord raised only the child of the Jewish ruler of the synagogue, infidelity, in its shameless presumption, might have questioned the reality of the death; and so also in the instance of the son of the widow. The case of Lazarus, therefore, was of another kind-one whom death had claimed, and retained for four days, so that even his sister exclaimed, "Lord, by this time he stinketh." But 'he who stood by the grave had "life in Himself" (John 5:27), and was about to die, and rise again, that He might be Lord both of the dead and living. (Rom. 14:9) Death therefore had no power, nay, could not exist, in His presence; and He, in His condescension and grace, has proved it for us by meeting and overcoming death in every stage of decay and corruption. He will prove it again, in a still more wondrous and victorious way, at a later time, when "all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (judgment). (John 5:29)

The motives also, it may be remarked, of the Lord's action in these respective instances were different; that is to say, His motives as revealed in the several scriptures. He went to the house of Jairus at the earnest request of the sorrowing father. "He fell at His feet, and besought Him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: [I pray thee,] come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live." (Mark 5:23) It was faith, so to speak, laying hold of the heart of Christ, and constraining Him to answer its appeal. It was the heart of Christ delighting to meet the need of one who in all confidence was casting his burden of sorrow upon Him. What consolation! yea, what encouragement to every poor burdened soul-burdened with whatever grief or anguish-to come to Christ and evoke the sympathy and succor of His unfailing and inexhaustible grace and love! Truly all such shall find that He has a heart for every woe.

But there was no appeal from the widow of Nain. Whatever her sorrows, exercises and desolation, they are all unrevealed, save in her circumstances. They are left to be gathered from that one pathetic word, "The only son of his mother, and she was a widow." But this one word is enough. It is a living picture of unequalled sorrow and heart-breaking grief. Divine sustainments there may have been; but if we speak after the manner of men, it is a picture of dark and hopeless desolation.

Knowing therefore something of the heart of Christ, we do not wonder that it says, "When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her, and said unto her, Weep not." (Luke 5:13) We have said that this poor widow made no appeal to Christ. Nay, her hopeless sorrow, her total bereavement, constituted her appeal. The Lord saw her, estimated as no other could the depth of her need, and thus, moved by His own heart, He went to her relief. We do not sufficiently understand this. All can comprehend that the Lord should listen to the cries of His people, but how many of us live in the power of the blessed remembrance of the fact, that our own griefs and sorrows find an answering response in His heart? "In all their affliction He was afflicted." (Isa. 63:9) "We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are-without sin "(sin apart). (Heb. 4:15) If a parent bends over his suffering child with yearning pity, "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear Him." (Psa. 103:13) Some who read these lines may be lying on beds of pain and affliction; others, bereaved, may be weeping over their dead; and others again may be mourning over those who are dead in sins. Surely, then, it will be a comfort to all such to remember, that He who, when He saw the widow of Nain following the bier of her only son, had compassion on her, has the same heart for their griefs; that He stands by them with infinite tenderness, waiting both to succor and to console.

" His heart is filled with tenderness,

His very name is Love."

The case of Lazarus differs from both. There was not the faith in the heart of Martha, or even in Mary, that characterized Jairus. They had faith; but it only embraced the power of Christ to raise up from sickness. Both alike said, "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died." (John 11:21-32) Nor did the Lord, as in the case of the widow of Nain, act from His own heart. On the other hand, He refused the appeal to His affections. The message of the sisters was, "Lord, behold, he whom Thou lovest is sick." (John 11:3) No doubt they concluded that this constituted the most effectual entreaty they could make, believing that they were laying hold of those strong cords of love that bound Him to Lazarus. They made no mistake as to the fact of His affection; for the Spirit of God carefully adds: "Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus." (vs. 5) But still the Lord refused the motive presented. It says, "When He had heard therefore that he was sick, He abode two days still in the same place where He was." Wherefore this delay? It was not, as we have seen, that He had no heart for Lazarus, nor that His heart would not prompt Him to speed to the succor of the one He had honored with His love, but it was because the sickness of Lazarus was "not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." (vs. 4)

Every word He spake, and every act He performed, was for the glory of God; for it was His meat to do His Father's will, and to finish His work. But it has pleased God to unfold to us the different ways in which the Lord acted for that glory, and thus to display the manifold perfections, and the varied moral glories, of His beloved Son. Here therefore we see Him losing sight, as it were, even of those He loved, that it might be known that He was actuated in this wondrous exhibition of resurrection power solely by the glory of God. Hence it was that He abode two days still in the place where He was, after the cry of these sorrowing hearts had reached Him; for though He was the eternal Son, the Word that was with God, and was God, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. And in coming down to this scene, He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him

that sent Him. (John 6:38) He would not therefore act at the promptings of His own heart, because He had taken the place of obedience, and thus waited for the Father's word before He responded to the appeal. Cold must be the heart that is not moved by this outshining of His moral glory, this combination of infinite greatness with the lowliest grace and humility. It is, in fact, the revelation of what He was.

What needed lessons are thereby conveyed! Human affection would have prompted to instant succor; but allowing death to come in first, brought, in raising Lazarus, as nothing else could do, not only glory to God, but also to Christ Himself; for if this sickness was for the glory of God, it was also "that the Son of God should be glorified thereby." How then it should still our hearts in the presence of God when He seems to delay to answer our, cries! Urgent need or pressing danger is generally importunate and impatient. "Has not God said," we repeat at such times, "that He will hear our prayers?" How then is it that we have cried in vain? Ah, no! we never cry to Him in vain; "for the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and His ears are open unto their prayers." (1 Peter 3:12), If the Lord wait, He waits only for His own glory, and our fuller blessing.

Martha and Mary would naturally conclude, that if Lazarus died the case was hopeless; for they had not counted upon resurrection power. In like manner we often limit God, and thus it is that He leaves us, like Paul, to have "the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." (2 Cor. 1:9) We should challenge our hearts as to how far we have thus learned God as the God of resurrection. Martha and Mary needed and learned the lesson, and, on the evening of the day on which their brother had been raised up from death, would thank God that He had permitted him to die ere the Lord came upon the scene. What was thus for the glory of God, and glorified the Son of God, secured at the same time for His people unspeakable blessings.

These three different motives for the Lord's action may in another way be connected. If we begin from man's side, as presented in Jairus, we see that it is faith which lays hold and secures the intervention of His power on our behalf. If we look at His side in relation to ourselves, we learn that it is His heart which moves His arm of power in answer to our cries. And then if we inquire what is the object He has before Himself in all the exercise of His grace and power, we find that it is solely the glory of God. Thus, ere He came to earth, in the past eternity, foreseeing man's condition and the failure of everything to satisfy God's claims, He presented Himself, saying, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God;" and before He returned to the Father, but taking a place, in spirit, beyond the cross, He said, "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." (John 17:4)

A few words may be added upon the dispensational teachings of these three cases, leaving for the present the more general instruction. All symbolize Israel in different ways. But it must be remembered, as another has said, "that, while dispensationally Israel has great importance as the center of God's government of this world, morally Israel was just man where all the ways and dealings of God had been carried out so as to bring to light what he was. The Gentile was man left to himself as regards God's special ways, and so unrevealed. Christ was a light "to reveal the Gentiles (ε■ς■ποκ■λυφιν ■θωνων)." The daughter of Jairus sets forth the condition of Israel on the Lord's return. Christ was on His way to heal the nation, but while on His way the poor woman, who had been afflicted with an issue of blood for twelve years (Mark 5:25), and had come to the end of

all resources, whether in herself or in others, in vainly seeking for cure, comes in the energy of faith to Christ, and at once obtains relief. This is what has happened. The nation of Israel refused their Messiah, but faith, even while He was on earth, proved His ability to save, and still proves it now that He is on high. The present dispensation, therefore, like the woman with the issue of blood, comes between His mission to Israel and His actual restoration of the nation to life. The son of the widow of Nain also speaks of Israel's moral condition. Remarkably enough, too, the incident comes after a striking exhibition of faith; faith in Christ as having the power of God, and such faith as the Lord had not found in Israel. (Luke 7:9) But in this case it was a Gentile, and not one of the chosen people. He was a Roman centurion. Luke, however, presents Christ as the Son of man, revealing God in grace outside of all dispensations, although, as a matter of fact, He was in the midst of Israel. Hence the prominence given to the faith of the centurion, who was an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and a stranger from the covenant of promise. It is in contrast with this that the son of the widow of Nain is introduced. Morally Israel was dead, and, as such, beyond hope, save for the intervention in grace of resurrection power—a power unknown to the ordinances of the law. Israel then must be the object of sovereign grace and mercy equally with the Gentile. (Compare Rom. 11:30-32)

Lazarus typifies, in like manner, the state of Israel, as indeed the state of man as displayed in Israel. In chapter 8, the Jews reject the word of Christ; in chapter 9, His work; and in chapter 10, He, as the Good Shepherd, calls His sheep out of the Jewish fold. This excites the enmity of the Jews, and they took up stones again to stone Him. (10: 31) They had done this before. (8: 59) Not only, therefore, had they rejected Him, but they had also displayed the murderous enmity of their hearts against Him as the Son of God. (10: 33-36) It was consequently all over with them as a nation, and in the next chapter their state in death, as the fruit of their sin, is displayed in Lazarus. They had sought to stone Christ as the Son of God; God testifies to Him in this character in the resurrection of Lazarus. "This sickness is not unto death, but for the glory of God, that the Son of God might be glorified thereby." Moreover, if Israel is dead, the question is, Can these dry bones live? If so, it can only be by the sovereign exercise of resurrection power in grace. And this is what will take place; for "thus saith the Lord God; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel."

(Ezek. 37:12) "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God how unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord? or who hath been His counselor? Or who hath first given to Him, and it shall be recompensed unto him again? For of Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things: to whom be glory forever. Amen."

(Rom. 11:33-36)

E. D.

Fragment: Perfect Law of Liberty

The “perfect law of liberty” is leave to have no will of my own. The greatest bondage is to have to be subject to one’s own will; i.e. if we know God’s will.

Fragment: Perfect Will of God

If I have known how perfect the will of God is, I am free to submit myself to Him. Many do not think it a boon to have no will of their own, because they do not know what it is to have to do with a perfect will.

Sanctification

<R 1TH 5:23)Let us here examine a little into that which this passage teaches us with regard to sanctification. It is connected indeed with a nature; but it is linked with an object; and it depends for its realization on the operation of another; namely, of God Himself; and it is founded on a perfect work of reconciliation with God already accomplished. Inasmuch as it is founded on an accomplished reconciliation, into which we enter by the reception of a new nature, the Scriptures consider Christians as already perfectly sanctified in Christ. It is practically carried out by the operation of the Holy Spirit, who, in imparting this nature, separates us, as thus born again, entirely from the world. It is important to maintain this truth, and to stand very clearly and distinctly on this ground: otherwise practical sanctification soon becomes detached from a new nature received, and is but the amelioration of the natural man; and then it is quite legal, a return, after reconciliation, into doubt and uncertainty, because, though justified, the man is not accounted meet for heaven--this depends on progress, so that justification does not give peace with God. Scripture says, "Giving thanks to the Father, who hath made us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light." Progress there is, but it is not in Scripture connected with meetness. The thief was meet for paradise, and went there. Such views are enfeebling, not to say destructive, of the work of redemption, that is, of its appreciation in our hearts by faith.

We are then sanctified (it is thus the Scripture most frequently speaks) by God the Father, by the blood and the offering of Christ, and by the Spirit--that is to say, we are set apart for God personally and forever. In this point of view justification is presented in the Word as consequent upon sanctification, a thing into which we enter through it. Taken up as sinners in the world, we are set apart by the Holy Spirit to enjoy all the efficacy of the work of Christ according to the counsels of the Father: set apart by the communication of a new life no doubt, but placed by this setting apart in the enjoyment of all that Christ has gained for us. I say again, it is very important to hold fast this truth, both for the glory of God, and for our own peace: but the Spirit of God in this epistle does not speak of it in this point of view, but of the practical realization of the development of this life of separation from the world and from evil. He speaks of this divine development in the inner man, which makes sanctification a real and intelligent condition of soul, a state of practical communion with God, according to that nature and to the revelation of God with which it is connected.

In this respect we find, indeed, a principle of life which works in us that which is called a subjective state; but it is impossible to separate this operation in us from an object (man would be God if it were so), nor consequently from a continual work of God in us that holds us in communion with that object, which is God Himself. Accordingly it is through the truth by the Word, whether at first in the communication of life, or in detail all along our path. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."

Man, we know, has degraded himself. He has enslaved himself to the lusts of the animal part of his being. But how? By departing from God. God does not sanctify man apart from the knowledge

of Himself, leaving man still at a distance from Him; but, while giving him a new nature which is capable of it, by giving to this nature (which cannot even exist without it) an object-Himself. He does not make man independent, as He wished to be: the new man is the dependent man; it is his perfection. Jesus Christ exemplified this in His life. The new man is a man dependent in his affections, who desires to be so, who delights in, who cannot be happy without being so, and whose dependence is on love while still obedient as a dependent being ought to be.

Thus they who are sanctified possess a nature that is holy in its desires and its tastes. It is the divine nature in them, the life of Christ. But they do not cease to be men. They have God revealed in Christ for their object. Sanctification is developed in communion with God, and in affections which go back to Christ, and which wait for Him. But the new nature cannot reveal an object to itself; and still less could it have its object by setting God aside at its will. It is dependent on God for the revelation of Himself. His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom He has given us; and the same Spirit takes of the things of Christ, and communicates them to us. Thus we grow in the knowledge of God, being strengthened mightily by His Spirit in the inner man, that we may understand with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height; and know the love of Christ, and be filled unto the fullness of God. Thus, gazing with open face upon the glory of the Lord, we are changed into the same image from glory to glory as by the Spirit of the Lord. "For their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also may be sanctified through the truth."

We see by these passages, which might be multiplied, that we are dependent on an object, and that we are dependent on the strength of another. Love acts in order to work in us according to this need.

Our setting apart for God, which is complete (for it is by means of a nature that is purely of Himself, and in absolute responsibility to Him, for we are no longer our own, but are bought with a price, and sanctified by the blood of Christ according to the will of God, who will have us for His own), places us in a relationship, the development of which (by an increasing knowledge of God, who is the object of our new nature) is practical sanctification, wrought in us by the power of the Holy Spirit, the witness in us of the love of God. He attaches the heart to God, ever revealing Him more and more, and at the same time unfolding the glory of Christ and all the divine qualities that were displayed in Him in human nature, thus forming ours as born of God.

Therefore it is that we have seen in this epistle that love, working in us, is the means of sanctification. (chap. 3: 12, 13) It is the activity of the new nature, of the divine nature in us, and that connected with the presence of God; for he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God. And in this chap. v., the saints are commended to God Himself, that He may work it in them, while we are always set in view of the glorious objects of our faith in order to accomplish it.

We may here more particularly call the reader's attention to these objects. They are God Himself, and the coming of Christ: on the one hand, communion with God; on the other, waiting for Christ. It is most evident that communion with God is the practical position of the highest sanctification. He who knows that we shall see Jesus as He now is, and be like Him, purifies himself even as He is pure. By our communion with the God of peace we are wholly sanctified. If God is practically our all, we are altogether holy. (We are not speaking of any change in the flesh, which can neither be subjected to God nor please Him) The thought of Christ and His coming preserves us practically, and in detail, and intelligently, blameless. It is God Himself who thus preserves us, and who works

in us to occupy our hearts and cause us continually to grow.

But this point deserves yet a few more words. The freshness of Christian life in the Thessalonians made it, as it were, more objective; so that these objects are prominent, and very distinctly recognized by the heart. We have already said that they are God the Father and the Lord Jesus. With reference to the communion of love with the saints as His crown and glory, he only speaks of the Lord Jesus. This has a special character of reward, although a reward in which love reigns. Jesus Himself had the joy that was set before Him as sustainment in His sufferings, a joy which thus was personal to Himself. The apostle also, as regarded his work and labor, waited with Christ for its fruit. Besides this case of the apostle (chap. 2), we find God Himself and Jesus as the object before us, and the joy of communion with God-and this in the relationship of Father-and with Christ, whose glory and position we share through grace.

J. N. D.

Propitiation

Propitiation, then, has been made inside the heavenly sanctuary. Of this we are assured on the authority of the Holy Spirit. He, the Comforter, would come, sent by Christ from the Father, the token that He had gone whither He told His disciples He would go. (John 15:26) Israel knew it was effected annually for them, as the high priest emerged from behind the curtains which screened the entrance to the holy place. We know it has been made once for all, by the coming of the Holy Spirit to tell us of the perfect and abiding acceptance before God of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Sacrifice and High Priest. The need of it God knew, and has declared. The provision to make it He concerned Himself with, and now that it has been effected tells us of it. God on the throne is perfectly satisfied with that precious blood before Him. But what grace have we part in who share in the result of this! The High Priest, God's Son, has vindicated by His own blood the nature of God, and enabled Him righteously to accept guilty creatures before Him; and the Holy Spirit has come down to tell us of it for our joy, and peace, and confidence of heart before God. What a God, we may well say, is ours! and may indeed exclaim, "Unto thy name be the glory, for thy loving-kindness, and for thy truth's sake."

Now this propitiation concerns both sinners and failing saints. It concerns sinners, as they thereby learn that God is righteous in saving such from the judgment they had deserved. It was love, too, which provided for the propitiation to be made; for it has been effected by the blood of God's Son: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10) A sacrifice was needed. Blood must be shed, and carried in, as it were, before God. What sacrifice could He accept? What blood would avail? The blood of bulls and of goats could never take away sins. The sinner could not die for himself; but God's Son could, and did die for us. Herein indeed is love. Propitiation made tells us what men are, and what we deserved; but having been made, and in the way in which it has been accomplished, it shows us too what God is. He is love, and He is light. As light He could only act in righteousness, and that is seen in the requiring a sacrifice; whilst love is displayed in providing it. So God on the throne, the Lord Jesus our Sacrifice and High Priest, and the Holy Spirit who declares it, are each seen engaged in the activity of divine love, caring for those who have sinned Surely we are very little alive to the love which has been thus manifested towards us. Two things, which to man it would have been impossible ever to unite without compromise of either the one or the other, are fully

harmonized and displayed in the death of the Lord Jesus, and the propitiation made by His blood-God is light, and God is love. Propitiation then made, and it has been perfectly made, God can deal in grace with any and every sinner. His righteousness has been fully vindicated, and therefore He can justify the ungodly.

Neither the enormity then of a man's guilt, nor the length of his career in sin, are questions which affect the possibility of propitiation being made, though the heinousness of the guilt, and the length of time any one continued in it; must surely deepen in the heart of the justified one the sense of the grace in which he shares. But all that has no place at all in determining the question, Can God righteously act in grace? If He is righteous in so dealing with one, He will be equally so in thus dealing with all who now accept His terms; viz., believe on the Lord Jesus Christ for the saving of their soul. Hence propitiation is for the whole world (1 John 2:2), not for the sins of the whole world; but it is enough for the whole world, God requiring nothing more than what has been done, to be righteous in saving the whole world, if all were willing to be saved. Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the whole world, the value of His blood before God being all that is needed to deal in grace with the whole world. It speaks to God, and is ever before Him. How this simplifies matters "Is God able to have mercy on such a wretch as I am?" some one might say. "He is righteous, perfectly righteous, in having mercy," is the answer, the Word given us. Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the whole world. Nothing then is wanting but the sense of need and of guilt in the sinner's heart and conscience, for the acceptance on his part of the salvation proffered him by God. So that which in the book of Leviticus is treated of in the inverse order, we learn about in the New Testament in its proper order. God's righteousness is first met, and then the sinner is evangelized.

But saints are concerned with this truth as well. Has failure come in? Has sin been committed? Confession then has to be made. Can God forgive the saint who has fallen, sinned against light, and perhaps in willfulness; sinned presumptuously? Yes; thank God. "We have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 2:1,2) Our relationship to God never changes, and at such a moment, when the heart most needs it, God assures us of it. We have an Advocate with the Father, One who can always take up our cause and be heard; for He is righteous; One who has ever a place before the throne; for He is Jesus Christ the righteous, and He is the propitiation for our sins. He is the propitiation. It is of what He is abidingly that we are here reminded. Not merely that He was, but He is the propitiation. Hence the value of His blood abides unchanged before God, and the failing saint learns the immense comfort of such a truth, and the reassuring nature of it, as he reads those words by John. God is able righteously to forgive a failing saint, as He was to forgive the sinner at the outset; for propitiation has been made by blood, the blood of His Son. How the need for the death of Christ and the shedding of His precious blood comes out to us. How the need, too, for Him as High Priest to make propitiation, is made plain to us. Without it God could not righteously act in grace, nor the sinner stand before Him. By it He can act in accordance with all the desires of His heart; and the sinner who believes, and the saint when he has failed, both learn something of the value of that work, and together will have cause throughout eternity to bless God for it.

C. E. S.

On Worship in the Past, the Present, and the Future

Some souls find a difficulty in understanding how animal sacrifices should again be resorted to after the church has been caught up to heaven, imagining that the Jewish ritual has been once and forever abolished, consequent on the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus on the cross having been offered up. The Mosaic ritual is never said to be abolished. We who believe on the Lord have died to the law, and those called to go with Christ without the camp of necessity turned their backs once and forever on the temple and its ritual. But the recurrence of sacrifices is so clearly stated in Ezek. 40-46, that the fact is settled at once for the soul which bows to the Word. Isa. 66:23, too, intimates it, and Mal. 1:11 likewise. Further, the sons of Zadok will be reinstated in their priestly office and functions, as the holy priesthood, to offer up animal sacrifices (Ezek. 44:15,16); for the covenant of an everlasting priesthood made with Phinehas the Lord will not revoke.

But the difficulty in the mind probably arises from not understanding, that an essential difference exists between the character of worship suited for men on earth, whose calling and prospects are earthly, and that suited for those whose calling and portion are heavenly, those who share in the latter worship on earth after the manner in which they will worship in heaven; i.e. without a ritual in which animal sacrifices or literal incense have a place. Hence they need no altar; and the language of the elders in heaven (Rev. 5) suits Christians now on earth who worship in spirit and in truth, for such worship the Father (John 4:23), and by the Spirit of God. (Phil. 3:3) It is evident, then, that no unconverted person can have part in such a service. Only children can worship the Father; only those who are partakers of salvation can worship by the Spirit of God, and such the Lord calls true worshippers.

But in the days before the cross the case was different. Men approached God by sacrifice, and Israel, God's peculiar people, drew nigh to the altar with their offerings and sacrifices; at least, they were all commanded to do it, without the question being thereby raised of the individual's conversion. As God's earthly people they were to own Him, and in doing that governmental dealing was at times averted. Christians bring not their sacrifices, the fruit of their lips, to avert the divine displeasure, or to ensure acceptance. They worship because the divine displeasure has been forever averted from them, and they stand in the acceptance which flows from the abiding value in God's eye of the atoning death of His Son. As the Creator and as Jehovah God was worshipped before the cross; as such He will be worshipped again. Hence of old unconverted people could worship Him. Saul worshipped the Lord (1 Sam. 15:31) in the past, and the spared of all nations who shall come against Jerusalem (Zech. 14:16) will in the future. See also the proclamation of the everlasting gospel, noting the classes of persons to whom it is addressed (Rev. 14:4,5), and the prophetic announcements in Psa. 22:27-29; 86: 9, 10, Isa. 66:23, Zeph. 2:11. All flesh in that day will not be converted (Psa. 18:44, margin), but all will worship God.

Further, the revival of the Mosaic ritual need not engender any difficulty in the minds of the Scripture student. Sacrifice can be commemorative as well as anticipative. In the blood of bulls and goats there was no intrinsic value. (Heb. 10:4) Their blood was typical of the blood of Christ.

By-and-by, when the blood of the sacrificial animals shall again be shed, it will be in commemoration of the atoning blood of Christ shed once for all on the cross. There is really no more difficulty in the thought of sacrifices in commemoration of what has been offered up, than in sacrifices anticipative of it; and since the normal manner of worship for those whose prospects are bounded by earth is by sacrifices, they will be again resorted to when the earthly people shall be once more owned as the people of Jehovah.

Fragment: Slovenliness

The adversary gets many an advantage over us through slovenliness. How little equal are we to the occasions that present themselves. Satan works more effectually now with the pillow than he formerly did with the stake.

Fragment: the Cost of Worldliness

The world never gives you a thing without your giving up something of Christ for it. I believe you have to buy every bit of worldliness you get, and to pay very dear for it too!

Fragment: Friend of the World, Enemy of God

Never forget what James says, “Whosoever therefore is minded to be [the] friend of the world is constituted the enemy of God.” (New translation)

Peace and No Peace

Divine peace is a wonderful thing to him who has it, and only he knows what it is. He of all others carries a light in thickest darkness, has joy in deepest sorrow, is “calm amid tumultuous motion,” quiet amid the strife of tongues, unperturbed and unruffled in the most trying hour, in the deepest waters is not overwhelmed, and in the season of Satan’s angriest opposition can look up steadfastly into heaven.

Peace is a higher thing than comfort, a deeper thing than joy, a more solid thing than rest; for while here my comforts may be diminished, my joy be disturbed, my rest be broken, but my peace floweth as a river. Interrupt the flow of a river, and it is a river no longer. You may dam up its waters, but you only make them stagnant; you may have widened their area, but you have only distended desolation, for their freshness and their fruitfulness depend upon the continuity of their changeless flow. Thus a river is the scriptural illustration of PEACE. “O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river.” Again: “Thus saith the Lord, Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river.” (Isa. 48:18, and 66: 12) And “the troubled sea “just as fittingly illustrates the state of those who have no peace. (See chap. 57: 20, 21)

In the seven closing verses of this chapter (Isa. 57) we have a beautiful presentation of grace. God speaks of Himself as “the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell,” says He, “in the high and holy place,” but He adds, “with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.” What is evident here is, that God’s dwelling is in harmony with His own nature. He is high and holy, and He dwells in the high and holy place. But He dwells also with him “that is of a contrite and humble spirit,” for He finds there that which is suited to Himself. The highest place in heaven is dignified by the presence of Him who yet condescends to make the lowly heart His throne. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.” (Psa. 51:17) The God whom the highest heavens cannot contain is the God whom we may make our Guest, but only by ourselves getting down into the lowest and lowliest place. Thus, if we have never met Him, it is because we have never got down so low as that level of self-judgment on which He is found in grace. But when He takes up His abode in the humble and the contrite, it is in the sweetness *of His love, and the tenderness of His mercy, that He may revive the spirit of His humble ones, and revive the heart of His contrite ones. How blessed to be thus humble before Him—lowly enough for the lofty One to dwell with us, contrite (or rubbed down) enough for the Holy One to revive us! The really humble, are those who can never be humbled; such, in His own peerless perfection, was the Master Himself.

In the next verse, God condescends to remember human frailty, and reflects that if He stay not His hand from judgment man’s spirit would fail before Him, and the souls that He had made. Divine compassion is here most touchingly exhibited. Yet (vs. 17) He had been justly wroth for the iniquity of their covetousness, and had smitten them. Again He had been wroth, and had hid Himself, and they had gone on in frowardness of heart. Thus He had seen Israel’s sin, and smitten him for it. Again He had seen it, and had refrained from smiting. But He had still to be wroth; for Israel had

only taken advantage Of His hiding Himself, and their frowardness was unchecked. Yet again will God act, and in a new way. "I have seen his ways, and will heal him." He shuts not His eyes to his sin, but He adds, "I will heal him." Marvelous grace! Thus are seen God's three ways of acting. (1) Seeing sin, wrath, and judging the sinner. (2) Seeing sin and wrath, but hiding Himself. (3) Seeing sin, and healing the sinner; leading him also, and restoring comforts unto him, &c. The first is seen in principle in the antediluvian world and the judgment of the flood. The second, in the law. The third, in the gospel of our salvation. How happy for us that we live in a day in which God commendeth His love to us by acting in the last of these ways! What wondrous grace "I have seen his ways, and will heal him." Who can be insensible to such precious words? The One who measures the magnitude of my sin as I never could, and views its hateful malignity with an abhorrence I have never felt, is the One who has righteously dealt with it suitably to His own glory; for seeing the extremity and the exigency of my case, the word went forth from His lips of grace, "I will heal him." The One who knows, as none but He, the iniquity of my covetousness, and the frowardness of the way of my heart, is the One who says, "I will lead him also, and restore comforts unto him." Adorable, matchless grace!

All founded, we need scarcely say, in the blood of Christ.

Again: "I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the Lord; and "(a second time) "I will heal him." These expressions, "him that is far off," and "him that is near," respectively bring in the purpose of God that Gentile and Jew should both receive the heritage of peace from His hand. For the former, see Zech. 9:9,10, the One who enters Jerusalem as her King, just and having salvation, speaks "peace unto the heathen;" on the other hand, in Mic. 5:2-5, the One whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting, "this man shall be the peace, when the Assyrian shall come into our land." So also the Spirit of God by Paul, in Eph. 2:17, says, He "came and preached peace to you which were far off" (Gentiles, as those to whom he was writing), "and to them that were nigh" (Israel his kinsmen). And, says the apostle (vs. 14), "He is our peace." So that having made peace by the blood of His cross for the Jew, the Gentile, and the Church of God, the One who will in a future day speak peace to the heathen, has already spoken it to us; and the One who will be Himself the peace to Israel is our peace now. It is deeply interesting in this, and many another case, to see how the Church, through grace, is in the highest way put in present possession of blessings, many and varied, which will, in another form, be the portion of earthly saints; for, indeed, "all things are yours."

"But the wicked" -solemn word of contrast- "are like the troubled sea when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt." Or, as we read in Jude, "Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame." Graphic picture, drawn by the Holy Spirit, of the state of a soul without God And at the foot of the canvas He adds but this word, as an eternal inscription, "There is NO PEACE, saith my God, to the wicked."

W. R. D.

Separation From Evil, and Holiness to the Lord, in Order to Testimony-Early Witnesses to Their Necessity

A dangerous doctrine is abroad which does not deny the importance of separation from evil, an ever abiding principle of God, but which does not at once act upon it; this allowed must have the most disastrous effect on the testimony. It presents itself in two forms: it is found, on the one hand, in the palliation of the evil; on the other, it is seen in the pressing and urging of delay. Where the evil is manifest, Scripture shows both the palliation of it, and delay in dealing with it, to be false and mischievous to us; and shows further that unless God in His grace delivers from these, there can be no such thing as a true testimony. There is one only safe way of dealing with evil, and this is separation from it. Evil, whatsoever its form, and whether arising from within or from without, is not of God, but the saints are. (Compare 1 John 4:4, and 1 Thess. 5:23) So that, proceeding as it does from Satan, there must be withdrawal from. it in all who desire fellowship with God. The Lord Himself can have nothing to say to it save to condemn it; this He has now fully proved in what He has done at the cross.

Now I urge that separation from evil is the divine and first way of dealing with it, and that this separation must be acted on at once, or I become identified with evil in God's sight, defiled by it, and no longer a testimony for Him; and I propose to draw the reader's attention to Scripture in proof of these statements.

But how did evil originate? If we turn to Gen. 3:5, we shall read, "God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof; then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." In this suggestion man is brought, for the first time, face to face with evil. By yielding to the suggestion of the enemy, he was to become acquainted not merely with good, but also with evil. And such was the result. Separation from evil was not here acted on as the divine and first way of dealing with it; it was not acted on at once. Man fell, and instead of being a testimony for God, a witness of His goodness as the masterpiece of His works, he has lost all confidence in God-no longer knows Him as the Author of his chief and only good, but distrust, suspicion, fear, and dread of Him, characterize man in place thereof.

Still God is not to be thwarted. God acts in His grace, and enunciates a principle of action not needed until evil was there. He would have man separate from the evil. Death only can remove it, and in man's approach to God this is taught and placed between the evil (ourselves) and Him, in all the offerings that foreshadowed the death of Christ. But not only so, the family of faith, who thus owned its necessity, must be separate, too, in their associations from all the evil in their fellow-men that owned it not. By requiring the death of a victim selected by Him, God taught that He was separate from evil, and required man to be so also if he would have to say to Him This we see in the offerings of Cain and Abel, the first men of whom we read drawing nigh to Him after sin was in the world. But Abel bringing such a victim, we are distinctly taught in Heb. 11 was an act of faith; to neglect it as Cain did was open unbelief. But this led to separation also in association, consequently we find the family of faith, which began in Abel to own the necessity of death, is

distinguished in Seth and his descendants from the descendants of Cain. (Gen. 5) Of this family of faith came Noah, preserved of God when the flood came in and swept away the unbelieving family of the ungodly. Here we are taught, though God has long patience, that a time must come when He will sweep away evil from His presence, separating forever between Himself and it, but teaching at the same time that His eye surveys with satisfaction those who, ere that moment comes, seek to walk in separation.

In the family of Noah, after the flood, we find it still the same, the children of Shem being distinguished from the descendants of Ham and Japheth. Among these latter are enumerated the enemies of God, the nations of Canaan whom Israel was directed afterward to “destroy utterly;” and here too are all the Gentiles, “after their families, in their nations.” (Gen. 10:5) It is to Shem, to Abraham of this family, that God distinctly enunciates the principle of separation from evil. Though God had said by Noah, “Blessed be the Lord God of Shem,” it appears that his descendants (for many generations had passed) were sunk in idolatry. Abram dwelt in Ur of the Chaldees, was identified with evil there, and served other gods. (Josh. 24:2) The God of glory appeared to him, and called him thence to walk in threefold separation—from his country, from his kindred, and from his father’s house. (Gen. 12:1) It is recorded of him that he “obeyed; and went forth, not knowing whither he went” (Heb. 11:8); for the Holy Spirit delights ever to own all that He can sanction in us; but we learn too that he did not go to Canaan at once, nor leave his kindred (he took Lot with him); nor did he leave his father’s house (he took Terah, his father). At first he did not reach God’s Charran until the death of Terah, and Lot was a trouble to him until their separation. (Compare Acts 7; Gen. 11:31,32, and 12: 1, 4) God came in to break for him both links and leave His servant free. And this being done, the language of the Lord, as recorded by the Holy Spirit on this occasion, was never so intimate with Abram before. It seems as though His heart had waited for the death of the father, and this moment of his separation from Lot, to pour itself out in unmeasured blessing. “And the Lord said unto Abram, after that Lot was separated from him, Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed forever. And I will make thy seed as the dust of the earth: so that if a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered. Arise, walk through the land in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for I will give it unto thee.” (Gen. 13:14-17)

In Lot we learn more than one lesson as to the fundamental necessity with God of separation from evil. Not only is he himself not separate, but, so found, he is powerless in testimony, and his whole household is contaminated. When, as bidden in mercy by the angels, he seeks to bring out his family, he learns where evil has landed them and him. The sneers and reproaches of those from whom he had never separated, greet the ear of him who, aroused by the near approach of God’s judgments, is at last courageous enough to teach them the evil of their ways. He has to learn by their contempt the weakness of the testimony of one not himself separate. “This fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge.” (Gen. 19) “He who came in glad to dwell in Sodom, and to pasture his flocks in its well-watered plains, would now set up to be a judge of our ways.” Such inconsistency is manifest even to wicked men, and we learn a further lesson in it; viz., that good mixed with evil does not make all good, but that evil always corrupts what was once fair. Already and long had the leaven been spreading itself over Lot’s house; and links were formed with it which Lot, when fairly aroused, found that he had no power to break. His daughters had married;

and when he spake to his sons-in-law, he who had been so long in association with evil seemed to them but “as one that mocked.” And Lot learned, in the loss of his wife, and in the overthrow of his married daughters in the city, how strong were the chains which evil associations had bound around him and his family, while he himself was dragged out of the range of God’s judgments only by the hand of the angel, Such are the solemn and instructive lessons taught us here, which are surely desired of God to have their separating effect upon our ways.

Later we find that Jacob knows and owns the first importance of separation. Though long his conscience had slumbered while in his own family, he was in association with false gods in Padan-aram. When God speaks to him, bidding him “arise, go up to Bethel, and dwell there,” what is his first thought? “Then Jacob said to his household, and to all that were with him, Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean, and change your garments.” (Gen. 35) The patriarchs thus dwelling in separation in tents, and moving from place to place, declared that they were “strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” in contrast with those who, at rest here where sin was, are found enjoying “the pleasures of sin for a season.” Faith always desires present fellowship with God, which must ever be in separation from evil, and as to the future waits for a sphere where, sin banished, the pilgrim and stranger shall find, not merely fellowship with God in separation from evil all around, but a home. God was with them in this desire, and until its fulfillment “God was not ashamed to be called their God.” (Heb. 11) Forever has He linked His blessed name with those who, whatever their mistakes, sought to walk in separation, as strangers and pilgrims on the earth, saying, in Ex. 3, “The God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, hath sent Me unto you: this is My name forever, and this is My memorial unto all generations.”

Separation is distinctly seen in the call of Israel from among the nations of the earth to be “a kingdom of priests, a holy nation.” (Ex. 19:6) “And I will take you to Me for a people, and I will be to you a God: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.” (Ex. 6:7) And when this people failed to maintain separation from evil in the wilderness, on two occasions God’s judgment was most emphatically expressed. As it is written, “God shall judge His people.” (Heb. 10; Deut. 32: 26) So, on their worshipping the golden calf, God removed His dwelling-place from their midst to the tabernacle pitched by Moses outside the camp. (Ex. 33:7-10) How solemn it is thus to see God withdrawing His presence from the defiled camp of Israel, and that because they were His people, and He could not, whatever they may allow, sanction it. Again, when they forgot their separate place, and sought association with the nations of Moab and Midian (Num. 25), how swiftly did the judgment of God upon them proclaim, as He had said before, that He was a jealous God who would have them separate to Himself, and “those that died in the plague were twenty and four thousand.” And again and again in their history do we trace the same teaching in God’s dealings with them. A leprous man and leaven, both typical of sin and uncleanness, were to be put, the one outside the camp (Lev. 13:45,46), in the midst of which God dwelt; the other not only to be put out of every house, but not even to be seen in Israel (Ex. 12:15;13 that they “defile not My tabernacle that is in the midst of them.” And of minor defilements (Lev. 11;15;18;20;22) not one was overlooked. “Thus shall ye separate the children of Israel from their uncleanness; that they die not in their uncleanness, when they defile My tabernacle that is among them.” (Lev. 15:31)

After this, when having crossed the Jordan they had entered the promised land, their first failure records their forgetfulness of the principle of separation from evil. Achan took of the accursed

thing, and Israel fled before the enemy. God said Israel hath sinned, "Neither will I be with you any more, except ye destroy the accursed from among you." (Josh. 7) Here the Lord insists on their separation from the evil as a condition of His being with His people. "Up, sanctify the people, and say, Sanctify yourselves against to-morrow: for thus saith the Lord God of Israel, There is an accursed thing in the midst of thee, O Israel: thou canst not stand before thine enemies, until ye take away the accursed thing from among you." Here the first thing the people have to do is to sanctify themselves, and not until the morrow did God reveal to Joshua, when gathered with the assembly, who was the offender, and then judgment was executed upon him. It is worthy of note, that ignorance of the guilt, or of the guilty one, does not lessen it in God's sight; God withdraws from it according to the holiness of His nature, and His people must bear the consequences of His withdrawal, which, as shown here, must be shame and ignominious defeat. Whether, then, we act at once on the principle of separation from evil or not, God in His holiness has already withdrawn from it; a solemn consideration surely is this for us. Self-will may refuse to take God into account. This Achan did; and those in association with him had to learn that it was not to be, and that evil must be always viewed and judged, not as it affects us, but as it affects God. And what are we without Him? And where is the testimony?

In the book of Judges eight times we are given the key to all their trouble, repeated like a bitter wail again and again, "And the children of Israel did evil again in the sight of the Lord." The result was not merely one battle with the enemy and one defeat, but the most terrible oppression, persecution, and misery extending at times over long periods of years, and only ended by the raising up of some one individual who judged Israel. Now, the one raised up was always raised up of God to deliver, and consequently is found alone with Him in communion first as to the condition of His people. This is true separation. Othniel "judged Israel" before he "went out to war." (3: 10) Deborah likewise "judged Israel" before she called Barak to deliver them. (4: 4, 5) Gideon built an altar to the Lord, mid sacrificed on it to the Lord; he also threw down his father's altar of Baal, and cut down the grove that was by it (Judg. 6), before God used him to deliver his people Israel from the enemy. Samson was to be a Nazarite to God from the womb to the day of his death. (13: 7) But these were all used of God to deliver His people. Therefore one lesson taught in this book is not difficult to read; namely, that he who would help his brethren must be himself in fellowship with God; and what does this demand but of necessity the condemnation of all in them that is contrary to Him, nor can I be real in condemning evil unless it lead me into practical separation.

But, however they failed in it, God's people were chosen to be a holy nation. "Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever." (Psa. 93:5) And when the Prophet Isaiah (chapter 1) addresses them later, when they were on the eve of "Lo-ammi," "Not my people," being written upon them, he says: "Ah sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity... the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint: from the sole of the foot even unto the head there is no soundness in it." What, then, is the remedy-God's remedy which he proposes? It is separation from evil. "Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; CEASE TO DO EVIL." (vs. 16) But all exhortation was in vain. (See 2 Chron. 36:16) They "sold themselves to do evil in the sight of the Lord, and the Lord rejected all the seed of Israel." (2 Kings 17:17-20) And Loammi, therefore, "not my people," (Hos. 1) was written upon the nation. But the way they will tread in a future day when, as the ransomed of the Lord, they shall return and come to Zion with songs, bears witness to the never setting aside but final accomplishment of God's first primary purpose for them; viz., their

separation from evil, which their sin has only marred for the time. It is thus that we read of their future: "And a highway shall be there, and a way, and it shall be called the way of holiness; the unclean shall not pass over it; for He shall be with them (margin): the wayfaring men, though fools, shall not err therein. No lion shall be there, nor any ravenous beast shall go up thereon, it shall not be found there; but the redeemed shall walk there. And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy shall be upon their heads: they shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away." (Isa. 35:8-10)

H. C. A.

Letters on Profession and the Work of Grace

My Dear Brother, In my reply to your last letter, I omitted to point out the application of the truth of God's work, or the "work of grace," as I called it, to the saints in former days. It is not so readily seen as in its application to us Christians, because there is not anything like the same fullness of Scripture revelation about it, "life and incorruptibility" having been "brought to light by the gospel." Nevertheless, the Lord shows us that in principle what is true now was true then; and although there was no revelation about the life which saints had, so that they could not have used the language of full assurance which belongs to us, yet it was a divine necessity that a man "must be born again;" and so the Lord spoke of the truth, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:5), as among the "earthly things" which, as a master or teacher in Israel, Nicodemus should have known. This shows plainly the character of the work by which life was, and is always, communicated to a sinner, and shows, too, that it is divine life, and quite different in nature from all that man is or was. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh, but that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit."

Psa. 16; 19:7, 8; 21:1-6; 32:1-6; 40:1-5; 51:103, &c.; Ezek. 20:44; 36:25-38; 37:1-14, &c., are among the many Old Testament Scriptures which show that man needed life as a divine gift in order to have part with God, and that it was there for faith. But I do not believe that any soul had the consciousness that it possessed eternal life, because the character of the life was not then revealed, and, moreover, certain earthly blessings were then connected with that life, and to these the attention of God's people was directed, because as to their ways on the earth they were directly subject to God's government exercised in the earth, and this uses earthly blessings and curses as rewards and chastisements.

Rom. 3:25 shows how the death of Christ, to which God then looked forward, was the foundation upon which He thus dealt with any sinner then, passing over his sins and giving him life, though justly deserving death; and in due time, by the death of Christ accomplished, God was declared righteous His past dealings. So that we see the application of both sides of the work of grace to sinners in other days as well as in our own.

There is a great difference, of course, between a man merely professing to love and serve God, and this work of God in a soul. The one will not last nor stand the test of trial; but the other is indestructible; while, of course, it leads everyone who is the subject of it into that character of life which pleases God.

F. J. R.

Fragment: the Veil Rent

God's first act after man had crucified His Son was to open a way into His presence-the veil was rent.

Substitution

Propitiation by blood having been made on the day of atonement inside the veil, the special work of the high priest was not, however, completed till substitution had been delineated in the fullest manner that the type could set it forth. By the Lord's command Aaron had entered the holiest with blood, and had dealt with it in the manner prescribed by the Mosaic ritual. By the Lord's command likewise, the scapegoat was kept in reserve till the moment arrived for the high priest to concern himself with it, as the ordinance of the day of atonement set forth. Inside the sanctuary Aaron had sprinkled the blood of the sin-offering. Where, and when no eye could see him but God's, he did that work, by which Jehovah was enabled in righteousness to accept before Him a people that had sinned. Now once more back in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation, ere he changed his garments and resumed the ordinary pontifical attire, he brought forward the live goat for a substitution to be typically effected. For he alone, who had made propitiation, could deal aright with the scapegoat, azazel, i.e. the goat of departure.

This the high priest now proceeded to do. He laid his hands on its head, 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. For uncleannesses, transgressions, and sins, propitiation by blood had been made. Now the iniquities, transgressions, and sins of the people were confessed over the head of the people's substitute, who bore them away into a land uninhabited. A holy God could not even pass over uncleannesses, not to say sins, unless propitiation had been made for them. How fully did He aright with the scapegoat, its untarnishable perfection, whilst announcing by the means provided to maintain it, the impossibility of any one in Israel keeping himself fit for entrance into the divine presence. For had any one kept himself from transgression and sin, and no one did that, as Solomon attested (1 Kings 8:46), he could not have ensured himself against defilement by uncleanness, as Leviticus (chaps. 11-15) shows us. Propitiation then was needed for uncleannesses as well as for positive sins; for they were the fruit of sin, though they might not arise from acts of sin; but substitution as well as propitiation was called for where sins themselves were in question.

Iniquities, transgressions, and sins were confessed by the high priest, and all of each. The confession was a comprehensive one. By iniquities we understand the fruits of perverseness or crookedness; by transgressions, the overstepping of a line, beyond which a man should not have gone; by sins, the missing or falling short of a mark. Hence these several terms would comprehend all acts of deflection from the right road, every overstepping of the line, and all comings short, or missing of the mark to which they ought to have attained. All this was confessed on Israel's behalf by Aaron, and put on the living goat reserved for that purpose, which was then sent away by the hand of a fit man into the wilderness.

Now this was the first time throughout the service of that day that Aaron was called to open his mouth, after that he had killed the sin-offering. Inside the veil, as we have remarked in a previous

paper, he had no need to speak, and no opportunity presented itself which called forth any prayer from his heart and from his lips. Here in the court where he did speak, prayer would not have been in season. He spoke, whether at length or with brevity we know not; but it was not to ask for anything at the hands of Jehovah. He was not there as the suppliant for the people, but as their representative to confess all their iniquities, and all their transgressions in all their sins. Confession, not prayer, was then in season. All duly confessed over the head of the scapegoat, on which both his hands had rested, the iniquities and sins of the people were no longer on them. The burden of their sins rested on that goat. The people had not shifted their burden to the live goat. They had no active part in the doing of it. It was done, but done perfectly, and for that year finally, by the high priest, the son of Amram, of the tribe of Levi.

Charged with all that weight of sin-all, let the reader again remark, all the iniquities of the children of Israel, with all their transgressions in all their sins, the substitute for the people was led away by the person appointed for the purpose. All their iniquities had been laid upon it, not some, not the great ones, the gross ones, not those that weighed heaviest on their consciences, but all-all were placed on that goat, who bore them all away. Propitiation and substitution were now accomplished facts. The two goats, really but one sin-offering (Lev. 16:5), typifying two important parts of the atoning work of the Lord Jesus, were both needed, the former to meet the claims of God's holiness, the latter to free the guilty ones from the burden, the weight of their sins.

Charged with the people's sins, that goat went away into a land not inhabited, or separated, never to return. And as it took its departure, all might see it going away, might watch its gradual disappearing from sight till lost to view. With what interest doubtless some regarded it, Jehovah's provision for a guilty people. Sent away by the high priest under the charge of the man selected for the purpose, that goat wended its way into the wilderness. That man could ensure its going thither; but who could keep it from coming back? It went with all the sins of the people on its head, and it was of the utmost importance that it should never come back. Full provision was made for its departure, but nothing was said of its return. The man took it away. The Lord provided that it never should come back.

Suppose a foreigner in the camp, who had no part in the privileges and blessings of Israel. Imagine him there on the day of atonement. What a sight must have met his eye! The whole camp at rest; every member of the privileged nation keeping a perfect sabbath; the din of daily toil all hushed; cessation from work of any kind absolute throughout that vast encampment. The cloud rested on the tabernacle; no trumpet sound heard either to summon the heads of the people, or to prepare the camp for a march; all as still, as orderly, as quiet as could be conceived. Yet it was not the weekly sabbath, the sign between the Lord and His people, that they might know that He was Jehovah who sanctified them. (Ezek. 20:12) But the people were resting from all work with as much strictness as if it were the seventh day of the week. What, he might have asked, was it all about? On the previous sabbath they had rested from all work. Now ere another sabbath came round they were doing the same, but with this difference. On the sabbath-day they rested, and afforded thereby rest to their servants and cattle. On this day they were afflicting their souls, whilst the high priest was making atonement for their sins. This resting was most expressive. It spoke of their helplessness in the matter which so closely concerned them, whilst the afflicting of their souls indicated how deeply they were interested in all that was being done.

As the day went on, and the scapegoat was led away, the foreigner might have inquired what that was, and would have learned that it was azazel, or "the goat of departure," going away with all their sins on its head into the wilderness. Inquiring further, he would have learned how privileged was Israel above all other people upon earth, since for them, and them only, had Jehovah their God provided a substitute to bear their sins, and to carry them all away. If he asked further, whether they were sure that all of them were gone, would they not have answered that they had seen the goat led away, after all their sins had been solemnly laid on it by the high priest? But were they really gone? he might have again inquired. "Yes," would have been the reply; "that goat just sent away will never come back, for all our sins being laid on it, they are really and truly and forever gone with it. The man appointed will lead it into the wilderness, and there let it go, and Jehovah will take care that it shall never return." The goat's departure, and its never returning, would be for them decisive of the whole matter. In all this it was true they had taken no active part; yet, knowing that all had been done in accordance with Jehovah's word, they would be satisfied. Aaron's re-appearance from the holy place told that all had been rightly done within; and the goat's departure, after all their sins had been confessed over it, assured them that they no longer rested on the guilty ones. Formerly on them, they were now on the goat, and going away into a land of forgetfulness.

Thus both propitiation and substitution were prefigured in that day's ceremonial; but substitution was only fully effected in type after Aaron's re-appearance in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation, when, before the eyes of all, he confessed the sins of the people over the goat, and in the presence of the whole congregation that goat was led away into the wilderness. What had gone on in the sanctuary no human eye had witnessed; the departure, however, of the goat was patent to all. Further, this goat was provided for the children of Israel, and not for Aaron and for his house. The reason for this, then probably unexplained, is made clear to us who live after the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus Christ, and have God's word opened up to us by the teaching of the Holy Spirit. Had the scapegoat been provided for Aaron and his sons, as well as for the people, it might have been said that no one could know their sins were put away till the high priest had re-appeared from within the sanctuary. In other words, since the Lord Jesus Christ is the High Priest of whom Aaron, throughout that day's service, was only the type, it might have been taught, and with apparent ground for the truth of it, that unless the Lord re-appears to the view of people on earth, no one can know that their sins have been borne by Him who is the true scapegoat, as well as the sacrifice, and the Priest. So for Aaron and for his house the scapegoat was not provided, though from the teaching which flows from it they could, and we can, profit. And the reason for the dismissal of the goat before all, and after that Aaron had finished his work in the holy place, is made plain. Israel will only know, when they see the Lord, on His re-appearance from the heavenly sanctuary into which He has entered, that atonement has been made for them.

Of this the prophets wrote; Isaiah before the captivity, and Zechariah subsequent to it. Both treat of it; the former telling us what thoughts will be uppermost in the hearts of the godly remnant when they see Him; and the latter describing the sorrow that will take possession of them when they learn who is the true sin-offering. Isaiah, in chap. 52:13-15, describes the effect on kings, and on others, of the Lord Jesus appearing in His glory. Astonishment will seize them as they behold the One once crucified coming in power and glory. "Kings shall shut their mouths at Him; for that which had not been told them shall they see, and that which they had not heard shall they consider." The

coming in irresistible power of the once despised Nazarene will overwhelm them with surprise and amazement. How different will His re-appearance be to the godly remnant. This is treated of in chap. 53. His rejection by their fathers they will remember and speak of; their own wrong thoughts about Him they will confess, and will acknowledge that they are corrected by His personal presence among them. But not this only. They will then understand, and gladly own, in the language of the prophet, what His death has done for them. "He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all." Their Substitute, the true scapegoat, they will then behold, and own. "The Lord hath laid on Him," they will say, "the iniquity of us all." With that they will be satisfied. "Jehovah has done it," they will say, "the One against whom we have sinned; and in that they will rest. Confessing how wrong had been their thoughts about Jesus of Nazareth, thereby owning their own unbelief; and taking the place of convicted sinners, they will rest contented (how could they do otherwise?) with the perfect Substitute God has provided. Unbelief, and dread of divine vengeance, will both vanish, and perfect peace will take possession of their hearts; for they will learn, when they see Him, that He, the victorious, powerful, glorious One, was wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their iniquities. Iniquities and transgressions Aaron confessed over the scapegoat. Their iniquities and transgressions, they will learn, have been borne by the true sin-offering, God's Lamb, David's Son, and David's Lord.

But relief from all dread of wrath is one thing, godly sorrow for sin is another. This last they will likewise fully experience when they shall look on Him whom they have pierced, and mourn. (Zech. 12:10) The spirit of grace and of supplications having been poured on them, they will be granted the desire of their heart. The Messiah they will behold, but, beholding Him, will mourn. Their fathers' guilt, the nation's sin, with which they are closely connected, will be to them apparent; and looking on Him, whom they as part of Israel pierced, they will mourn. What an awaking up there will be! Centuries of national unbelief judged in a moment. And the reason, the deep necessity for Messiah's death, will flash on them with vividness, and with all the brightness of a summer's noonday sun. Then, too, the double purpose for which the Lord's side was pierced when on the cross will receive its accomplishment. (John 19:34-37) By that piercing with the spear, blood and water flowed out. What that is, and how it concerns us, the evangelist who witnessed it has placed on record. (1 John 4:9,10; 5:6-11) By that piercing, likewise, He has been marked in His person as the One who really hung on the cross, and when Israel shall see Him, the once pierced One, mourning will characterize them in truth. Mourning, not the bitterness of despair from learning that there is no hope; but the sorrow of contrite hearts at the discovery of the love which He had manifested for them, and their rejection of it till then. Dread of judgment will vanish when they see Him appearing in power on their behalf. No thought of their sins to be imputed to them will cross their mind. For they will see Him who has borne them, the pierced One, alive, and victorious without them. Having been laid by Jehovah on Him, they will never be put back again on them. And Him on whom they were put they will see without them, all gone, and gone forever; and He without them will be present among them, the witness of this, for the joy and comfort of their souls.

But not only did He die for that nation, He died for sinners; so we who believe on Him can now say, what the remnant will then own, that our sins were borne by Him in His own body on the tree. (1

Peter 2:24) Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many. (Heb. 9:28) That question He has settled, and settled forever. For “unto them that look for Him shall He appear... without sin unto salvation.” The remnant will know Him as their substitute when they see-Him. We know that now on the testimony of the divine word. The proof of it to them will be the beholding Him in power and glory. The proof to us is His presence in heaven without them, attested by the presence on earth, and the teaching of God the Holy Spirit. Our sins cannot be in heaven, but is there who bore them in His own body on the tree; He rose Without them, so all those whose sins He bore are free. The remnant of Israel will only know this when they see Him, hence we can understand why they should deprecate God’s wrath. (Psa. 25:7, &c) Believers on the Lord Jesus Christ in apostolic times knew that question was settled (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; 1 John 2:12); for propitiation had been made (Heb. 2:17; 1 John 2:2; 4:10); substitution had been effected (Heb. 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24), and forgiveness of sin was preached (Luke 24:47; Acts 10:43;13. 38) to all who would receive it, believing on the Lord Jesus Christ. It is the same still.

C. E. S.

Fragment: Receiving Strength

People think they want strength to do something; but the first thing is not to do; but to receive.

To Me to Live Is Christ

The mind of the Spirit for You and me to-day is, that we should be channels for the flowing forth of the eternal life that is in Christ, in the midst of the world. He would have a stream flowing forth from us, telling of the God who is its source, and of the Christ who supplies it.

For what does Christ show that all He possesses is ours? Merely that we should be saved? No! He might then have waited till the eleventh hour before He had called us. No He wants the eternal life to be told out in a world where Satan is master, so that He can point angels, and principalities, and powers to the Church, to learn in us the manifold riches of God's grace. As children of the Father's house, who have known the bosom of the Father, who are like the feet of the glorious Head in heaven, let me ask you if the character of the Head is seen in you? Are you seeking to make the wilderness resound, not merely with the name of the Lord Jesus, but with lives conformed to His character, and to the life of the Lord Jesus Christ in heaven? God has His wishes for His saints, and shall not my heart respond to His desires? See to what an extent Paul carried this. To some it seems a strange thing to press the life of Christ on people.; but what would you give for a beautiful watch without hands? And what is a saint if not showing forth Christ? or a vine if it bear no grapes?

The apostle could say, "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." What was Paul about when he wrote that word? He felt that he was for Christ, and for Christ only, whether in life or in death. He could say, "I have only one object-Christ; and I have only one desire-that Christ should be magnified in my body." If, therefore, they had beheaded Paul, would he have lost anything? No! Christ would have been magnified in his body still. What sort of testimony was that in Caesar's court? A Roman knew how to face death as a display of courage, but to go forward to it in the thought that death was gain, because there was a Jesus who had been crucified between two thieves, who was the joy of a man's heart, a Roman could not have understood. Let me ask you-since you have known Christ, Christ's heart, Christ Himself your treasure, your life, Christ everything that God could give you-has your thought been, "To me to live is Christ, and to die gain"? It is our privilege while passing through this scene. And how it glorifies the meanest life if Christ is magnified in it! And how does it change death, if to die is gain, Christ being magnified in it! That is what a life of communion with God gives to a man. Ennobled by God most truly. The life of Christ flowing out through me, I am like the hands of a clock through which the life of the works within shows itself. Is that bondage? Is it legality for Christ to say, "Your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, and I expect you to show it"? If this is bondage, would to God there were ten thousand times more of it.

G. V. W.

Christ As Light and Love

The infinite variety and fullness of the word of God is matter for wonder and admiration to every student of the Scripture. It often thus happens that a number of lines of instruction will run through the same passage. This is especially the case in the gospels, in which not only are the moral, the typical, and the dispensational often combined, but the connection and sequence of the incidents recorded have also their significance. It is in illustration of the latter point that we call the attention of the reader to Luke, chap. 5. In the first incident (vss. 1-11), for example, losing sight of the special object of the draft of fish, and the call of Simon Peter to be a fisher of men, Christ is presented to us as the Revealer of sin. He had been teaching the people from Simon's boat; and when He had concluded, He directed Simon to launch out into the deep, and to let down his nets for a draft. (vs. 4) Simon, notwithstanding the fruitless toil of the previous night, obeyed, and at the Lord's word let down the net. The net was instantly filled, so that it could not bear the strain of the multitude of fish; "and they beckoned unto their partners that were in the other ship, that they should come and help them. And they came, and filled both the ships, so that they began to sink." (vs. 7) The effect upon Simon Peter is remarkable. The display of the Lord's power so occupied him with himself; that, falling down at Jesus' knees, he said, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." (vs. 8)

How, we may inquire, was this effect produced? The exhibition of power, as seen in the miracle of the fish, was the revelation to Peter's soul of the presence of God. He had known and followed Christ ere this; but it was now for the first time that the divine secret flashed into his heart and conscience. Simon was thus brought consciously into the divine presence-face to face with God; and hence, though attracted to Jesus, he is made to feel, sinner as he was, his unworthiness to be with Him; and this feeling found expression in the cry, "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord." God was revealed to Simon Peter in Christ; and in the holiness of that presence Simon saw his own true state and condition. It was Christ acting as light, and as such He was of necessity the Revealer of sin.

The same effect always follows the manifestation of God to the soul. It is seen in Job, when he said, "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear: but now mine eye seeth thee. Therefore I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes" (Job 42:6); also in Isaiah, crying, "Woe is me I 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." (Isa. 6:5) On this account it is that the sinner is never convicted of his sin until the light of God has entered his soul. Has my reader ever been brought face to face with God?

But if Christ is the Revealer of sin, the next two incidents teach that He can take away the sin which, He reveals. The first is that of the man "full of leprosy." Leprosy, as often explained, is the type of the evil in the flesh which, breaking out, covers the whole man with defilement and guilt. This poor man comes before us, with his condition openly revealed. The light has done its work, and he is seen, and sees himself, to be full of leprosy. And what is his resource? Surely he has no

other than in the One who has brought his sin to light. For if Christ is light-symbol of the holiness of God--He is also love--the expression of the heart of God. If He thus acts as light, when He first comes into contact with the sinner, it is only to pioneer the way for the exhibition of His love. As soon, therefore, as the leper is found on his face, at His feet, crying, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," "He put forth His hand, and touched him, saying, I will: be thou clean." (vss. 12, 13) And the leper then learned that the love of Christ was as large as His power; for the leprosy immediately departed from him.

The next incident, that of the man with a palsy (the paralytic) differs from the leper, in the aspect now considered, only in the fact that he represents, not the guilty, but the helpless sinner. He could not come therefore to Christ, but had to be brought, for he was "without strength." But though brought, yea, because of this (for it was "their faith," as will be seen, that secured the blessing) he learns, equally with the leper, the healing, cleansing power of Christ. Taking then the two together, we learn that if Christ reveals the state of the sinner, He is able also to meet his need and condition. Blessed Savior! thou art equal to all our needs. There is not a sinner upon the face of the globe, whatever his state or guilt, whose case thou canst not meet. Thy precious blood cleanseth from all sin.

It will not be overlooked, that it is faith which brings the soul into contact with Christ. The degree of faith may differ, but wherever there is faith it produces a response in the heart of the Lord. Thus the faith of the leper was feeble: he believed only in the power of Christ. He confessed that he was not sure as to His heart. He could go no farther than to say, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." Still there was faith, and hence the Lord instantly responded to his cry. There was greater energy in the faith of those who brought the man with a palsy "into the midst, before Jesus." They pressed through all difficulties, overcame all obstacles; for "when they could not find by what way they might bring him in because of the multitude, they went upon the house-top, and let him down through the tiling." (vs. 19) Evidently they had confidence both in the power and heart of Christ. Nor was their confidence misplaced; for no sooner had they succeeded in their object than it is recorded, "And when He saw their faith, He said unto him, Man, thy sins are forgiven thee." (vs. 20) The need of faith is emphasized indeed by the contrast. For we read, after a description of those (Pharisees and doctors of the law) who were sitting by, that "the power of the Lord was present to heal them." (vs. 17) Why, then, was it that not one of these obtained the blessing? Because they had not faith. How often is this the case now! The gospel is being preached to large numbers, and this gospel is the power of God unto salvation--to whom? To every one that believeth. (Rom. 1:16) And yet how frequently not one is saved; for God never saves the sinner apart from faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So, during the sojourn of our blessed Lord in this scene, it was faith alone that laid hold of the blessing.

Pursuing,...however, the special line of truth through the connection, we learn from the next incident, that, if the Lord meets the need of the sinner, he claims his service when his need is met. "After these things He went forth, and saw a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt of custom: and He said unto him, Follow me." (vs. 27) Levi was busily occupied with his daily occupations as Jesus was passing by. But he was not his own. The One who saw him claimed all that he was and had, and expressed this claim in the words, "Follow me." Having shown Himself as the Savior in the two preceding incidents, He now declares His authority as Lord. And as Lord, His word is supreme, demanding the instant and complete obedience of the soul. This is illustrated in the

action of Levi. As soon as the Lord had uttered His command, "he left all, rose up, and followed Him." (vs. 28) This proves that it was not so much the assertion of authority, though He who spake had the right to command, as the expression of the claims of His heart. Nay, it was more; it was the presentation of Himself to the heart of Levi; and by the attractive power of His person He thus drew Levi away from everything by which He was surrounded, and after Himself in the path of discipleship. This is how disciples are ever made. Try as we will, we cannot follow Christ until He has disclosed Himself to, and won, our hearts. Then, and only then, we receive power to deny ourselves, to take up our cross, and to follow Him. But we may well challenge our souls-and this point may be especially pressed with all affection upon young believers-as to whether we have acknowledged, and whether we do habitually acknowledge, the claims of Christ over all that we are and have. There are so few disciples in this day of laxity and worldliness! What, then, let us ask, constitutes a disciple? It is not in the profession of Christianity, otherwise all around us were disciples. No; but it lies in the total setting aside of ourselves-our wills-and in the acceptance of the will of Christ, as Lord, for our daily walk and conversation. It is seen in the action of Levi. He refused himself, and everything around him, and with eyes fixed upon the One who had called him, he steadily followed in His steps. It is seen in the statement of the apostle, "I am crucified with Christ" (if so his will is gone): "nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Gal. 2:20) It is exemplified in a remarkable way in Phil. 3 Again, therefore, we ask, Are we owning the claims of the Savior as Lord?

It may be remarked, before passing on, that Levi makes Christ "a great feast in his own house; and there was a great company of publicans and of others that sat down with them." (vs. 29) The Lord has His joy in the whole-hearted and devoted disciple, and feasts with him, as He does with all His faithful ones; and, moreover, Levi as the true disciple expresses the heart of His Lord to those around him; for he invites to his table not the righteous, but sinners, those whom Jesus came to call. How blessed to be so near the heart of the Lord (and this can never be unless we are closely following Him) that He can use us as the channel of His own mind and heart! The scribes and Pharisees may murmur as they will; but our joy will be undisturbed as long as we are in happy fellowship with the Lord.

In connection with this was the objection that, whereas John's disciples practiced fasting, Christ's ate and drank. To this He replied, "Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." (vss. 33-35) From this we gather--confining ourselves to the special line we have followed--that the presence of Christ is the only source of joy to His disciples. Having convicted them of sin, taken their sin away, claimed their service, He would have them satisfied in Himself. They cannot fast, therefore, in His presence. It is true that for us, since He has departed, that the fasting and the rejoicing go on together. As passing through a judged scene where Christ is not, we fast; on the other hand, as dwelling in His presence, as having Himself ever with us, we rejoice; and, in the prospect of being forever with Him, we rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. But the lesson abides, and cannot be too deeply engraven on our hearts, that it is the presence of the Lord that constitutes our joy. May we never seek it from any other source.

The chapter then concludes with a parable: "No man putteth a piece of a new garment upon an old: if otherwise, then both the new maketh a rent, and the piece that was taken out of the new agreeth not with the old. And no man putteth new wine into old bottles; else the new wine will burst the bottles and be spilled, and the bottles shall perish. But new wine must be put into new bottles; and both are preserved. No man also having drunk old wine straightway desireth new; for he saith, the old is better." (vss. 36-39). Grace as displayed in Christ-the pre-eminent characteristic of this gospel -could not be used to patch up the decaying forms of Judaism, nor be contained by them. It was the introduction of a totally new thing, and this was precisely what the scribes and Pharisees could not understand. Nor was it possible for the natural man to comprehend it. The old wine was, and always will be, better to his taste. The Lord therefore teaches in this concluding parable that grace could never flow out from, or be confined in the old legal rites and ceremonies; but that, as it was a wholly new thing, it must be expressed in new ways, and that to contain it new vessels must be created. The connection of this teaching with the line of truth indicated is obvious. We have had Christ as revealing and taking away sin; as claiming the service of those He has forgiven; and then showing that in His presence His disciples could not fast, for it is that which constitutes all their joy. All this was alien to the thoughts of the ceremony-loving and self-righteous Pharisee. He therefore warns them that the introduction of grace was the signal for the passing away of the old dispensation; and that they themselves needed a new life to enter upon the enjoyment of the blessings which He only could bestow.

E. D.

Motives to Holiness

In 1 Cor. 6, the apostle deals with wrongs among brethren; gives warning as to the characters which would be shut out of the kingdom of God; deprecates the attaching importance to meats; and, lastly, insists upon personal purity. The course of this teaching gives occasion for the presentation of a remarkable series of motives for the exercise of those principles he presses upon the saints. "Do ye not know that the saints shall judge the world?" "Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" What striking grounds are here presented for absence of litigation among brethren! what a showing cause for arrest of judgment! Causes are pending, cases are waiting for the grand assize, but, far from being those of the saints, they are those of the world and of angels, in which we shall be the adjudicators together with Christ! Again: "Ye are washed, ye are sanctified, ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." What a precious cluster is here. The apostle appeals to what the blood of Christ had accomplished. They had been washed in His own blood (Rev. 1:5); had been sanctified by blood (Heb. 10:29; 13: 12); and had been justified in the power of that same blood. (Rom. 5:9) The washing was a personal, individual thing; the sanctification was relative, separating them from the world; the justification was Godward; each was by blood, and each was final. It had been in the name of the Lord Jesus too, not for our sakes primarily, but for His; we were but the means to an end-the glory of His name; the bowing to His rights, the owning His authority-according to that eternal purpose which was purposed in Christ Jesus before the world began. Thus also it was "by the Spirit of our God" -by the agency of Him who ever works with a view to that one only end and object, the exaltation and glory of Christ. How blessed to see the Spirit of God thus constituting us parts of that wonderful economy which shall be displayed by-and-by in glory, and using His own work already wrought in view of it as motives for that holiness which is the true and suited expression of it here. Again: "And God hath both raised up the Lord, and will also raise up us by His own power." Here is a new and precious motive for holiness. He is the risen Lord, and His glorified body was the pledge of theirs; these saints were going to be raised too, as surely as He was raised. And thus he says further, "Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?" Marvelous fact for faith -when He came they would be raised up, because God had already raised Him up, and thus have bodies glorified like His; but meanwhile the very bodies they then had were members of Christ, not of His body (another line of truth altogether), but of Himself, and to this is added also, "He that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit." What powerful motives to holiness! Who could resist them? Yet again: "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body." How remarkable are these appeals. Six times over in the chapter he says, "Know ye not?" And here in this closing appeal, the strongest of all, he connects these foundation facts (1), that the believer's body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, because (2) he is not his own, but is bought with a price! Purchased with the blood of Christ, and being thus His property, having no vested rights even in our own bodies, but His right being admitted when we truly own Him Lord, the Holy Spirit makes our body His temple; He is in us, for we have received Him from God. **THEREFORE GLORIFY GOD IN YOUR BODY.**

These seven motives to holiness-precious, powerful, and complete - may thus be clearly traced in the chapter. (1) Saints are going to judge angels and the world. (2) They are washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. (3) They are going to be raised up. (4) Meanwhile their very bodies are members of Christ. (5) Being joined to the Lord, they are one spirit. (6) The saint's body is a temple of the Holy Spirit. (7) He is not his own, but bought with a price!

May so weighty an appeal by the Spirit of God work in us "that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

W.R. D.

The Christian's Directions As to Separation From Evil, and Holiness to the Lord

Now, at the present time, God is forming out of Jew and Gentile (Eph. 2:14-18) a bride for present association, in testimony to and for a rejected Christ, and to be hereafter manifested in glory with Him. Though the language of Israel has been "We have no king but Caesar," and their prayer "His blood be on us and on our children," His dying prayer has gone up, too, to the Father, and has been answered: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." Consequently there is a redeemed people to walk in separation from evil today. For in nowise are God's principles changed. The language first applied to Israel, is applied by the apostle Peter to Christian men and women now: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people." (1 Peter 2:9) And again, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." "I pray not," says the Lord, in John 17, "that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil. Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." And as to our practical sanctification, we know that we are to be "conformed to the image of His Son." (Rom. 8:29); we know that this practical conformity is going on now (2 Cor. 3:18); and we know that, though we are not fully like Him, yet still that we shall be so in that day. "When He shall appear, we shall be LIKE HIM; for we shall see Him as He is," and the one effect of this is that "He that hath this hope in Him purifieth himself, even as He is pure." (1 John 3:2,3) With these exhortations of Peter and John agree the words of the apostle Paul: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2 Cor. 7:1) He had also just said, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing;" and his parting exhortations to Timothy are of similar import, in view of the perilous times of the last days. (See 1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:20-26; 3:1-17) The consequence of not at once acting on the principle of separation is that souls are defiled by association; the conscience loses its tenderness, no longer shrinking from evil; the Holy Spirit is grieved, and separation is presently considered to be either needless or impossible.

It is important that Scripture only should guide us. Let it be consulted if the reader admits the principle of separation from evil to be divine, and of paramount, i.e. of first importance, in order to be instructed in the way God would have it practically effected. To this I propose now to turn, assuming the above is admitted. Separation from evil, then, begins with self-judgment. Self-judgment is the condemnation by the new nature, of the ways and manners of the old, and separation from them. The Christian's body, the body of each believer, is the temple of the Holy Spirit. This Paul insists on in writing to the Corinthians. (1 Cor. 6:19) How this can be Scripture fully explains elsewhere; but he is using it here in order to insist that they shall not do what they will with that which is not their own. "He that is joined to the Lord is one Spirit," and this Spirit is the Spirit of holiness. (Rom. 1:4) It condemns everything in me that it finds inconsistent with itself. The right way of its manifestation is in a walk such as Christ walked when down here; a reproduction of Christ in the world. (1 John 2:6) The means the Spirit uses to correct me when I fail in this is

always the Word. In Hebrews it is the provision on earth for the saint going through this wilderness, and is "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (4:12) It pierces down to and discerns the thoughts and intents of the heart-goes down to what is hidden, yet working within, and exposes these hidden things (whence spring my actions) to me. Nor is this all, the Word is the sword of the Spirit against the enemy, who would use these lusts of my own heart, this inherent sin which he finds there, to draw me away from the path of obedience.

Thus I find the Spirit using the Word for two purposes-the one to expose to me that inward working which is not of Him, in order to lead me to judge it and separate from it; and, on the other hand, to defeat the enemy, who seeks to ensnare me by presenting something to these lusts which he finds there. (James 1:14) And what the Lord uses, as a man, to defeat the enemy is the word of God. There was and could be nothing in Him to respond to what Satan presented, for He was "without sin" (Heb. 4:15); but still He met the tempter as a dependent man (Matt. 4; Luke 4), not as Son of God, but gaining the victory as man by never leaving the path of obedience. So the apostle would have the Corinthians remember to "judge themselves" (1 Cor. 11); for their failure in self-judgment led to all the open and manifest sin which had become a common report and a scandal to the name of Christ. (1 Cor. 5:1) The Word, then, is the instrument, a piercing sword in the hands of the Spirit, to enable us to judge all evil in ourselves, and to walk in obedience. "To obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." (1 Sam. 15:22) Nor is the believer's responsibility over, when he is thus seeking to fashion himself and his ways by the light of the Word, though surely to do so is the first and all-important matter, and it is in this sense of its importance that the apostle Paul says: "Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord" (Heb. 12)-a daily word to us as to separation from evil. But there is a further responsibility devolving upon those who would be true disciples of their rejected Lord. In John 13, because He loves them all, and is occupied in the activity of His love to the end, He insists that each is to care for his brother: If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet; for I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." Wherever I see a spot on another believer, my responsibility at once is to remove it, to separate him from it, and not one is exempt from this responsibility. The means is still the Word; and what is the spot? It is sin; and in seeking to separate my brother from it, I am benefiting him, myself, and all the members of the body, and I am occupied in the same work as Christ Himself is doing. (Eph. 5:26)

Here, too, we may fitly say, that "if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Cor. 12:26) As to individual trespasses, brother against brother, Matt. 18:15-18, directs us. (See also Rom. 16:17; 2 Thess. 3:6,14) In open sin, unrepented of by one "called a brother," 1 Cor. 5 directs the assembly how to act, itself now, instead of Israel, the dwelling-place of God (1 Tim. 3:15), however men may have marred its original simplicity and beauty. Outside the assembly, God deals in judgment still with the offender. "The Lord shall judge His people." He is in the hands of God for judgment, that the chaff may be blown away from the wheat, and "that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus;" for "our God is a consuming fire." (Heb. 12:29) If we fail in self-judgment, God Himself may come in. "For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." (1 Cor. 11) He comes in

either by the assembly, or He Himself chastens. The assembly, through lack of spirituality, is not always cognizant when saints are not walking in self-judgment, and when she is, cannot act in putting away save for acts of sin. Such cases clearly belong to the individual care of John 13. But God is cognizant of it, and oftentimes chastens individuals by sickness and even death, when the assembly is ignorant why He does so. Thus He acted in Corinth, while another case He allowed to go on there to manifest itself in open acts of sin such as are named in 1 Cor. 5, which the assembly must judge, the word of God being to the assembly (as it is to the individual) the authority to judge and separate from evil. If the leaven is put out, it is well; but it becomes a cause of humiliation then, and after that (on the part of the assembly) that God should have seen it necessary to let it go on to this. (See 2 Cor. 7:9-11) But if an assembly will not put away leaven, and thus does not own the necessity of keeping clean the temple of God, the dwelling-place of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 3:16), the place where Jesus delights to come and manifest Himself (Matt. 18:20; John 20:19,26), it thereby ignores His presence, and has given up any claim to it, and the responsibility of the individual believer is to separate himself from such a company. For as Scripture teaches me in many places to avoid an individual ostensibly "within" who is going on with evil (see Rom. 16:17-19; Phil. 3:17-19; 2 Thess. 3:6,14,15; 1 Tim. 5:22; 2 Tim. 2:21; 3: 5; 3 John 9-12 &c), so I learn too that Paul avoided an assembly, that of Corinth, for a time, where evil was not judged, for Paul would not tolerate it, and more, if present, he would not spare any who did. "And I call God for a record upon my soul," he says, "that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth." (2 Cor. 1:23) This necessity is clear, if 2 Tim. 2:15-26 be studied in connection with Peter's language, that "judgment must begin at the house of God." (1 Peter 4:17)

Is it not easy to see, in all these directions for our guidance in the word of God, that the one desire of God is to have communion with us, and that the first necessity to this is our separation from evil? Like a golden thread, running through all His ways with us, we trace it in redemption (Titus 2:14); again in the necessity of self-judgment (1 Cor. 9:27; 11:31); in the injunction to us that we are to care for each other (John 13); in the assembly's direction to put out leaven (1 Cor. 5); and in the individual faithfulness, which must act if an assembly is unfaithful (2 Tim. 2:21); in all, the same principle is before us again and again.

H. C. A.

Objections to Separation From Evil, and Holiness to the Lord Considered

Now, in view of what has been before us, I gather that if there is one divine way of dealing with evil, viz., separation from it, we are never safe until we have acted on it. God holds us responsible as to association. What, then, is proposed instead of it? Let us examine this a moment. There is first the palliation of evil, when the good intentions of the evil-doer are pleaded, along with the extenuating circumstances that led to it; but no amount of palliation of evil will ever remove the evil, and it is the evil itself I must separate from. (1 Tim. 5:22) Serious souls must admit that there is not separation from evil, though we act on the most complete and elaborate palliation of it that was ever framed.

Next we find that, instead of acting on God's principle of separation from evil, delay is urged. This is a more specious and subtle method of the enemy, and is often attended with complete success. This Scripture has been quoted, "He that believeth shall not make haste" (Isa. 28:16), in order to give the apparent sanction of the word for delay. But if the reader will turn to Rom. 10:11 and 1 Peter 2:6 he will see how the apostles Paul and Peter understood these words of the prophet. One quotes them, "shall not be ashamed," the other, "shall not be confounded."

We may also remember that Lot believed the angel and yet is bidden to "haste" (Gen. 19:22), that Paul the believer was urged by Ananias not to "tarry," but to be baptized (Acts 22:16), and himself writing to the Hebrews (chap. 6:18) speaks to them of those who "have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us." (See also Matt. 3:7) Hence, I must object to the use of this passage when applied to hinder my immediate separation from evil, unhesitatingly affirming that such an interpretation is not of God. With the same desire for delay it has been asked, "Which of us is perfect? Who then is fitted to cast the stone at his brother?" Here again I must object to a manifest perversion of Scripture, and to an entire misapplication of it. The Lord's own words in John 8, which are here referred to, are, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast the stone at her," not as is taught and inferred in the question "without sins." There is a great difference in saying "without sin" and "without sins." (Compare 1 John 1:8 with James 3:2) But the immediate effect of raising a question as to one's own perfection, is to make every humble soul turn away from the evil before him to become hopelessly occupied with himself. That we are not perfect in the sense the questioner means is admitted, but it is totally beside the mark; for does Scripture say any where that we must be, before we can judge and separate from evil? Alas! if it did there could be no separation and no judgment of any evil at all. Did the apostle so direct the Corinthians? I fully admit the importance of Matt. 7:3-5; Lev. 6:26, &c.; but I refuse to dig for supposed (though admitted) imperfections in myself or in others, and thus vainly occupy myself and them, when the evil from which I am commanded to separate is manifest and unjudged. Alas that delay, urged upon us because we are not perfect in our practical life day by day, which we admit, should so hinder separation from evil, and stumble real godly souls as it does and has done. Bring in anything else—delay by calling for self-judgment, humiliation or whatever may be proposed instead

of what God requires, and we are allowing the leaven to work, becoming ourselves defiled, and departing from separation from evil, God's principle for the preservation among His saints of practical holiness, while we have already lost communion with God, who is light; for in Him is "no darkness at all." Nor will any godly soul, I think, be bold enough to deny these inevitable results.

Yet another reason has been pressed in favor of delay, and this is when evil, in the Church or otherwise, is of long standing, or has been sanctioned or committed by one who, himself a Christian, has been of reputation and beloved amongst the saints. Nor is the quotation of Scripture wanting in this connection. I have heard quoted this passage: "Touch not mine anointed, and do my prophets no harm." (Psa. 105:15) Or again, "Wherefore then were ye not afraid to speak against my servant Moses?" (Num. 12) As in the other cases so here, I need scarcely say there is a wresting of Scripture. To seek to walk in separation from evil, to seek to exercise conscience as to its existence where manifest, or failing this to separate myself, is not doing harm to any of the Lord's "prophets." It is the very reverse of this, even a blessing to them all. Nor were the words addressed to the Lord's people-another reason for their inapplicability-they were addressed to the nations, as the context will show. As to speaking "against Moses," it is still more manifest that the quotation can have no possible application. Sin or evil is in Scripture everywhere spoken against by the Lord Himself, nor do we assume equality (as Aaron and Miriam did) with what we speak against. There was no desire in the heart of either to separate from what they presumed to be evil in Moses, through his marrying an Ethiopian woman; but there was a desire to assume to be what they were not, namely, equal with him of whom the Spirit has recorded that he was "meek above all the men which were upon the earth," and this God rebuked. But if it is that which the Lord condemns, the fact that it is of long standing can be allowed no weight, and if countenanced by one who has held or holds some influence over the minds of the saints, there is all the more reason why there should be no delay, lest the leaven work and they become through his influence deceived and ensnared. But we have Scripture testimony, and no delay was proposed to the mind of the apostle Paul when Peter, himself of reputation and beloved, had been betrayed into error, and Barnabas and others were in danger of becoming leavened by it. (Gal. 2:11-21) He acted faithfully and at once, painful as it must have been to him to do so.

Nor is there the danger that is feared of "endless division if we separate from evil," nor is the outcry to be heeded that "it will destroy all our corporate testimony." The testimony, either individual or corporate, is already gone when we have ceased to act on separation from evil, and the only remedy, the only way of recovery, is its recovery; for separation is at the basis of everything ever owned of God as His testimony. Have we a corporate testimony or an individual one worth retaining if it involves the giving up of, not merely one tittle of the truth of God, but of a great fundamental principle which lies at the very root of all His dealings with us, as it has been laid down by Him as a first necessity with all the faithful that have gone before us? Far be the thought; to give it up is to give Him up. Alas what are we now, and what is the testimony? A little remnant always went out from evil associations, and acted professedly on this God-taught principle of separation from all evil, maintaining that He demanded it. They found themselves together in our own days in various localities, as two or three gathered together "unto His name," who desired to maintain what is due unto it. Thus, and thus only, they became a testimony by separation, a testimony to failure and departure from God's ways for His people, a testimony nevertheless to His faithfulness (Matt. 18:20; 2 Tim. 2:19) Is it not humbling that such, if they once knew the

blessedness of all this, should now be found fearing to act upon it, or be found advocating or defending delay, or indeed anything else, as God's present instruction for His people? Excuse the evil committed-palliate it in what way you will-call the desire to separate from it division, haste, or by what name soever you may, the godly soul who reading the Word for himself is governed by it, will not be deceived by such' expressions. He knows that the judgment of evil and separation from it are of God, and that whatever may be proposed instead, nothing so shakes the power of the enemy. The greatest blow a Christian can inflict on the power of the prince of darkness is to separate himself from evil, and grace is given for it. Blessed be His name that He can and will use now such a feeble folk as we are for this end if we are true to Him! Separation from evil is a sure defense. "The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks." (Prov. 30:26) Let us remember that our wisdom is to act like they do, and having thus acted, our strength is "to sit still." (Isa. 30:7)

Reformation has come in instead of separation. No objection is raised to it; and while separation from evil is denominated division, party work, and bigotry, reformation is lauded under such names as philanthropy, or brotherly love, or even charity. We must look deeper than man's praise or condemnation, if we desire to know which is right, and what is the origin of each. Now reformation pre-supposes the existence of evil. But all that God does must of necessity be perfect, to it, therefore, certainly the idea of reformation cannot apply. Reformation had its origin in the proposal of the serpent to the woman in Eden. "God doth know that in the day that ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil." (Gen. 3:5) The suggestion of the enemy found here in the infancy of our race was, that there was imperfection in God's work, which the woman could amend. This proposal, yielded to, brought in the ruin. We thus see the thought of reformation was the fruit of a corrupt tree. Is it less so to-day? If it brought sin and death into the world, and separated man from God by giving him entirely false thoughts of God, it perpetuates the ruin when acted on now. Reformation to-day says that there is something good to be retained. What did it effect in Eden? Not separation from evil, but separation from GOD the only source of good. And what does it effect when acted on to-day? What can we retain? It effects the same end; for there is nothing to be retained but what is of God, and HE is separate from all evil. There is no way but the cross, and the practical carrying out of what it means day by day, when faith has grasped its meaning. By the cross and faith in Christ what is effected? Man is brought into fellowship with God, to know Him as Father in all the intimate relationships of a child. But it is God in all the unchanged holiness of His nature still, though now, to us, in the relationship of Father. This is never to be forgotten. Thus while we see that reformation brought in ruin, and still perpetuates it, separation was God's remedy, and is still; and that if we desire to get that which is perfect we must return to Him which necessitates it. To what is of God, and to that which was from the beginning (1 John 2:7,8), the far-lauded scheme of reformation does not and cannot apply. "I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be forever: nothing can be put to it, nor anything taken from it." (Eccl. 3:14) This is the language of the wisest man that ever lived, and it is the language of faith today. Nothing, then, but the cleaving to and resting in the perfection of that to which nothing can be added, and from which nothing can be taken, will ever satisfy that shrinking from evil, or lull to rest those heart-yearnings after practical holiness, which, right in themselves for every one born of God, have only been found since sin came into the world.

I have spoken but of the negative side-separation from evil; there is also the positive-holiness to the Lord. We are called from the one unto the other. But the latter is, as to practical holiness, impossible without the former, separation from evil, and therefore I have dwelt more on that side, as of first importance. In Christ, and the results of His work on the cross, we have both; and it is because we have that we are exhorted to both in our daily life. "As He who hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation." If true to Him, I am leaving the one (evil), I am reaching after the other. "Let us go forth unto Him" (Heb. 13:13) is the extent and limit of my separation. I am going to be like Christ when He appears, as we see in 1 John 4 Being not like Him yet, but with this knowledge that I am going to be, I "purify myself "now; and the apostle adds the extent of this, "even as He is pure." Here is the positive side, "as He is pure;" and John knows no cessation of this work, until the day dawns, and the shadows flee away, and he who longed for more likeness to Christ on earth at last finds that he is "like Him."

H. C. A.

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