

CHRISTIAN FRIEND VOLUME 8

by Unknown

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89 Chapters

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What is Man?

The above question is asked in three important connections in Scripture, and is itself one of three put to man in his fallen state. These are:

1. "Where art thou?" (alienated from God, "afar off!")
2. What hast thou done? ("killed the Prince of Life!")
3. What is man? Adorable is the grace which (when he could not) supplies the answer. The Scriptures may be regarded as a development of that answer, coming, not fruitlessly, to leave man where he is, but to awaken him, now wretched, to what grace is waiting to do for them who have ears to hear.

The three connections are shortly these:

First (Job 7:17), where God instructs or deals with man.

Secondly (Psalms 144:3,4), where he stands judged in presence of God's revealed glory.

Thirdly (Psalms 8; Hebrews 2), what man is in the person of Christ?

Referring then to the first of this group, few there are who have not "heard of the patience of Job," though many may not "have seen the end of the Lord," and still fewer have drawn from God's various dealings with him the lesson "that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." Job himself was in the dark respecting these things, and in the chapter referred to even betrays how ready he was, though conscious that God's eyes were upon him (v. 8), that He was with him (v. 19), and that He had set His heart upon man (v. 17), to remonstrate with, almost accuse, God. Not until chapter 40. does Job discover he is vile, and cease to speak. It is then he begins to enter into what man is, though in chapter 7 he knew he had sinned (v. 20), and tasted great bitterness, notwithstanding his sense of the Lord's nearness; indeed, this but added to his distress. Day yielded him no pleasure, night no rest; he prefers death to life, which he "loathes." (vv. 15, 16) Yet he is unbroken. In prosperity his goodness is a basis for self-complacency, and now in adversity—sent to remove this—he complains, such is man under instruction. Not until he says, "Mine eye seeth thee," does he say, "Wherefore I abhor myself" Thus also Isaiah (chapter 6): "Woe is me I for I am undone... for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." And again, in Saul's case, on his way to Damascus, where the "blameless" Pharisee became "the chief of sinners."

This leads to the question in its second connection (Psalms 144), where the answer also is given, of which Isaiah 40:68 is an expansion.

It is ever a precious reflection, that God begins with man; and that, when His glory must come, because He comes, love leads, and sends a herald to prepare His way. But coming, man is judged, and set aside—prophetically here; for this portion evidently points forward to Christ. It is now no longer instruction which is demanded to meet man's state. This had been tried by God

ineffectually for four thousand years, till there was no remedy. The glory of the Lord should be revealed, and all flesh should see it together. In fullness of time Christ came, “the True Light which lighteneth every man which cometh into the world;” and John could say—as did Isaiah “when he saw His glory, and spake of Him” “we have seen His glory.” Henceforth men had “no cloak for their sins;” for “this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world.” Yet truly did He come in the spirit of Isaiah 40:13; for “grace (first) and truth (next) came by” Him, ushered in by the voice in the wilderness too.

Then, finally, the cross proves man to be in utter alienation from God “short of His glory,” having sinned. “Every mouth is stopped, all the world guilty before God” “dead;” and thus, for God, the whole moral scene is a complete blank. What is man? Jesus dies, to put “away sin by the sacrifice of Himself” “the Lamb of God.” And now we pass to a consideration of the question in its third connection (Psalms 8; Hebrews 2; Ephesians 1). It was not possible that He should be holden of death. The glory of the Father claims Him, the perfect Man, on the Mount of Transfiguration; and once more the glory of the Father, having scanned the transcendently acceptable sacrifice, justifies the Son of His love, raising Him from among the dead, and sets Him “at His own right hand in heavenly places.” Oh, what an answer is this to “What is man?” for the hearts of those who, with God, see now but ONE within the wide range of His vision, and theirs the first fruits, the Head of a new creation. Nor is this all. If the deliberate descent from the mount to the garden brought glory to Him whose “commandment” Jesus was “content” to do; being there, brought there by love too to them, He was there in identification with those upon whom His heart was set “made sin for us.” Oh, the treasure the Church eternally has in the love which, in view of such sorrow as His, could enwrap itself around its object, claiming there the glory for it which the Father gave to Him! Surely in this also “Thou hast given Him His heart's desire, and hast not denied Him the request of His lips.”

True, the Church is not yet in this glory, though hers, and hers because His, which makes all so sweet; nor do we yet see all things put under Jesus, though we see Him crowned with glory and honor. (Hebrews 2) He “expecting” (10: 13), we can well afford to wait with as well as for Him, keeping the word of His patience. Meantime He would not leave us orphans, but having received (for us now, as for Himself before) the promise of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter is sent forth. Heaven's door is thus opened to us in the power of His blessed ministry, enabling one to gaze, to feast, in ravishing delight upon the Blessed One at the Father's right hand, undazzled by the glory of the place, since He is there; and unmoved, being one with Him. We drop henceforth the interrogation, and exclaim, through the grace which has set us in all this, “What is man!” One with Him for time and eternity; condemnation as far behind us as it is behind Him; the Father's smile resting upon us as upon Him; death itself now merely that which resolves the distance attaching to our feebleness of faith, into the bliss of immediate nearness; or the future so thrown open, that in “the fullness of God” one may view “the length, breadth, height, and depth,” and discover in Ephesians 1 the accomplishment of Psalms 8, God's Christ set far above all principalities, and powers, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named; in the coming as in the present age, “Head over all things to the Church, which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all in all.”

J. K.

The Morning Star

“I will give him the morning star.” And who is it that sees the morning star? He who watches while it is night. All see the sun in its brightness; but those only who are not of the night, yet knowing that morally it is night, and are looking for the morning star rise, and those only, see the morning star, and get it as their portion. They are children, not of the night, but of the day, and therefore look they for the day. When the star rose that hailed Jesus, who was born King of the Jews, there were Annas and Simeous waiting for the consolation of Israel. And who were Anna’s friends in that day of darkness? Simply those who were looking for redemption in Israel, and to them she spake of Him. In them was made good that word in Malachi, “They that feared the Lord spake often one to another.” We see they knew each other, and they enjoyed the comfort in spirit by the truth of Jesus of what follows in the prophet: “To you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in His wings.” These were a poor despised few, who were but little known, and less cared for; but they were “waiting” for redemption in Israel, sensible of the ruin and of the evil, because alive to God’s glory and to the privilege of being His people. In them, feeble as they were, we find a much brighter mark of faith than we do in Elijah when he was calling down fire from heaven. They were not setting the temple right, but were speaking together of God’s thoughts. Elijah was setting outward things to rights, but had not faith for inside things. In God’s unfailing grace to the remnant he had no just confidence.

Law was the measure of his apprehension; but the Annas and Simeons had the secret of God in their souls (“The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him, and He will show them His covenant”), and were walking in the narrow and silent path of faith; not setting the temple right, but speaking to all that were waiting for consolation in Israel. But were they content with the state of things? No; but in separation from evil they waited for the consolation of Israel, which could alone set the evil right. And just so it is in our day, the Christian cannot change Jezebel, nor can he be mixed up with the mere temple worshippers, the so-called religious systems of the day. He walks, while leaving them to the judgment of the Lord, far from violent attacks upon them, in quiet separation from all the evil, patiently waiting and watching during the long dark night of sorrow for the morning star of the day of glory. “To him that overcometh will I give the morning star,” and this morning star is Christ Himself. And He is in this way known to those who, though in the night, yet are not of the night, being children of the day. The morning star is gone before the world sees the sun, before the sun rises, before the day appears. But before the sun rises, there is the morning star for those who are watching in the night. The world will see the sun; but the morning star is gone, so far as the world is concerned, before the sun rises. So we shall be gone to be with the morning star before the day of. Christ appears to the world; and when Christ shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory.

There are three passages which refer to this morning star, to which it is important to refer you. In 2 Peter 1 he says: “We have also a more sure” (that is, confirmed) “word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well to take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the daystar arise in your hearts.” Israel’s prophets had prophesied the full day of blessing on the earth,

saying, "Arise, shine, for thy light is come." "A king shall reign in righteousness." And their testimony was confirmed to the disciples by the vision on the holy mount. They prophesied, too, of events coming on the world which marked out its judgment in all its forms of rebellious will and power, of Nineveh and Babylon, and the beasts which should arise upon the earth of Jerusalem and its portion as departed from God; and judgment was thus pointed out, so that there was a warning light which, in the midst of the darkness of this world itself, gave a light which recalled him that gave heed to it to avoid the crime of human will which led on to divine judgment. And this they did well to take heed to, until the daystar arose in their hearts, because it was the light in a dark place. But the daystar itself was something yet more excellent.

The prophecies, indeed, are plain; their warning clear. They guard me from being mixed up with the spirit of the world, whose judgment is announced. In Revelation 1 read of unclean spirits like frogs going forth unto the kings of the earth and of the whole world, to gather them to the battle of that great day of God Almighty. If I do not even exactly understand who and what the frogs mean, still the grand import of the prophecy is evident; they are not the power of good; they lead the kings of the earth to the battle of the great day of God Almighty. It is thus a light shining in a dark place, the night of this world's history on the absence of Christ. But the morning star is Christ Himself, as we see in Revelation 22 He is the bright and morning star. He will be the Sun of righteousness to the world when He appears; but then there will be judgment. The wicked shall be as ashes under the soles of the feet, as stubble, and the day of the Lord as fire. But the star appears to them that watch before the sun appears to the world; for as I can understand by the prophetic warning, that this dark place is going to be judged; that "the night is far spent, and the day is at hand;" yet so it is night now, whatever people may think. And I want the morning star in my heart (the hope of Christ before the day coming to receive the Church to Himself; for the morning star is given to them that overcome) to cheer my soul through the long and dreary night, which is yet darker now than it was then, but still far spent, as the darkness of the night always thickens till again the dawn of another day rise beyond on the other side of heaven, and the morning star appear to fix the eye of the watchful and waiting soul, and cheer the heart with a sure and certain hope. And what, then, do we want of the things of this dark place, which is now under judgment for having nailed God's Son on the cross? Do not you, therefore, be seeking the riches, the honors, the power of this world on which Christ is coming to execute judgment. One ray of the glory of Christ will at once wither up all the glory of this defiled world like an autumn leaf. Do not you, therefore, go on mixing yourself up with the world, heaping up riches. What will you do with them when Christ comes? Remember the Lord is at hand. But do I keep separate from this world merely because it is going to be judged? Certainly not. My whole portion for time and eternity is in Christ; the daystar has arisen in my heart. I am separated from the world by affection, and not by fear.

We have the coming of Christ as the morning star, as a distinct thing from the sunrise; for when the sun rises upon the world, it will be for judgment. (See Isaiah 2, Malachi 4:13) But beside and before all this we have our portion in Christ; we are not of this world, we are redeemed out of it, and belong to the Lord Jesus Christ, and shall join Him on high before He is manifested for the judgment of this world; and, therefore, the thunders of judgment cannot touch us, because we are seated with Him in heaven, from whence the judgments come. In Revelation 4, we have a most blessed and comforting picture of the position of the Church. There are the twenty-four elders sitting on their thrones, round about the throne from whence the thunders, the lightnings, and the

voices come; and they continue perfectly unmoved. But was this insensibility? Certainly not; for when God Himself in His holy character is mentioned, immediately they fall down and cast their crowns before Him; neither is this holiness the cause of any fear, when the living creatures proclaim the threefold holiness of Him who sits upon the throne; it is their worship breaks forth, and they fall down and cast their crowns before Him in the full sense of the blessedness of Him who sits alone upon the throne. Christ, then, is this morning star; and if the day has dawned, and the day star has arisen in our hearts, we know our association with Christ Himself, as within that place from which the judgment proceeds.

At the end of the Revelation we have the place of the star again. (22: 16) The Lord brings us back from the prophetic testimony to Himself — “I Jesus have sent mine angel”— “I am the root and the offspring of David” (this is in connection with His being source of promise, and heir of it, as King in Zion, Rule thou in the midst of thine enemies’), “and the bright and morning star.” But the moment He presents Himself as the bright and morning star, “the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; the Holy Ghost in the Church says, Come.” This response is what is connected with Himself; the mention of Himself attracts and awakens the answer of the Spirit. This is the character in which the Church herself has to say to His coming. God, in the love of His own heart, has associated the Church with Jesus, and the very mention of His name awakens the cry, “Come!” for it touches a chord which gives an immediate response; and therefore He does not say here, “Behold, I come quickly!” The question here is not when He will come, but that it is Himself that is coming. He does not speak of His coming— blessed though that thought is—but He reveals Himself; and this it is that awakens the response of the heart by the power of the Holy Ghost. We are for Himself, and shall be with Himself. It cannot be anything short of this, for He calls us “His body.” What a glorious place this is! Not merely wonderful, but glorious identification with the Christ of God! No explanation of prophetic scripture, however nice and true it may be, however useful as a solemn warning as regards this world, can ever take the place in the soul that is taught of God, of knowing its living union with a coming Jesus, of the present waiting for Himself. No mere explanation of His coming as a doctrine is the proper hope of the saint. That hope is not prophecy; it is the real, and blessed, and sanctifying expectancy of a soul that knows Jesus, and waits to see and be with Himself.

The bride alone hears the voice of the Bridegroom, which at once calls out the expression of her desire of His coming. To this He responds, assuring her of it, and then the revelation closes, leaving this as her own expectation, whatever He may have previously communicated to her concerning the judgment, to which she does not belong. The Lord Jesus is represented as departing Himself, and coming and taking His bride to be with Him. Then, when the world is saying, “Peace and safety,” sudden destruction cometh upon them, and they shall not escape.

Paul closes (1 Thessalonians 4) with these words, “So shall we ever be with the Lord.” And is that all? Yes, that is all; for to the heart that has learned to love Him He can say no more. Then he adds, “Of the times and seasons ye have no need that I write unto you.” Ye are the children of the day, you wait for that. No explanation of this as a doctrine can ever reach the heart. You cannot make a person understand a relationship; to understand it he must himself be in it. An unquickened soul may understand, in a manner, what prophecy means; but nothing short of the sense and taste of being connected with Christ Himself can give the desire of His own personal coming. And why? Because for this the relationship must be known. In Revelation 22:16 the relationship is known, affection is awakened, and there is the immediate response. Take a case: A

woman is expecting her husband; he knocks at the door; not a word is uttered out of his mouth, but his wife knows already who it is at the door; for it is he whom she loves that is there; and thus the natural feelings proper for a wife are awakened, when the chord is touched by that which acts on them. But then the link must be in the heart, the affection must be there to produce the response; the chord which vibrates with this blessed truth must be there to be awakened by it. There is such a consciousness of union with Jesus, through the power of God's Spirit, that the very moment He is spoken of in this character the chord is touched, and the instinctive cry is, "Come!" No amount of intelligence merely will produce this. And what a difference between expecting the Lord Jesus, because He has made me and His saints a part of Himself and His bride, and looking for His coming to judge poor sinners. Now mark the practical effect of this looking for Jesus. It takes us clean out of the world up to heaven. If my heart is right in its affections for Him, I am looking, too, straight up on high to take notice of the things around me. Plenty of things there are around in the world, plenty of bustle and turmoil; but it does not disturb the blessed calm of my soul, because nothing can alter our indissoluble relationship with a coming Jesus, as nothing should divide us in hope.

To see this coming of the Lord Jesus for the Church changes the character of a thousand scriptures. Take the Psalms, for instance, those which speak about judgments on the ungodly, such as "the righteous washing their feet in the blood of the wicked." We are not the persons who say this; it is the language of Jews, and of godly Jews too, who will be delivered through the rod of power smiting their enemies when all the tribes of the earth will wail because of Him. But do I want my enemies to be destroyed to get to Christ? Certainly not. I shall leave them to be with Him. (It is a sorrowful thought indeed, though we recognize the just judgment of God, that such judgment will be accomplished upon those who despise Him and His grace) But as for me, I am going straight up to Christ in heaven. My place is in Him while He is hid in God in the nearest and most intimate union. I belong to the bride, a member of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones. When we have hold of this blessed center, Christ, and with Him, therefore, of God Himself, then every scripture falls into its proper place, and we get a spiritual understanding by the Holy Ghost of things in heaven, and our connection with them, and things on earth, and our separateness from them; and above all, our hearts get into their proper place; for, being set on Jesus Himself, we are waiting for Him. When He shall appear, we shall appear with Him in glory; but we shall be forever with the Lord.

May the Lord give us such an apprehension of redemption, and of our position in Him, as may so fix our hearts on Himself, that we may be daily walking down here like unto men that wait for their Lord, who has promised to come and take us to Himself, watching in the midst of a night of darkness, aware that it is the night, although we are not of the night; but watching and waiting for the day, having the morning star arisen in our hearts. May the Lord keep us from idols; and, above all, from aught that savors of Jezebel, that we may be in dread for fear of grieving Him in any of those things which have come in to spoil and corrupt that which He once planted so beautiful, to be for the manifestation of His glory in this dark and evil world.

J. N. D.

Fragment: Faith

Faith makes nothing of circumstances, because it makes God all. It is not that difficulties in themselves are lessened, but that God fills the eye.

Fragment: the Path of Faith

We may get into the path of faith, but we shall find then that nothing but faith can walk in it.

Written Revelation

Epistolary communications are a marked feature of New Testament revelation. In the Old Testament there was comprised, under the threefold division of the law, the prophets, and the Psalms (Luke 24:44), the whole of that portion of God's written word. By the law was meant the Pentateuch. Under the prophets the historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings were classed with the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the twelve minor prophets. Under the Psalms the rest of the books forming the canon of Old Testament revelation were ranged; this portion being so called, probably, since the book of Psalms stood first in the third great division of the Hebrew Scriptures.

In the Old Testament we have related the history of man from the creation to the exodus of Israel out of Egypt, as far as God has been pleased to make it known, when for the first time there existed upon earth, and was seen, a people which the Lord Jehovah owned, and would have others to know were His peculiar people. To them the law was given, God's revelation of that which was suited to man in the flesh (Romans 7:5), and which was holy, just, and good. What response there was to that revelation on the part of the people of Israel, or rather how they failed to respond to it, the historical books are chiefly concerned in narrating. The failure after the death of Joshua, and of the elders which outlived Joshua, was great and general. (Judges 2:7) The solemn warnings of Moses recounted in Deuteronomy, the earnest entreaties of Joshua a little time before his death (Joshua 23:24), as well as the predictions of judgments, including captivity, if they continued obdurate, and which were written in the law; all these failed to make any lasting or deep impression on them.

Hence arose a new kind of ministry, called prophetic, the purpose of which was to act on the consciences of the people, to recall them to their allegiance to the Lord their God. This ministry was instituted by God, who provides the means of communicating with His people when and how He pleases. So when priesthood had failed in Israel in the person and house of Eli, the Lord commences to open up communications with Israel by prophets, at the head of whom stands Samuel (Psalms 99:6), he being the instrument especially chosen by which to communicate the divine mind to the people, after judgment had been pronounced on the house of Eli. (1 Samuel 3:20,21) The grace of this was manifest. The failure on the high priest's part, the representative before God of the people, was not to hinder communications from God as often as occasion might call for them, whether unsought by the people, or as answers to their requests. For the prophet was not one who merely foretold the future. Rather he was one who had the mind of God, whether for that which was wanted for the present, or to reveal things future.

Both grace and sovereignty were displayed in the institution of prophets. Grace was seen, inasmuch as by such the Lord had a channel of His own selecting, by which He could still address the people, even if they should apostatize from the faith, as was the case with Israel during the prophetic ministry of Elijah and Elisha. Sovereignty, too, was displayed, since the prophetic office was not hereditary like the priesthood or the monarchy. It did not descend from father to son,

though the Lord of course was free to make use of both a parent and his child in this service if it pleased Him. An instance of this we have in the case of Jehu, the son of Hanani, the seer, who reproved Jehoshaphat, as Hanani, his father, had reproved Asa. (2 Chronicles 16:7; 19: 2) But such cases, as far as we know, were rare. The office, then, not being hereditary, the Lord exercised His sovereignty each time that a prophet appeared amongst the people, a token that Jehovah had not forgotten them, nor was indifferent to their welfare, however indifferent they were to Him.

Of the earlier prophets, no prophetic writings, as that term is commonly understood, have come down to us. We say, as that term is commonly understood; for certainly some of the historical books which are classed in the Hebrew canon amongst the prophets were written by men of that school. (1 Chronicles 29:29) Yet some of them did commit revelations to writing; witness Elijah, whose message to Jehoram, the son of Jehoshaphat, is incorporated into the sacred history (2 Chronicles 21:12-15); and the prophecy of Ahijah, and the visions of Iddo the seer. (2 Chronicles 9:29) These last, however, did not form part of the canon of Scripture, nor were intended for our instruction; for all that a prophet uttered was not always committed to writing for preservation to a future day. Of this Jonah is an example; for we learn elsewhere (2 Kings 14:25) that we have not in the work that bears his name all that he predicted, though doubtless we do possess all that the Lord saw fit to preserve to later ages.

Hence, studying their writings, we learn in what manner the prophets carried on their work, and we can trace the forbearance and goodness of God as displayed in them. For attempting to arouse the people to a sense of their failure, and of that which became them if they would avert the threatened outpourings of divine displeasure, we see how the Lord was willing, if they had responded, to have turned away His anger from the nation. How often indeed did He do that, as the psalmist has placed upon record. (Psalms 78:38) But a time came when there was no remedy. Israel would not hear; God's people would have none of His reproofs. As that drew near the prophetic communications were multiplied, warning the people of the coming judgments, but telling them also of the future and final blessing.

Commencing according to the common chronology with Joel, who lived in the reign of Uzziah, and going on to Jeremiah, who witnessed the capture of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the Lord appealed by various servants to His people; but all in vain. Hence deportations from their land had to take place. Yet even then Jehovah did not forsake them. And Ezekiel, with the captives at Chebar; and Daniel at Babylon and Shushan, were proofs that God still cared for His people, and would minister by His servants the prophets to impress on them their sins, or to sustain the heart of any that were repentant, when tasting in the bitter way that they were called to do it the consequences of their guilt and of the national unfaithfulness. After the captivity the same kind of ministry was continued in the persons of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi; and the New Testament opens with prophecy bursting forth afresh from the lips of Zechariah—Zariaharias, the father of John. (Luke 1:67)

But a new manner of dealing with the people was now to be attempted. By the ministry of John, than whom among the prophets none was greater, hearts were prepared to welcome the advent of the long-promised Messiah, the teacher for whom they had been taught to look, and to wait. (Luke 3:15; John 4:25) At length He came, and taught the people, journeying through cities and villages,

and teaching in the temple, till the time arrived for His death on the cross to take place. This leads to a consideration of the character of New Testament written revelation.

The Old began with the Pentateuch, commonly called the law; the New begins with the four gospels, describing, each in its own characteristic way, the life on earth and the death of Him in whose heart the law of God was hidden. (Psalms 40:8) By the law God traced out what man ought to be. In the gospels we see what a perfect man is, dependent and obedient; for there was but One who has fully exemplified it. Following the gospels, comes the historical book of the New Testament, the Acts, detailing the progress of the work, in the spread of Christianity from Jerusalem to Rome, as far as God has been pleased to recount it, that book being chiefly occupied with Peter's early labors in Judaea, and with Paul's missionary work among the Gentiles, After this come the epistles, embracing those of Paul, Peter, John, James, and Jude, the whole volume closing with the one prophetic book of the New Testament, the Apocalypse, which treats of the judgment on the professing churches in apostate Christendom, and on the impenitent dead raised up for that purpose (John 5:29), and carries us on in thought to the commencement of the eternal state. (Revelation 21:18) The Old Testament closed with the hope of the Lord's coming to reign, and the need of preparing hearts to receive Him, lest He should come and smite the earth with a curse. (Malachi 4:6) The New Testament carries us on to millennial blessing, when there shall be no more curse (Revelation 22:3), and to the eternal state, when there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying, nor pain on earth, for the former things will have passed away. (Revelation 21:4)

Now the character of the instruction vouchsafed us in the New Testament is very different from that which we meet with in the Old, but it is in perfect harmony with the opening books of this part of the sacred volume. God is not now making a claim on man, and telling him what he ought to do, and to be, as a creature sharing in divine mercy and goodness; but is now presenting to his eye a perfect Man, and to those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ God is ministering of Christ to them. The Old Testament prophets reminded the people of the law, and endeavored to recall them to the observance of it. The New Testament ministry is the presentation of Christ in various lights just as it was needed. And addressing, as the sacred penmen did, saints, in whose midst they were not at the moment, the written revelation of this part of the volume took the form of epistles, letters addressed to assemblies, as those at Thessalonica and Corinth; to companies of saints, as the Romans, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians; or to individuals, and in one instance to God's ancient people.

With the Lord Jesus Christ delineated in the gospels, the example for God's saints (Matthew 11:29; John 13:15; Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 12:2; 1 Peter 2:21; 4. 1; 1 John 2:6), the characteristic feature of apostolic ministry is the presentation of the Lord Jesus Christ, and truth about Him, as occasion called for it, whether arising from failure on the part of God's saints, or their lack of intelligence in the truth, or from their condition being such that the Holy Ghost could freely minister of the things of Christ for their profit and spiritual growth. The epistles to the Galatians, the Hebrews, and the Ephesians, may be cited as illustrations of these different conditions of the saints in the days of Paul.

By the preaching of the gospel God was sending out a message of grace to men in the world; by the epistles God was addressing those who professedly were His people, gathered out by the

gospel from all around as believers on His Son. The only exception to this is the epistle of James, addressed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. But the principle is in measure the same with reference to it as to all the others, in that God was addressing by it those who had a recognized position before Him as His people, once owned as such, though now for a time treated as 'LoAmmi,' and 'LoRuhamah.' James wrote to God's earthly people; Paul, Peter, John, and Jude to those professedly Christians, described by the apostle of the Gentiles as saints in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 4:21) To saints in general John and Jude wrote; to those gathered out from the Jews Peter addressed himself; to assemblies, chiefly composed of those once Gentiles, Paul wrote, besides addressing Christian saints as such, and certain individuals as well. In this last line John alone followed him. Paul wrote letters to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon; John to the elect lady, or Cyria, and to his well-beloved Gaius. In all these writings God's desires for His children come out to us. He is teaching them, whether by correcting evils which had manifested themselves amongst His saints, or by exhorting them to be faithful and patient, or by unfolding His purposes to them, and those counsels by which they were being worked out; for we are "predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will." (Ephesians 1:11) This passage explains the difference between God's purpose and His counsels.

What grace to and interest in the saints does this character of ministry illustrate. In the Old Testament, with sinful man before Him, God gave Israel a law to show what man ought to be. In the New Testament, with the perfect man before Him, God ministers Christ to us as that which, since He is our life, we are to manifest before God, His saints, and the world. In short, it is the ministry of a Person, and not the promulgation of a code, useful, and needful to us, as that code was, and is still. (1 Timothy 1:8-10) C. E. S.

Dorcas; or, Garment-Making for the Poor

TABITHA, or rather Dorcas, has obtained a most unlooked-for notoriety. Almost every church and chapel boast of their “Dorcas Societies;” and “Dorcas” meetings are becoming well known even to those believers who are in professed separation from human systems and organizations. The aim, both in the one and the other, is laudable; and, doubtless, even if the objects of such charity are often not well chosen, the sufferings of many are thus alleviated. Without the slightest intention, therefore, of discouraging such efforts, it may still be well to examine a little the history of Dorcas, and to inquire what instruction there from the Spirit of God intended us to apprehend.

It is to be remarked, in the first place, that her activity was not confined to clothing the naked. “This woman was full of good works and alms-deeds which she did.” (v. 36) This is a wonderful epitaph for a saint of God, and with this remarkable distinction from many such epitaphs written by men, that it was recorded by the unerring pen of the Holy Ghost. Her good works were therefore good works—such as God had before prepared that she should walk in them (Ephesians 2:10), and such, on this account, as could only have been produced in the energy of the Spirit of God. It is profitable to remind ourselves of what is really good works; for while we have been taught the danger of restless activity and occupation with service, and have been led to admire, and to desire to possess, the good part which Mary chose (Luke 10:42), we would also remember the words of Paul: “This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men.” (Titus 3:8) Philanthropic efforts of many kinds are often dignified with the title of “good works,” and are thus calculated to deceive many a simple soul; but good works, those that are such before God, can only flow from the power of the Holy Ghost, and therefore in accordance with His mind and will. They can thus be wrought only by believers, and only by believers as actuated by divine power, and in subjection to the word of God. “The coats and garments which Dorcas made” (v. 39) were of this class by an infallible verdict.

The “alm-deeds” of Dorcas are recorded as well as her good works; and from the usage of the word (see Matthew 6:1; 2:34; Luke 11:41; 12:33; Acts 3:2; 3:10; 10:2, 4) there is no reason to doubt that these consisted in the ministration of money or food to those that were in need. The apostle, writing to Timothy, says, “Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate” (there is no foundation whatever for the marginal rendering “sociable”); “laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal” (rather, on that which is really) “life.” (1 Timothy 6:17-19) Dorcas was thus in the spirit of this exhortation. She was rich in good works, and she was ready to distribute, willing to communicate of her substance; for she had learned “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for our sakes He became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich” (2 Corinthians 8:9); and by that same grace she had become His representative in the world. She was a giver, because God, who had brought her to Himself, was a Giver. Knowing therefore that

she was not her own, and that whatever she possessed she held only as a steward for Him, to whom she belonged, she placed both herself and her substance at His disposal, and served with both according to His will.

The objects of her charity or ministry are distinctly specified. When Peter had arrived, and had been introduced into the chamber of death, we read that “all the widows stood by him weeping, and showing the coats and garments which Dorcas made while she was with them.” It is noteworthy also that these widows are distinguished from the saints. (v. 41) There may be a reason for this—not to imply that none of these were saints, but rather, as we judge, to show that she labored for widows as a class, and perhaps, too, in the spirit of the apostolic exhortation, “As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.” (Galatians 6:10) It may then be concluded that her charitable activities were not solely expended upon believing widows; but, as one who knew the heart and mind of God, she sought to minister to need wherever it might exist, while owning the special claims of the household of faith. Every reader of the Old Testament must have been struck with the constant expression of God’s care for the widow and the fatherless (and the two classes must often be found in combination), and James gives a voice to this for us when he says, “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.” (James 1:27) Paul likewise has given special instructions concerning these two classes. (1 Timothy 5)

It is thus clear that Dorcas had the mind of God in the special work to which she was devoted. And indeed what service could be more blessed than to clothe the naked and feed the hungry? The Lord Himself, in the judgment of the living nations, when He shall sit on the throne of His glory, specifies these things services rendered to Himself in the person of His “brethren.” He says, “I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat... naked, and ye clothed me.” (Matthew 25:35,36) This, as He explains, done unto one of the least of His brethren, was done to Himself. How unspeakable then the privilege to feed and clothe Christ in the person of one of His members. It is what He has done for us; for the apostle says, “For in this (our tabernacle house) we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: if so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked” (that is, without Christ). (2 Corinthians 5:2,3) To clothe the naked and to feed the hungry and He Himself is our food (John 6) is consequently to act in His own spirit the existence of the need drawing forth the affections of Christ from the hearts of His people.

A distinct lesson or two for our own guidance may be profitably collected from the whole history, confining ourselves now to that which is specially mentioned—making the coats and the garments.

First, it should be observed that the work of Dorcas was individual. There is not the slightest trace of any association with others. Evidently it was the special service to which the Lord had called her, and to which she willingly yielded herself. Her example cannot, therefore, be cited for anything beyond her individual line of service. Nothing is more blessed in Christian activity than fellowship— fellowship in the Lord. But the great danger of a day like this is association— association with others to obtain an object through the energy of cooperation rather than in the power of the Spirit. Satan often succeeds in this way in arresting even what might have been at the outset the action of the Spirit of God. Thus the Lord has laid some special thought of service upon the heart of one of His people; and instead of going forth to its accomplishment in the power

of Him who has called to it, the effort is often made to associate others with it, or even to form a society for the end in view, and immediately the service, even if outwardly prosperous, is on the road to failure. Moses may well be a warning to us on this head. He complained to the Lord that the burden of the people was too heavy for him. The Lord permitted him to have seventy associates; but He took of the Spirit that was on Moses, and put it on them. (Numbers 11:11-17) Not only was there no gain of power by the association, but enormous loss by the importation henceforward of seventy judgments into every question that had to be decided. No; service is intensely individual; for every servant is individually responsible to the Lord, even in garment-making, and hence cannot afford to subordinate his convictions to those of another, or to seek to walk upon the level (be it higher or lower) of another's faith.

Secondly, this history affords distinct guidance for sisters as to the occupation of their leisure time in their homes, or at least for such as have the means to purchase materials, and capacity to use the needle or the sewing-machine. It is to be noted very especially, that if Dorcas spent any of her time in fancy-work (and we by no means contend that she had not liberty to do so), the results of her labor in such a direction are not mentioned. This will surely be significant to every spiritual mind. It is "the coats and the garments" only that find a place in the word of God teaching, at least this much, that it is labors of this kind that command the Lord's approbation. This is plain from the fact that Dorcas was raised to life again. Her loss was so keenly felt by the disciples that they sent for Peter, "desiring that he would not delay to come to them." The apostle went, and was permitted to restore her to life; and "when he had called the saints and widows, presented her alive." (v. 41) Thus the Lord interposed at the cry of His people, and comforted their hearts.

A last instruction may be added—one already obvious from what has been said—viz., that the work of Dorcas was for cases of need. There is some danger, if not watchful, of seeking to gratify ourselves in ministry of a Dorcas character; of expending our efforts upon selected cases, of choosing such as commend themselves to us in one way or another, so that it will often happen that the needs of some of the poor saints are abundantly met, while those of others are almost entirely overlooked. The antidote is to have Christ Himself before us as the object of our ministry, only remembering that, as it was not our merit, but our necessities, that drew forth His heart in service for us, so likewise the only incentive to our loving ministry to His own should be their needs. In other words, all our service must be drawn forth by the constraining love of Christ; for it is possible to bestow all our goods to feed the poor and yet to be without divine charity (1 Corinthians 13), and hence without any promptings of the heart of Christ. Christ, therefore, must be the motive; Christ must be the object, and Christ must be expressed in all our service.

E. D.

The Garden of Eden

The full act of creation under God's hand is detailed in chapter 1. The work of creation is again given us here, but much more succinctly; the narrative soon passing, the general action confines itself to Eden, or to the garden of Eden, because there the scene of the great action about to be tried was laid, and all here is under the hand of the Lord God in a character of covenant relationship to man and the creation. The garden is shown us very particularly; it is described as the place of every desirable production, and as the source of those fruitful rivers which were to go over the whole earth; and Adam himself is put there "to dress it and to keep it."

Now all these were so many characters of the man's happy estate. He had provision of all desirable things, he saw his habitation a spring of blessing to the earth around it, and he himself made important to that garden from which he derived his enjoyments. He was made to give as well as to receive, and all these were but different features of a happy condition to a well-ordered mind such as Adam's. All this was surely so, but with advantages of so high an order it was needed that he should be told that he was but a creature still, and that the divine Planter of the garden alone was supreme. Accordingly, the voice of a Sovereign is heard in the garden; a commandment goes forth, "Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat." But this voice is not a discord. It is all unison in the ear of an upright creature; for, act in what way or sphere he may, God must be, and will be, God—filling the chief room, and not giving His glory to another. A creature of a right choice must therefore rejoice in any witness of God's supremacy as in its own blessing. All this is but harmonious and consistent happiness; for in the command there is nothing beyond the necessary thing. There is no laying upon Adam any other burden. One command is needed, and only one is given. And this is therefore only another item in the great account of his happiness. There the Lord God, to fill out the scene of this happiness, celebrates for Adam a coronation—day, and a day of espousals; but here I must linger for a moment or two. The order of the passage is this (vv. 18-22). The Lord God first takes counsel with Himself about Adam's espousals. He then introduces him to His dominions and sovereignty.

At last He celebrates his espousals, presenting Eve to him. This is the order of his coronation and of his marriage, and it is an order which has its meaning. I believe the richest purpose of joy is the first in counsel, but the latest in manifestation; so in the substance. The Church was in the election and predestination of God before the world began; but other ages and dispensations took their course ere "that mystery hid in God" was made known. (See Ephesians 3) There is something of peculiar beauty and meaning—in the order of this passage. It is not the mere progress of the narrative of independent facts; it is the design of a Great Master who knew the end from the beginning.

But not only so. It is not only the design of a perfect mind, but the well-known way of love also. The Lord God's first thought was about Adam's best blessing. The helpmeet at his side was to be more to him than the subject creatures under him. The day of his espousals was to be dearer to him than the day of his coronation. Accordingly, the Lord crowns him; but that is done at once, and put

out of hand. But that which was to be chief in his enjoyments was the fondest image in the mind of his Lord. His Lord pondered it. He made it familiar to His thoughts; spoke of it to Himself, because it was to be the dearest to Adam. This was the way of love. We understand it to be so. We like to think of the materials of a loved one's happiness; we turn it over in our thoughts, and thus is the Lord God represented here as engaged for Adam. The manner of forming the plan or taking the counsel is thus beautiful, and the plan itself was wonderful. It took the highest aim, "It is not good that man should be alone, I will make a helpmeet for him."

Jesus the Son of God has found this to be so. His joy is provided for in the very way in which the Lord God here provides for Adam's. As we read, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king which made a marriage for his son." How excellent a purpose therefore was this! It was making nothing less than the divine enjoyments the standard and the measure; it was saying to the creature, "Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And not only in the plan, but in the execution of the plan. The divine original is copied. Adam sleeps a deep sleep, and out of his riven side a rib is taken, of which the helpmeet is made. As the Lord's helpmeet comes forth from His toil, His sorrow, and His death, and He felt and valued all this. He saw of the travail of his soul, as it were, and was satisfied. "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh," said his satisfied heart, surveying the fruit of his weariness and of his mystic death, and this again is divine joy. There is Another, we know, who will thus see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. It is the rest of the laboring man that is sweet. It is the bread eaten through sweat of brow that is pleasant. Adam had not helped in the forming of any beast of the field. They had not been quickened through any sleep of his. But Eve was taken from his riven side. She had been the fruit of his deathlike slumber, and he therefore prized her. "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man." Not only as his helpmeet, his companion, but because he had been so necessary to her did he prize her; she was out of his side as well as for His side. The execution of the plan bound his heart to her as well as the result.

And this was divine joy, this is the joy of Jesus. This joy in His Church is His chief joy; she is both for His side and out of His side. Angels are not of the travail of His soul. But that which His toil and sorrow have won for Him, and which is prepared for the fellowship of His thoughts and His affections—this will be the dearest. The whole redeemed thing in heaven and in earth will surely be to Him the rest of the laboring man, and the bread that is eaten through sweat of brow; but the Church it is which is destined for His side, like Eve, as well as taken out of it.

Finally, we see here the unashamed nakedness of the man and the woman—happy expression of innocent intimacy. No familiarity which such hearts could indulge would be rebuked, and so will it be between the true pair in the heavenly garden; no fear of being bidden away, and no shame in drawing intimately near. Innocence was the security between Adam and Eve, and all the virtues of the new mind will be the necessary, instinctive, essential protection of the ways of the redeemed Bride of the Lamb, in company with the Lord, while indulging her heart in His nearest affection.

Beautiful, wondrous chapter! I would ask myself, Are such the materials of my happiness? Adam communicated as well as received; Adam was subject to God as the creature was subject to him. And all these were but different parts of his happiness. Do we know this kind of blessedness — the blessing of imparting to others, and of being subject to God? and do we enjoy those mysteries which so tell out the ways of Christ and the Church?

All this is a picture of perfect happiness; but it is such happiness as God could sanction or impart, and Jesus Himself could share.

J. G. B.

Songs of Deliverance

In leading our souls into an apprehension of His mind, God breaks up, so to speak, some great truth, that the Holy Ghost may select and apply the precise morsel suited to each one at any moment; or He may, and often does, epitomize a certain range of truth, that we may survey it all at a glance, and learn to classify and arrange its various points, and to judge of their mutual bearing. Psalms 32 in a very striking way presents a development of God's great salvation, though ranging in extent beyond the limits of what could have been then known to the psalmist (being thus prophetic) and bears the soul forward into blessings which, thank God, are now known as the fruit of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus.

Generally, the first few verses of each psalm give the result reached through exercises such as are described— in what follows. Hence, to consider the exercises of the godly soul in this psalm, we pass on to verse 5 and those following it, where we find:

1. "I acknowledged my sin unto Thee," &c. (v. 5) 2. "Thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin." (v. 5) 3. "For this shall every one that is godly pray unto Thee in a time," &c. (v. 6) 4. "Surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh unto him." (v. 6) 5. "Thou art my hiding place; Thou shalt preserve me from trouble;" (v. 7), 6. "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." (v. 7) 7. "I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way that thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye." (v. 8)

Thus we have confession, forgiveness (compare 1 John 1:9), dependence, safety, peace, deliverance, and guidance. In reviewing these several features of a soul's experience, not only is there, as we know, great joy attendant upon a knowledge of forgiveness—expressed by the psalmist: "Blessed is the man whose iniquity is forgiven," &c. but in the progress clearly implied in the above divinely—sketched series, joy doubtless accompanies the learning of every step. One must therefore in nowise conclude, as too many do, that when joy floods the soul as God's amazing love is first tasted, nothing more is to follow until heaven be reached. Vastly otherwise is it, as we have already seen, but very specially also in the point we wish now to treat of. It will be observed that something is presented in connection with deliverance in the above series, which renders it quite exceptional. Up to that point not a word is said of God's feelings, though, as already mentioned, the soul itself is happy when the burden of guilt is removed. But here we read of His happiness: "Thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance." God's joy gives character to the blessings vouchsafed in deliverance, though herein assuredly the soul too rejoices, yea, has a basis for comfort, rest, and joy, so perfect and inexpressible, that former experiences are swallowed up, and every consideration of self utterly demolished.

When one inquires how these things can be, it is, blessed be God, easy to find an answer in His unspeakable love and abounding grace. But great as is that love, it has its ways with us, and, amazing goodness! not until we reach the point at which He can rejoice over us "with singing" does He "rest in His love." (Zephaniah 3:17) This point we have already seen (Psalms 32) to be deliverance that which the soul proves between verses 24, 25 of Romans 7 There, the upright

soul, delighting in the law of God after the inward man (22), uses every effort to release itself from the grasp of sin unavailingly. He proves his utter weakness in the struggle. Then, having learned this, he looks away from himself, and cries for a deliverer. Not now for a work, but instinctively for a Person, whose dignity when perceived invests the work with its proper glory in the new apprehension of the redeemed soul. Such a Deliverer is now presented, established in a position and titles which manifest at once the dignity of His person, and the glory of His work—the Lord Jesus Christ. The lowly Jesus, dying in love, and in a glory but dimly seen through the thick darkness at Calvary by the kindling eye of an awakened soul, has been “made both LORD and CHRIST,” in attestation of God’s perfect satisfaction with the work in which He charged Himself with the deep responsibilities of our guilt and state. Not alone with our guilt, but with the condition of utter weakness for God, so lately proved (Romans 7:24), with the dreadful strength for self-pleasing too, discussed in Romans 6 He has charged Himself with all, only to make an end of it all, before the eye of a holy God, in a way that has brought eternal glory to Him, as we read, “Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him.” God has not lost by our sin; He has realized glory through it by the way in which it has been put away. Blessed forever be His name! And we learn this, to our joy and perfect rest, when we see where He has set our Saviour, as we further read, “If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him.” The eye of faith is now and henceforth upon Him. He has become everything to the soul thus instructed in righteousness. Drawn out of self, it finds beauty, worth, acceptance before God—peace, comfort, and joy in Him alone. Communion with God is now realized; for now, as before the foundation of the world, the Son of His love is “daily His delight” the Only begotten of the Father. The Father too rejoices “with singing” over the soul thus introduced into the blessed liberty in which “CHRIST IS ALL,” and rests in His love. J. K.

Growth, Dwarfishness, Second Childhood, and Deformity

Growth is the natural advancement of the children of God from the state of babes to become “young men and fathers” in Christ. (1 John 2:12-14) But this may be either hindered or unnatural, and the state consequently may become all wrong. The Corinthians were still remaining in the condition of babes when the apostle addressed his first epistle to them: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able.” (1 Corinthians 3:1,2) The word “hitherto” (ο■πω) in this passage shows that they had never yet been in any other condition; they had remained in the condition of babes. The Hebrews also, when the apostle addressed them, are somewhat similar. Only with this difference, the Hebrews had advanced, but had afterward returned to the state of babes. “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.”

(Hebrews 5:12,13) “Ye are become such” shows that they had gone back to it. “But call to remembrance the former days!” Ah, he says, “you have gone back from the days when you endured a great fight of afflictions;” you have forgotten the time when you “took joyfully the spoiling of your goods,” because you knew that you possessed “in heaven a better and an enduring substance.” (Hebrews 10) “Now the just shall live by faith.”

There are three states of soul, or stages of growth, in the children of God to be found in Scripture; three states easily discernible too among Christians in our own day; and all three are evil, because they all arise from an arrested or unnatural growth. 1st, the dwarf state remaining in the condition of babes; 2nd, the state of second childhood, or returning to that condition; and 3rd, the result of both the hers—deformity.

I have referred to the first, as illustrated by the Corinthians, and say one thing more as to it ere passing on; namely, that Christians in this state are generally perfectly satisfied with themselves, and with what they know, and they are never found running in Paul’s company in 1 Corinthians 8:2, and Philippians 3:12-14. (As to this, see and contrast what they are doing in 1 Corinthians 3:21; 4:7, 8; 8:1; 9:24-27; 11:31; 14:36; &c)

Second, there is the state of second childhood; this we see was the condition of the Hebrews. In this state you have not impeded growth, as at Corinth, but unnatural growth; the internal has not kept pace with the external; it is more difficult to detect, for there is all the outward appearance of wisdom and manhood, with the intellect and the power wanting. This is a sad condition. There is refreshment in looking upon the confiding fresh young life of a babe; internally and externally there is harmony in such a one. But it is sad indeed to be brought face to face with second childhood. The hoary head, that should have guided aright, or curbed the impetuosity of youth by its sage and prudent counsel, that should have encouraged the feeble steps of the tottering babe, what can be more touching than to see its utter impotency and helplessness? (It is interesting and profitable to

compare Deuteronomy 34:7; Joshua 14:10,11; Job 12:12; 32:6, 7; with Titus 2:2,3; Philem. 1:9; in order to see that second childhood, whether in natural or spiritual things, is not part of God's order)

I pass on to notice now the third state "deformity," in which state something is manifested externally repulsive to the spiritual eye. I take as examples of those in this condition the saints addressed in 1 Corinthians and in the epistle to the Galatians. It is clear that in natural things deformity may be either mental or physical; that is, it may be that of the mind which is internal, but it does not therefore escape a spiritual eye, or that of the body which is external and more visible; this, too, is also true in the things of God, and both are illustrated in those addressed in these two epistles. Doctrine was wrong with the Galatians, practice with the Corinthians, the one internal, and far more serious and solemn than the other. Not to all the dreadful moral evil existing at Corinth does he address such solemn warnings and denunciations as he addresses to the Galatians. (Galatians 1:69; 3:4; 4:11, 20; 5:1, 4, 7, 12) No outward immorality is denounced by him as allowed among them, such as we find in 1 Corinthians, and it is possible that there was outwardly very little to complain of, the breaking of bread going on as usual, and those who attended at it not blamed. But they had gone back (Galatians 4:9), had begun in the spirit, but were now hindered, "bewitched." The "first works" (Revelation 2: 5) were no longer done, legal works adopted, and "the bondwoman and her son" being brought back to the house. (4: 30) But what had they done? In effect they had only neglected the teaching of the Word by the Spirit, a certain line of action not left to their judgment, but laid down for them, which is called "obeying the truth." (Galatians 3:1) This was the result of their bad state; but this was terrible to the apostle; for if the teaching of the Spirit and the Word are given up by saints, what is left?

It needed no great spiritual discernment to detect the deformity at Corinth. That which was allowed among them was a "common scandal," and such as was "not so much as named," even among the Gentiles. (1 Corinthians 5)

To remain, then, in the condition of babes is dwarfishness, and produces external deformity; while to return to this condition, having known better, is second childhood, and provokes this solemn condemnation of the apostle, "I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed upon you labor in vain." (Galatians 4:11) Doubtless the Hebrews were exposed to the danger of falling into the same state, though not so far advanced as the Galatians in it. But what strikes one is the overwhelming danger of this state, that it produces inaction of the Word by the Spirit. The soul is slumbering and content with itself, and no human power, nothing but the solemn voice of the Lord by the apostle, can arouse it. He was not, and He cannot now be, indifferent to such a state.

It is a matter of comfort to the servants of the Lord, that souls in the three evil states we have been considering are not beyond recovery through the application of the Word in the power of the Spirit of God, for we have all three of them addressed in the passages we have had before us. Nothing but divine wisdom can help us in dealing with such souls now, for by ignoring their state we are but continuing them in it, and by ignoring them because of their state we deprive ourselves of the duty and privilege of helping them to recovery.

In 1 Peter 2:2 (which does not in any way militate against what we have been saying) we find the means of growth: "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." We have been looking at growth arrested, and have considered a little what we have termed unnatural growth; we have seen that deformity follows each, but our view would not be

complete were it not also to embrace what true growth is, and how it is manifested, and for this we must turn again to John's first epistle.

I believe we learn there and everywhere in Scripture, as well as in walking up and down in service among the saints, that true growth always manifests itself in increased occupation of the soul with the person of Christ. When John is there writing of the "fathers," he says that he has written and still writes to them because they have "known Him from the beginning." This is all he has to say of them, and he adds no further counsel to them, gives them no further occupation. He does to the young men. (vv. 15-17) He does also to the babes (vv. 18-27), but to the fathers nothing, save in a general way. (vv. 28, &c) But the omission is full of instruction, for the few words he does say of them are in effect, "You have already begun, while yet upon earth, the occupation of heaven and eternity, and I know of nothing beyond it." Thus true growth was manifested. For in the day of Revelation 5, a day swiftly approaching for us, "Jesus only" fills the scene, and occupies the whole of the surrounding companies, "every family in heaven," and that, whatever their intelligence, or however varied their comprehension of Him and His ways may be. But if this is true in heaven, and we are growing now upon earth, it will manifest itself in more caring for Him and His approval, pleasing the Lord at all cost (2 Corinthians 5:9), and how but in ministering to those who are His, those so dear to Him, and those for whom He died? (1 John 5:1)

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things." (1 Corinthians 13) And, says the apostle Peter, "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 3:18) May we see that there is no growth but by the Word, and the dangerous condition of those who are not obeying it, that "word of God which effectually worketh also in you that believe." (1 Thessalonians 2:13) If at first it gave me life, it must effectually work now in me if I am to grow; and may it be thus with us increasingly to the praise and to the glory of His grace.

H. C. A.

Fragment: Separation from Evil

Separation from evil, when in fellowship of the Spirit, is separation unto God in true holiness, and in the title of Christ the appointed Heir in resurrection life and glory. And what is this but real strength in the power of the Holy Ghost?

Fragment: Christ Seen in Me

If Christ is in me, I must never let a bit of anything but Christ be seen.

Judgment-Seat of God and of Christ

I am not aware that this expression, "The judgment-seat of God," or "The judgment seat of Christ," is found anywhere else than in Romans 14 and 2 Corinthians 5; in the first of these two passages, with a view to present individual judgments; in the second, with a view to provoke to do good. The subject in itself is one of the most solemn and, at the same time, most blessed, and this so much the more as we understand it rightly. I believe that each act of our lives will be manifested then before the tribunal, according as the grace of God and His ways with us in connection with our own acts will be known then. We read (Romans 14) that "everyone of us shall give account of himself to God," and the word in this passage mentions the tribunal in connection with the exhortation to brethren not to judge one another in respect of days, meats, or any other such thing.

I am disposed to think that the acts alone will be subject to manifestation; but all the private acts of our life depend so intimately upon our inward feelings, that it is in a certain sense difficult to distinguish the acts from the inward thoughts. The acts manifest the power of the thought, or of the feeling. I believe that the whole of our acts will be detailed there, before the judgment-seat; not for us, however, as if we were in the flesh, and thus to our condemnation, but to make evident to our own eyes the grace that occupied itself with us regenerate or unregenerate. In the counsels of God I am elect before the foundation of the world; hence, I think that my own history will be detailed before the judgment-seat, and parallel with it the history of the grace and of the mercy of God toward me. The why and the how we did this or that will be manifested then. For us the scene will be declarative, not judicial. We are not in the flesh before God; in His eyes, by His grace we are dead. But then, if we have walked according to the flesh, we must see how we lost in blessing thereby, and what loss we have incurred; and, on the other hand, the ways of God towards us, all ways of wisdom, of mercy, and of grace, will be perfectly known and understood by us for the first time.

The history of each one will come out in perfect transparency; it will be seen how you yielded, and how He preserved you; how your foot slipped, and how He raised you up. Again, how you were drawing near danger and shame, and how He by His own arm interposed. I believe this is the Bride making herself ready, and I consider that moment is a wondrous one. There will be no flesh then to be condemned; but the new nature will enter into the full knowledge of the care and of the love, which in true holiness and in righteousness, and even in grace, have followed us step by step all through the running of the race. Some parts of our life, till then entirely unexplained, will be fully disclosed, and become altogether plain; some tendencies of our nature that perhaps we do not judge to be so pernicious and deadly as they are, and for the mortification of which we are perhaps now subjected to a discipline that we may not have interpreted aright, will be then perfectly explained; and what is more, the very falls that plunge us now into such bitter anguish, will be seen then to be that which God used to preserve us from something more terrible. I do not think that until then we shall ever have had a full knowledge of the badness of our flesh. How blessed for us to know that then it will be not only all over with the flesh in the counsel of God, but that the flesh will no longer be attached to us! On the other side, I doubt not the manifestation of God's grace

toward us individually will be so magnificent, that even the sense of the perversity of the flesh that we had, if it could possibly enter there, would be excluded by the greatness of the sense of divine goodness. Why do we not deny and mortify the flesh when we think of that hour? The Lord grant that we may do so more and more to the glory of His grace. The great subject of the judgment-seat brings the soul to a very full knowledge of our individual standing.

J. N. D.

Fragment: Rejoice in the Lord Always

Some Christians are apt to confound these two things special joy and abiding communion, and to suppose, because they have not always the first, the discontinuance of the latter is to be taken for granted and acquiesced in. This is a great mistake. Special visitations of joy may be afforded; but constant fellowship with God and with the Lord Jesus is the only right state, the only one recognized in Scripture. We are to rejoice in the Lord always.

Fragment: Strength in Weakness

Ah! if you were only weaker, you would then know what it is to be strengthened with might in the inner man.

The Efficacy of the Blood of Christ

It is of the first importance, beloved readers, that everyone should understand the light in which God regards the precious blood of Christ. The one lesson written on almost every page of Scripture, and told out in symbol, type, and fact, is, that “without shedding of blood is no remission” (see Hebrews 9:22); i.e. no remission of sins. The reason of this is plain. Man is a sinner. “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23), and hence all men as sinners are under the sentence and condemnation of death. (Romans 5:12) Now blood represents the life. As we read in Scripture, “The life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul.” (Leviticus 17:11) Inasmuch, therefore, as man is a sinner, and is under the penalty of death, he can find no escape except through the shedding of blood, the rendering up to God of a life in the stead of his own. Failing to find such a method of deliverance, he himself must bear the doom of his sin, for “the soul that sinneth it must die.” Now the blood of Christ is God’s own way of saving the sinner; for the blood of Christ signifies the offering up of His life to God, in death upon the cross, as an atonement for sin. Hence He Himself says, “The Son of man came... to give His life a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:28)

The aspects, however, in which the blood of Christ is presented are many, and it is only by a consideration of these that we can obtain any conception of its unspeakable preciousness and value—its preciousness and value before God—and its efficacy on our behalf.

Let us then examine a little together into what the Scripture teaches on this subject. One remark, however, must first be made. Even the blood of Christ, we shall find, would have no value apart from what He was. It is the truth of His person that imparts to it its efficacy. Had he only been man, His death could not have availed for all; had He only been God, He could not have died; but being what He was, “very God and very Man,” He not only was qualified as the spotless Man to offer Himself as a sacrifice for sin, but His divinity added such efficacy to His precious blood that it suffices for the need of all who believe in His name. Understand it well, then, that it is not the blood of Christ apart from Himself that avails before God; it is Christ Himself rather in the efficacy of His blood. It is on this account, for example, that the apostle speaks after this manner, “In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.” (Ephesians 1:7)

As a general remark it may be said that the blood of the sacrifices in the old dispensation, and therefore the blood of Christ which this typified, was wholly for God. That is, while, as we shall see, there are blessed applications to, and efficacies for, the believer, the blood was offered before all to vindicate the glory and to meet the claims of God on the sinner. Accordingly the first aspect of the value of the blood of Christ is that of PROPITIATION. The meaning and truth of this may be gathered from the action of Aaron with the blood of the sin-offering on the day of atonement. It is said, “And he shall take of the blood of the bullock, and sprinkle it with his finger upon the mercy-seat eastward,” &c. In like manner he was to act with the blood of the goat of the sin-offering. (Leviticus 16:14,15) In addition to this, the blood was to be sprinkled before the

mercy-seat, and here seven times because it was for the eye of man. Once was enough for the eye of God. That this spoke of the blood of Christ is shown from the statement of the apostle. He says, "Being justified freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God hath set forth a propitiation (a mercy-seat) through faith in His blood." (Romans 3:24,25) What, then, did the sprinkling of the blood on the mercy-seat accomplish? To answer this question it must be borne in mind that the mercy-seat in the tabernacle in the wilderness represented God's throne—the throne of Jehovah in the midst of Israel. Hence, He was said to dwell between the cherubim. (Psalms 80:1, &c) The blood put upon the mercy-seat met, therefore, the claims of God's throne upon the sinner. It answered all the claims of a holy God (we speak now of the blood of Christ) upon guilty sinners. It was the vindication of His holy government, and inasmuch as it both satisfied His righteous claims upon man as a sinner, and glorified Him in every attribute of His character, it laid the ground on which He could righteously pardon every sinner that approached Him trusting in the value of the sprinkled blood. This was propitiation—the propitiation which is the foundation on which God can now deal in grace with the whole world, and thus send out, through His ambassadors, the entreating message to all the vilest and the guiltiest—to be reconciled to Him. (2 Corinthians 5:20,21) Hence, too, John, speaking of Christ, says, "And He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the whole world." (1 John 2:2)

Such was the unspeakable value of the blood of Christ before God. It answered all His governmental claims upon a guilty world, so that He has been publicly vindicated, yea, glorified, concerning the question of sin, and in the very place where we had publicly dishonored His name by our sin and rebellion. And let it never be forgotten that He Himself in His wondrous love provided the propitiation. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (as believers can say), "and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins." (1 John 4:10) If thus His holiness demanded, His love furnished the propitiation; and hence He can now be proclaimed throughout the whole world as the God of grace; for He now sits as it were on the mercy-seat, waiting to receive, to pardon, and to save every poor sinner who comes through faith in the blood of Christ.

Propitiation having been made, God was free both in grace and righteousness to bless the sinner. Hence the apostle speaks of "being now JUSTIFIED by His blood" the blood of Christ. (Romans 5:9) Every one, indeed, who approaches God through faith in Christ is justified. For in virtue of that blood which met all God's claims, all the claims of His holy government upon the sinner on account of his sin, all the claims of His outraged majesty, and all the claims of His glory, He is able righteously to justify every believing soul. This is distinctly shown in Romans 3 "By the deeds of the law" it is conclusively proved; no flesh can be justified before God. Strive as a man may, and live as upright and moral a life as he may, he can never answer the claims of a holy God. Whoever is on, or takes, the ground of works as a means of salvation is hopelessly lost. Man cannot in any shape or form save himself; and should he seek to obtain righteousness by putting himself under the law, he will only find that "by the law is the knowledge of sin." What, then, we ask, is man's resource when it is demonstrated that he is a helpless, guilty sinner? It is in the righteousness of God, which, "without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:21-23)

But how, it may further be inquired, can God's righteousness be possessed? The answer is given in the same scripture. The apostle proceeds, "Being justified freely by His grace through the

redemption that is in Christ Jesus: whom God hath set forth a propitiation (mercy-seat) through faith in His blood... to declare at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” (vv. 24-26) Can anything be more divinely simple? The blood of Christ is the foundation. It is through its virtue, through its value before God as making propitiation, that He can be just, that He can act in perfect harmony with all that He is, in perfect consistency with His holy being, and justify, righteously justify, everyone “which believeth in Jesus.” We are therefore justified by, through the virtue of, the blood of Christ. We are also “justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus;” for it was God, acting from His own heart, in the exercise of pure, sovereign, and blessed grace, who provided the sacrifice whose precious blood made atonement for sin, so adequate and complete, that God could come out of His place, seek and bring back the sinner to Himself, pardon his sins, and righteously justify him on the exercise of faith in the blood of Christ. Hence it is only believers who are justified. But the moment a soul receives God’s testimony to the value of the blood, His testimony to His own appreciation of it, and, trusting in it, comes into His presence, that soul is justified, justified in the righteousness of God, even as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness. (Romans 4:3) Scripture likewise teaches that believers are SANCTIFIED through the blood of Christ. “Wherefore Jesus also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, suffered without the gate.” (Hebrews 13:12; see also 10: 29) These passages doubtless have a special application, but beyond this they teach a most precious truth. The sanctification of which they speak is neither practical nor progressive, this being effected by the Holy Ghost through the Word, but indicates the setting apart of believers to God as His people on the earth. That is, everyone who comes through faith under the shelter of the blood of Christ, is thereby separated from all the world, and set apart to God. The nature of this sanctification may be illustrated by the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the office of the priesthood. We read that Moses took of the blood of the rite of consecration, and “put it upon the tip of the right ear of Aaron, and upon the tip of the right ear of his sons, and upon the thumb of their right hand, and upon the great toe of their right foot” (Exodus 29:20) Thereby they were set apart to hear, to act, and to walk for God according to the perfection of the blood of Christ. It is so with believers now; and the blood in this aspect sets forth privilege and responsibility rather than actual blessing received, reminding the believer that he belongs to God, according to the value of the blood under which he is sheltered.

Another illustration of this may be gathered from Exodus 24 When Moses had read to the people the covenant which was made by the Lord at Sinai, he sprinkled half of the blood of the sacrifices upon the people (having sprinkled the other half upon the altar), saying, “Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning these words.” (v. 8) This will explain the words in Hebrews concerning an apostate, who is said to have “counted the blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified an unholy thing.” (10: 29) The blood sprinkled upon the people, while it set forth death as the penal sanction of the law, brought them thereby under the obligation of obedience. It was for this they were set apart. (Compare 1 Peter 1:2) So to the eye of God all His people now on the earth are seen, as it were, sprinkled under the value of the blood of Christ, and thus set apart to Him for His service. They are sanctified through the blood.

Another aspect of the blood of Christ is, that it CLEANSSES FROM SIN. “The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all” (or every) “sin.” (1 John 1:7) In like manner John, giving a voice to the adoration of the whole Church, cries, “Unto Him that loved” (or rather loveth) “us, and washed

us from our sins in His own blood,” &c. (Revelation 1:5) The same idea, speaking generally, is conveyed when forgiveness, or remission of sins, is spoken of as procured by the blood of Christ.

The difference is, that in this case it is God who has been wronged by our sins, who forgives, and absolutely forgives, whereas in the latter it is a question of the sinner being cleansed from his guilt, and made meet for His presence. Two or three specific statements will explain how this process of cleansing is effected.

As before stated, God sees every believer as sprinkled with, under the value of, the blood of Christ. When the priests were consecrated, and when the leper was cleansed, this truth was symbolized by their being sprinkled with blood. Both alike were first washed with water, figure of the new birth through the water (the Word) and the Spirit, sprinkled with blood, typical of cleansing from guilt; and then., lastly, anointed with oil to set forth the anointing of believers of this dispensation with the Holy Ghost. It needs scarcely be said that sinners now are not actually sprinkled; but on faith in Christ, in His atoning sacrifice, there is the application to them of all the cleansing value of the blood. Their guilt, therefore, is gone according to the efficacy of the blood of Christ before God.

It will thus be perceived that God sees no guilt where He sees the value of the blood, and He sees it on every believer. The blood has made propitiation for their sins. The effect, therefore, of the application of the blood of Christ to the soul—and let it be repeated that it is applied to all who believe—is, that they are without spot or stain. Borrowing the figurative language of the Apocalypse, they have washed their robes, and made them White in the blood of the Lamb. (Revelation 7)

“White in His blood most precious,

Till not a spot remains.”

So white, indeed, that they are spotless in purity before the all-searching eye of a holy God.

It should be added that Scripture knows nothing of a reapplication of the blood of Christ to the believer. Once cleansed, he is cleansed forever. This is the whole point of the argument in Hebrews 10:1-14. The efficacy of the sacrifice of Christ abides forever in contrast with the necessity for repeated sacrifices under the law, and hence the blood, once shed and presented before God, is ever there in all its value for our souls, so that the question of guilt can never more be raised against us.

“Though the restless foe accuses,

Sins recounting, like a flood,

Every charge our God refuses;

Christ hath answered with His blood.”

The believer may sin, as, alas! he does, and contract defilement; but guilt, in virtue of the precious blood, under the value of which he stands, is never imputed. If he does not judge himself and confess his sin, God will deal with and chasten him; for He loves His people too well to allow them to go on in sin; and in His grace He has made provision for cleansing these defilements by the

washing of water by the Word. (Ephesians 5; John 13) But while this is true, and should never be forgotten, we must never lose hold of the precious and momentous truth, that once cleansed by the precious blood of Christ, we are cleansed once and for all—made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, eternally fit for the presence of God.

E. D.

Usefulness

A question often arises about usefulness. Satan often beguiles by it. He may have suggested to John that he would be more useful if he were to compromise a little, and keep out of trouble for the sake of being free for his service to saints. Useful to whom? To God or to men? God may be able to show out more of His glory by laying men aside. The eyes of God rested on Paul a prisoner, seemingly useless (not even always allowed to write), as the field for the display of some of the greatest privileges of truth. The very point when your weakness seems to make you useless is often the very way in which God shows forth His glory. People think it strange that old Christians, useless ones, &c., should be left, and young active ones taken. Do not you be trying to settle God's house for Him; do not say, "What a pity for John to get to Patmos." The Lord wanted him there to communicate something that might serve His people to the end of time. A person may be in difficult circumstances, and you may have it in your power to get him out of them in the power of human nature. And you may do it, and find out that God would have had him in them, because then he could have borne testimony; and you ought not to have measured things by your love for him and your comfort, but by the light of God. We often act on a set of thoughts of which the cord is bound to our own humanity instead of God's glory.

G. V. W.

Fragment: the Waters of Marah

The bitter waters of Marah must be tasted when the salt waters of the Red Sea have delivered us from Egypt forever and ever. Put the wood of the tree, the cross of Christ, into our cross, and all will be sweet. “Crucified” is terrible work—crucified with Christ, joy and deliverance; reproach is cruel, the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt.

Fragment: Christ's Love

If we walk through the world with Christ's love filling the heart, there is not a single thing but what will awaken sorrow—the sorrow not of irritability but of love. Christ did ever the work of love, but with what a sense of the way in which death had come in! He was always sorrowing because He was all love.

Fragment: Cutting Away Hindrances to Growth

The Word of God can only cut away what is hindering my growth.

Fragment: the Source of Every Good Thing

I see the failure of the best things around, and unless one is with God, and knowing the source of every good thing, the heart gets depressed, and says, "Who will show us any good?" But God remains just the same, and I know where to look where only good can be found in Him.

Fragment: Confession

The practical relief to your soul is always the extent of your confession.

The Efficacy of the Blood of Christ

There is a further and slightly different aspect of the application of the blood in cleansing, and that is in its effect on the soul itself. It gives a PURGED CONSCIENCE. The difference between the two things may be thus represented: Cleansing me from guilt makes me fit to stand before God; purging my conscience makes me happy in His presence. There are several allusions to the purged conscience in the epistle to the Hebrews. "If," says the apostle, "the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" (9: 13, 14) Again, in contrasting the worshippers of the old economy with those of the present time, he says, "The worshippers once purged" (which the Jew never was, while the Christian always is) "should have had no more conscience of sins" (10: 2); and yet further, he speaks of "having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience." (10: 22)

Two questions then may be put to elicit the truth. First, what is it to have a purged conscience, or no more conscience of sins? and secondly, How is it to be obtained and enjoyed? A purged conscience is knowing that our sins are forever put away from before God, so that we can be in His presence happy in the consciousness that we are without spot or stain, in the light as He is in the light, in the confidence that, since Christ, who bore our sins on the cross, is seated at God's right hand, the question of our sins can never more be reopened. As another has said, "We have the purification not only of sins but of the conscience, so that we can use this access to God in full liberty and joy, presenting ourselves before Him who so loved us." This may even yet be simplified, if the reader is reminded that this purged conscience is in no way interfered with by the fact of indwelling sin. This we shall carry about with us until the Lord comes, or until death; but if we enter into the full character of the abiding efficacy of the precious blood of Christ, we may still enjoy uninterruptedly a perfect conscience, having no more conscience of sins, if we apprehend the truth, that by one offering Christ has perfected forever them that are sanctified. We would earnestly caution our readers not to confound these two things—the assurance of guilt being cleansed away forever, and the sense of sin because of our evil nature. They are entirely distinct; and through the wondrous grace of our God He has made provision, through the one sacrifice of Christ, to enable us, spite of the fact that we carry the old nature about with us, to be always happy in His presence, in the full consciousness that no cloud can ever more come between His face and our souls through the guilt of our sins. We have our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and that sprinkling can never be repeated any more than Christ can leave His glory and come down to earth, and die a second time on the cross.

How then is this purged conscience to be obtained? Simply by the hearty reception of God's testimony to the value of the blood of Christ. Hence the first part of Hebrews 10 is taken up with

showing on several distinct grounds—the will of God, the work of Christ, and the witness of the Holy Ghost—that the sins and iniquities of God’s people will be remembered no more, because they are forever put away by the one offering of Christ. Whosoever reads this Scripture, and from his heart believes what God there testifies, will enjoy the priceless possession of a purged conscience. He will be able then to sing

“How bright, there above, is the mercy of God!

And void of all guilt, and clear of all sin,

Is my conscience and heart, through my Saviour’s blood

‘Not a cloud above “not a spot within.”’

How is it, do you ask, that this truth is so little known? Because the teaching of almost the whole of Christendom ignores, nay, contradicts it. The consequence is that souls, instead of rejoicing in the sense of God’s love, are everywhere in bondage, and remain, as to experience, at a distance from God. Then listen to the opinions and thoughts of men no more, but come directly to the infallible word of God, and give Him honor by bowing to His own testimony to the everlasting efficacy of the one sacrifice of Christ.

In connection with this blessed truth, and indeed flowing from it, there is another; viz., that **ACCESS INTO GOD’S PRESENCE IS ENJOYED THROUGH THE BLOOD OF CHRIST.** We read, as soon as it has been demonstrated that the sins of the believers have been put away once and for all, “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,” &c. (10: 19) In the previous chapter we are taught that Christ Himself has entered by His own blood into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption. (9: 12) His own place therefore, at the right hand of God, is the result of the efficacy of His sacrifice. He was charged with our sins in His death; He bore them in His own body on the tree. If, then, He is now in the immediate presence of God, it is a plain and unanswerable proof that He has accomplished full and complete expiation; for if our sins were not gone, He could not sit in the glory of God. It was accordingly in the virtue of His own blood that He has entered into the holy place on our behalf. And this will help us to understand how it is that we have boldness also to enter the holiest by the blood of Jesus. Cleansed, made whiter than snow, we have the qualification for access, having no more conscience of sins, knowing that every question concerning them has been finally settled; and filled with the sense of the love and the grace from which so great blessings have flowed, we advance with boldness, with holy liberty and joy, inside the rent veil; we stand there in the full light of the blazing holiness of God’s throne without doubt or fear, and, prostrating ourselves before Him, our hearts find a blessed relief as we meditate upon that wondrous death, which has opened the way for us into God’s presence, in thanksgiving, adoration, and praise.

We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and God would have us there. It is the delight of His heart to have us there in His own presence. It is the only place of our worship. Let us then be satisfied with no other, and let us for the glory of God refuse any teaching that would limit the efficacy of the precious blood of Christ. For this privilege of entering into the holiest is no heritage of a chosen few; it belongs without exception to all believers. The address is to the “brethren,” to all the people of God. We must not, therefore, on any account, allow this truth to be frittered away. Nay, in the presence of the claims of a human sacerdotalism on every hand, claims

which are being pressed with ever-increasing energy, we must contend for this holy privilege of all God's saints. The whole truth of Christianity, as well as the efficacy of the atoning sacrifice, is bound up with it. To give it up in ever so small a degree is to go back to Judaism; to maintain it is to proclaim the virtue of the precious blood of Christ, the eternal efficacy of His one atoning sacrifice.

We are also REDEEMED BY THE BLOOD OF CHRIST. This is repeatedly set forth in the word of God. "In whom we have redemption through His blood," &c. (Ephesians 1:7) "Forasmuch as ye know," says Peter, "that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." (1 Peter 1:18,19) The Lord Himself expresses the same truth when He says, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life (for the life is in the blood) a ransom for many." (Matthew 20:28) The meaning of "ransom" is, a price paid for redemption, while redemption signifies the buying back, and consequently deliverance from a state of captivity or bondage. Redemption, therefore, effects a complete change of state, and thus we are reminded of what we were, and of what through grace, in the provision of the precious blood of Christ, we have become. This truth may be illustrated by the redemption (whatever the difference of its character) of the children of Israel out of Egypt. They were under the iron yoke of Pharaoh; their lives made "bitter with hard bondage" type of the natural condition of man. But God interposed on behalf of His people, and He smote the land of Egypt with plague after plague. At last judgment was pronounced upon all the firstborn, whether of man or of beast, in the land. The question of sin having been raised, Israel was as liable to the judgment as Egypt. How then could God righteously screen His people while smiting the Egyptians? The answer was found in the blood of the lamb, type of the blood of Christ, which by God's own command was sprinkled upon their houses. "I will pass through the land of Egypt this night, and will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and against all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgment: I am the Lord. 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." (Exodus 12:12,13)

But this was not all. The blood which on this eventful night screened them from judgment, secured everything. God, who was against His people on account of their sin, became henceforward for them on account of the blood. He therefore led them out with a high hand and an outstretched arm; and when they were terrified, as they saw the Egyptians pursuing after them, He bade them, by the mouth of Moses, to stand still and see the salvation of the Lord. (Exodus 14:13) Accordingly He parted the Red Sea, led His people through in safety, while Pharaoh and all his host sunk like lead in the mighty waters which had been a wall of protection, on the right hand and the left, to the children of Israel. Through the Red Sea they were redeemed, and the blood was the foundation of all. They were redeemed out of Egypt; redeemed from death and judgment, and from Satan's power; and on the other side of the Red Sea, having sung for the first time the song of redemption, they commenced their journey through the wilderness, as strangers and pilgrims, God's ransomed host; and finally, as such, they were brought through the Jordan into the promised land.

Believers also have been redeemed. Once they, like the Israelites, were in bondage "the servants of sin" (Romans 6:17), under the blinding influence and power of the god of this world (2 Corinthians 4:4), and taken captive by him at his will. (2 Timothy 2:26) It was for them, in this condition, that the Son of man gave His life as a ransom, His blood being the price paid for their

redemption. Hence it is that we read, that “by His own blood He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.” (Hebrews 9:12) Silver was used as a type of the price of redemption in days of old (Exodus 30:11-16), and on one occasion gold was given in the place of silver (Numbers 31:48-54), these being the two most precious metals, and employed therefore to signify that the redemption of the soul is precious; that is, beyond price. For “they that trust themselves in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches; none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him that he should still live forever, and not see corruption.” (Psalms 49:6-9) It is on this account that Peter contrasts typical redemption by silver and gold with the precious blood of Christ. For how precious must that be which secured redemption for all believers, so precious as to exceed all finite estimate. God only could provide such a ransom; for He only knew what was needed to effect the deliverance of His people. How, then, should it fill our souls with adoring gratitude as we think upon the unspeakable value of the blood of Christ, with gratitude to Him who gave the Lamb for the sacrifice, and also to Him who, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot to God!

It is then by the blood of Christ that we are redeemed. But what, it may be inquired, is secured for us in redemption? Already we are brought out of Egypt, out of our condition as sinners in the world; we have been brought through our Red Sea, through death and judgment, and delivered from Satan’s power, in the death and resurrection of Christ, and our death and resurrection in Him. As to our souls, therefore, we are now redeemed; but we wait for further blessings. We shall be carried safely through the wilderness; and, finally, redemption, which has been secured by blood, will be consummated by power in the changing into, or the resurrection of our bodies in, the likeness of the glorified body of our blessed Lord at His return; for when He gave His life a ransom for us, He acquired rights over us; He made us absolutely His own, purchasing us with the price of His own blood (1 Corinthians 6:19, 20), and in the authority of His rights He commences, continues, and completes the whole work of our salvation, never resting until He has brought us into the place where He is, and conformed to His own image, that we may be with Him forever. This is the redemption which has been procured for us by the infinite worth of the precious blood of Christ. (Continued from page 54. E. D.)

(To be continued, D.V.)

Spirit, Soul and Body and the Old Testament Witness as to Them

It may be asked, what do we know of their origin? and it is right that we should seek to know the meaning of what God has seen fit to write in His word. Neither intellect nor science can answer this question. These notes from Scripture on this subject have helped the writer; they may also help and interest the reader, if the Lord will.

Man, as God's creature, is made up of these three distinct parts. Like men, the lower animals are said in Scripture to possess both soul and body, but not spirit. In the word of God (Genesis 1), where alone we can read anything of the origin of this present creation, God has been pleased to instruct us as to this matter. "Let the waters bring forth the moving creature that hath life" (or, in Hebrew, "nephesh," soul); and again, in verse 21, "Every living creature that moveth" (or, every living soul—the same word). So also in verse 24, "Let the earth bring forth the living creature (or living soul) after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so." God thus created them by His word living souls (Advil nephesh) upon the earth; and verse 30 tells us that that class wherein there is (nephesh) "soul," includes "every beast of the earth, every fowl of the air, and everything that creepeth upon the earth."

But when we come to man, we read something different. As to all the other animals, God had but spoken and had called them into being. At the fiat of their Creator they had come forth; but He now consults as to the creature that is to have dominion. This is man. Neither the earth, nor the air, nor the sea is called upon to produce him. He is to be made, and made also in the very image and after the likeness of God. "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life (n'shahmah ghahy); and man became a living soul (ghahy nephesh)"—the same expression as we find used of the lower animals in Genesis 1:21. But what an important and twofold difference! First, man was, as to his body, God's own formation out of the dust of the ground—not, as they were, called into being by a word; second, he was, as and when he was thus formed, the receiver (from God still) of this "n'shahmah" of life into his nostrils. Thus the formation of his body and his inspiration, by which it is said he became a living soul (ghahy nephesh), are by no secondary means. Both are immediately from God; two things which we do not read of any of the lower creatures.

But further, "There is a spirit (rooagh) in man, and the inspiration (n'shahmah) of the Almighty giveth them understanding;" so says Elihu. But that the beasts have "no understanding" David tells us in Psalms 32:9, using this same word for "understanding." Again, he also says, "Man that is in honor, and understandeth not (same word), is like the beasts that perish." (Psalms 49:20) The prophet Isaiah also declares that they (the beasts) have not the spirit (rooagh). "Now the Egyptians are men, and not God; and their horses flesh, and not spirit." (Isaiah 31: 3) With men, therefore, the beasts partake both of soul and body, but not of spirit. As to the spirit (rooagh,) in man, it too (as soul and body are) is God's work. The first place we read this word "rooagh," in Scripture, it is applied to God. (Genesis 1:2) We read that "in the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth." Later, when the creation as it at present exists was formed, we read, "The Spirit (rooagh) of

God moved on the face of the waters.” Elihu also, who applies this word to the spirit in man (Job 32), applies the same word to God in Job 33:4. This spirit God forms in man. “Jehovah, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundations of the earth, and formeth the spirit (rooagh) of man within him.” (Zechariah 12:1) Again, as to this work of God, “Lo, He that formeth the mountains, and createth the spirit (rooagh), and declareth unto man what is His thought.” (Amos 4:13)

That both soul and spirit were not confounded, but were known and distinguished, we may learn from other passages of the Old Testament. Hezekiah said that he spoke in the bitterness of his “soul” (nephesh); but further adds, “In all these things is the life of my spirit (rooagh).” (Isaiah 38:15,16) Job says, “I will speak in the anguish of my spirit (rooagh), I will complain in the bitterness of my soul (nephesh).” (Job 7:11) Job also contrasts soul and spirit; the first being that of every living thing, and the second which is alone in man, when he asks the question, “In whose hand is the soul (nephesh) of every living thing, and the breath (rooagh) of all mankind?” (Job 12:10)

And as to the spirit being a separate formation of God in every man, and not a mere influence, we read of “the spirit (rooagh) of Zerubbabel,” and “the spirit of Joshua,” and the “spirit of the remnant,” in Haggai 1:14; of the “spirit” of Elijah (2 Kings 2: 15), of the “spirit” of Paul, and of the “spirit” of Tilgathpilneser (1 Chronicles 5:26) as well as of the “spirit” of Cyrus. (Ezra 1:1)

In one place only, where man is questioning about things existing “under the sun,” is “rooagh,” ascribed to beasts, and then it is by one who confesses his own ignorance of what he is writing about. He, himself wise, asks the question about it, “Who knows?” and without answering. (Ecclesiastes 3:19-21)

“The beasts perish” (Psalms 49), but as to man, both soul and spirit are IMMORTAL. This, found fully in the New Testament, to which I do not now refer, we find also in the Old. It is written, “God made MAN upright.” (Ecclesiastes 7:29) Of his threefold formation we have already spoken “Spirit and soul and body.” We may now look at what is immortal in him. Job, of whom we have already heard, who spoke of all three, “Spirit, soul, and body” (see Job 10:1,11,12), and lived most probably long before the writing of the book of Genesis, knew himself as one who would exist after death. In speaking of that event, and of the time when the worm should have destroyed this outward visible frame, he says, “Yet in my flesh shall I see God.” (Job 19:26) That is, the man Job, the complete workmanship of God, “spirit, soul, and body,” “in my flesh I shall see God.” For that which is destroyed by death (and even this, as to man, is only for a time) is merely this external shell, the tenement that contains both spirit and soul.

Daniel also may be referred to: “But go thou thy way till the end be; for thou shalt rest, and stand in thy lot at the end of the days.” (Chapter 12:13) Daniel speaks of Nebuchadnezzar’s “spirit” (rooagh). (Chapter 2:1,3), and of his own “spirit” (rooagh). (Chapter 7:15) This spirit, and the soul, and the body, formed the man Daniel, and this man will stand in his lot “at the end of the days;” the body may have long since turned to dust, Daniel still rests, and still awaits to stand in his lot in the end of the days, an end not yet come. The soul departs at death from its tenement. It is not affected by death. “As her soul (nephesh) was in departing, (for she died).” (Genesis 35:18) Here too Ecclesiastes is clear as to the future of the spirit, speaking now of man, and without doubt on the matter: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit (rooagh) shall return

unto God who gave it.” (Ecclesiastes 12:17)

It is by means of the body that the varied feelings and emotions of man manifest themselves. Some of these are ascribed to the spirit in Scripture, some to the soul, some to both soul and spirit. Thus the spirit (rooagh) is troubled (Genesis 41:8; Job 21:4; Daniel 2: 1), revives, or is strengthened (Genesis 45:27), is anguished (Exodus 6: 9; Job 7: 11), is endowed with wisdom (Exodus 28: 3; Deuteronomy 34: 9), is jealous (Numbers 5: 14), is sorrowful (1 Samuel 1:15; 1 Kings 21: 5), is contrite or humble (Psalms 34: 18,19; Proverbs 16:19;29: 23; Isaiah 57: 15;66: 2), is broken (Psalms 51:17,19; Proverbs 15: 13), is overwhelmed (Psalms 142:3;143: 4), is faithful (Proverbs 11:13), is hasty (Proverbs 14:29; Ecclesiastes 7:9), is haughty (Proverbs 16:18; Ecclesiastes 7:8), is wounded (Proverbs 18:14), is patient (Ecclesiastes 7:8), is grieved (Daniel 7:15; Isaiah 54:6), errs (Isaiah 29:24; Ezekiel 13:3) It learns too the humbling lesson that there is nothing under the sun for the “spirit” of man, but only “vanity and vexation.” (Ecclesiastes 1:14,17; 2:11, 17, 26, 4:4, 16; 6:9)

Of the soul (nephesh) we read that it departs from the body at death (Genesis 35:18; 1 Kings 17:21,22), as we have seen the spirit does in Ecclesiastes 12:7; that it blesses (Genesis 27:4,19,25,31; Psalms 103:1,2), it loves (Genesis 34:3,8; Song of Sol. 1: 7; 3:14), knows anguish (Genesis 42:21), has appetites or tastes (Leviticus 7:18,20; Numbers 21:5; Deuteronomy 12:15,20,21; Job 6:7;33. 20; Psalms 78:18), has lusts or desires (Deuteronomy 14:26; 1 Samuel 20:4; 1 Kings 11:37; Psalms 42:2;84: 2), hates (2 Samuel 5:8), abhors (Leviticus 26:43; Zech. 11:8), thinks (Esther 4:13), sorrows (Leviticus 26:16), is vexed (2 Kings 4:27; Job 19:2), is bowed down (Psalms 57:6), is troubled (Psalms 88:3), faints (Psalms 107:5,26; Jonah 2:7), is relieved (Lam. 1:11,16,19), is in bitterness (Job 10:1; Isaiah 38:15), is weary (Jeremiah 31:25), sins (Mic. 6:7), and therefore needs atonement (Exodus 30:15,16; Leviticus 17:11; Numbers 15:25), has to be afflicted while it is made (Leviticus 16:29,31), so also it needs redemption (2 Samuel 4:9; Psalms 34:22; 49:8, 15; 71:23), salvation (Psalms 35:3), and conversion (Psalms 19:7) These lists, which are not exhaustive, may serve to illustrate what, in chief, is attached to, or emanates from, both soul and spirit.

From the fact that Scripture nowhere asserts that the beasts have “spirit,” also that we have the passages quoted insisting upon the contrary, as well as from a careful comparison of these two lists, I think it is clear that the “spirit” is the higher part in man. It (rooagh) is also spoken of the Spirit of God. Man becomes like the beasts, if he has no understanding, as David says, and it is “the inspiration (n’shahmah) of the Almighty” (Job 32) (not given to them as it was to man) that is the secret of this understanding in man. The understanding, therefore, is connected with the “spirit” in man, and not with the “soul.”

I find the word (nephesh) “soul” used for the whole man just as it is often used now, in Genesis 12:5;14. 21; Exodus 1:5; Numbers 15:27,28, and in other places, but I have not found (rooagh) “spirit” so used for the man. How fitting, therefore, that we should find in scripture, as we do, that sin, atonement, redemption, conversion, and salvation; are all connected with it, not with “rooagh,” but with “nephesh,” the soul, for it is the man, spirit and soul and body, that has sinned, and that needs this power of God to be put forward in grace on his behalf.

Gathering up from what has been said of both soul and spirit in the Old Testament, it is not difficult to see that the eternal existence of man is taught in it, and was accepted long before the light of

the New Testament, as to these things, shone out in all its fullness. If man is blind, he cannot see it, and then he may go so far as to deny (as some have done, and do still) that it is there. Even in his blindness he may teach that man does not exist forever, but there it shines, God's truth, nevertheless.

There is a solemn word in Malachi 2:16, where we read a final exhortation to the "spirit" (rooagh) which was led away through the "desires" (Genesis 3:6) and "affections" (1 Timothy 2:14) of the "soul." "Therefore take heed to YOUR SPIRIT, that ye deal not treacherously." "Vanity and vexation of spirit" ought to turn the man to God, ought to lead him to take heed, and to look above the sun for what he fails to find beneath it. But to deny the immortality of the soul or spirit, and the resurrection of the body, or, in a word, the eternal existence of the man whom God has formed, is thus to deal treacherously with ourselves and with God, and leaves still all the "vanity and vexation" there. "COME UNTO ME, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you REST." (Matthew 11:28) Blessed words, my reader; words of life and light, coming from Him who "made man upright;" words sounding amid all the wearying vista of this life for every poor sinner who will "take heed."

H. C. A.

Fragment: Difficulties Not Necessarily Obstacles

A difficulty may be a real one, but it is only for the unbelief of hearts that it is an obstacle, if on the path of God's will. For faith reckons on God, and performs that which He wills, and difficulties are as nothing before Him. Unbelief can always find excuses, and excuses, too, which are apparently well founded: they have only this capital defect, that they leave God out.

J. N. D.

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians

Of the fourteen epistles of Paul in the New Testament those to the Thessalonians are probably the earliest. His first great missionary journey (Acts 13, 14), undertaken in company with Barnabas, did not give rise to any letter from him that we are acquainted with; and to none of the churches then founded do we hear of his writing, even in after years. But part of the fruits of that journey is seen in the conversion of Timothy, Paul's son in the faith, who, being well reported of by the brethren at Lystra and Iconium on the occasion of Paul's second visit to those towns, then joined his company, to be ever after most intimately associated with him in the work. With Paul and Silas, Timothy was identified in the work at Thessalonica, and is mentioned with Silas in both letters to the assembly of the Thessalonians.

Thessalonica was the capital of the second government of Macedonia, which province had been divided into four parts, Philippi being the capital of the first. Here the Jews possessed a synagogue (Acts 17:1), which it would seem at Philippi they did not. (Acts 16:13) Arriving at Thessalonica, after leaving Philippi, having passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia on their way, they entered the synagogue on the sabbath day, where Paul availed himself of the opportunity, of which he was always ready to take advantage, to preach to his own countrymen the glad tidings of the grace of God. The Word was not preached in vain; for some of them "believed, and consorted with Paul and Silas; and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few." Amongst the Gentiles the work greatly spread; many were converted, and turned from idols to serve a living and true God (the contrast to all their idols), and to wait for His Son from the heavens. (1 Thessalonians 1:10)

What length of time the apostle remained here we cannot say. He preached in the synagogue on three different sabbaths (Acts 17:2); but it is likely that his stay in the town was longer than that, since the Philippians sent him help there once and again. (Philippians 4:16) Details, however, of this kind are wanting; but the character of the work, and the results of it, are in some measure made known to us, and this more especially by the notices about it in the first epistle addressed to the assembly in that town. Driven away by the persecution of the Jews, but leaving behind a goodly number of converts, Paul had earnestly desired to return to see their faces, and to perfect that which was lacking in their faith. That consolation was denied him; Satan hindered it. But Timothy had visited them by the apostle's desire to establish them, and to comfort them concerning their faith, lest by some means the tempter had tempted them, and the labors of these hearty evangelists had been in vain. Bringing to Paul a reassuring account of their faith and love, and good remembrance of Paul and Silas, "greatly desiring to see us," as he writes, "as they also to see you": "we were comforted over you, in all our affliction and distress, by your faith:" for now, "he adds, "we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord." (1 Thessalonians 3:8) Hence he wrote to them this letter, which is more hortatory than doctrinal in its character.

As the first of his epistles which is both inspired and canonical (for he may have written other inspired ones for aught we know; but they were never really canonical, nor have they come down

to our time), it is of especial interest to us, as it gives an idea, such as we have nowhere else presented to us, of the way the truth was received, the spirit in which Paul and his companions worked, and the hope which the converts had embraced, and clung to most firmly. Viewed in this light, it is well suited to be the first epistle which came from his pen, forming a kind of introduction to all that he subsequently wrote; for his epistles are all addressed to Christian converts.

Addressed "to the church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ," the apostle at the outset reminds them of the perfect security of the assembly. It was in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ. No power then of the enemy could destroy it. (John 10:28-30) Suffering as they were and had been (1 Thessalonians 2:14), and would still be (2 Thessalonians 1:57), this must have been most consoling. Writing to the Corinthians, he reminds those saints that the assembly at Corinth was God's assembly (1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1); for their spiritual state, as we learn from the first epistle (1 Corinthians 3), necessitated such a reminder. On their way, they entered the Thessalonian saints, against whom persecution was active, he both times reminds them (1 Thessalonians 1:1,2; 2 Thessalonians 1:1) of the assembly's perfect security; and tried as they were by the enemy's attempts to stamp out through persecution the work of God in the place, since neither false doctrine nor carelessness of walk had wrought their dire and withering work among them, the apostle had no need to blame them for anything. Encouragement and exhortation were called for, and this last of the simplest kind.

From chapter 1 we learn how the work spread. In chapter 2 we have unfolded the spirit in which Paul and his companions worked. In chapter 3 we learn of his encouragement about them by the visit of Timothy, sent there at his request. This is followed (chapters 4: 5) by exhortations, and the revelation about the rapture, the ministry then suited to their need.

Opening with the assurance that he could thank God for them, making mention of them always in his prayers, he states the ground for his confident thanksgivings on their behalf, and by the subjects taken up in the body of the epistle we may learn what must have been the tenor of his prayers for them. Their work of faith, their labor of love, their patience of hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, these three fruits of the divine nature (1 Corinthians 13) he could not forget, and these assured him of their election as beloved of God, "knowing," as he wrote, "brethren, beloved of God, your election." With them as with him, the truth of election was not a matter for argument, but to be exemplified. He owned it as a truth, and they showed that it was true of them, for ample and manifest proof had been afforded of the reality of their conversion. The gospel had come to them not in word only, but in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; for the walk of the laborers testified to the reality of the truth preached, and the converts became imitators of them and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction with joy of the Holy Ghost. (Chapter 1:5-7) Joy filled their hearts whilst persecution was stirred up against them. The life too, the labors, the sufferings of these evangelists, told powerfully on the converts, and produced corresponding results in them, which those around could see, and with which those at a distance became acquainted (vv. 8, 9); for the work was not done in a corner. What an advertisement was this! And clear was their testimony, and decided the stand which they made; for they turned to God from idols to serve a (not the) living and true God, and to wait for His Son from the heavens, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivers us from the wrath to come. (vv. 7-10)

There is a bond which binds believers together. That was owned and manifested by them. (Chapter 4:9,10) There is a special tie between the laborer and those who have received help and profit from his service. Of this last, the apostle now goes on to speak. Gentiles and idolaters these saints had been, now they had become endeared (■γεν■θητε) to Paul, Silas, and Timotheus, who were willing to have imparted unto them, not the gospel of God only, but also their own souls. (Chapter 2:8) Love working in their hearts moved them to evangelize these souls. Recently suffering for the truth's sake at Philippi, they nevertheless could not be silent when they entered the town of Thessalonica, so they were bold in their God, to speak unto them the gospel of God in much contention. How the heart of an evangelist is here displayed to us! And how did they work? Their exhortation was not of deceit, nor in uncleanness, nor in guile. They spoke as those pleasing, not men, but God, who trieth the heart. They carried on their work consciously in God's presence, so no honeyed words of flattery came forth from their lips; nor was covetousness a motive which was working in their hearts, nor of men sought they glory, nor any temporal advantage, foregoing what they might have claimed, because, as a nurse cherisheth her children, they were affectionately desirous of their souls, and labored day and night with their hands for the supply of their own bodily wants. In such a spirit did they evangelize. (Chapter 2:19) In what spirit, it may be asked, did they teach? Verses 10-12 give the answer. As a father does his children, Paul exhorted them to walk worthy of God, who had called them to His kingdom and glory.

Thanksgiving filled Paul's heart as he thought of these saints, remembering how they had received the Word, not gathering round him and his companions in labor, endeared though they were to the Thessalonian Christians, but receiving the Word as it was in truth God's word, which was effectually working in them that believed. What knitting of heart there was between Paul and these converts! How he longed to be with them again, but was hindered by the enemy! To that he had to bow. But his enforced absence did not diminish the strength of his love, and whilst it was enforced he was, as it were, bereaved of them (■ποφανισθη■ντες), though only for a time. "For what," he writes, "is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming? For ye are our glory and joy." (Chapter 2:19,20) He looked across the interval between that day and the Lord's coming to reign, and was comforted. But what affection he had for them! For a time the enemy might seem to triumph, and those he was using as tools might frustrate the desires of Paul's heart. But where will be Satan and those instruments of his malice when the saints and Paul meet together in the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ?

Meanwhile, his heart yearning over them, he sent Timothy to encourage them lest by any means the tempter had tempted them, and his labor had been in vain. (Chapter 3:5) Learning from Timothy that they stood firm, their faith and love manifested, and their desire to see Paul unabated, he was comforted in all his troubles, and turned to God the Father to open up the way for him to revisit them, which possibly was granted to him during his third missionary journey. (Acts 20: 1, 2) He desired to be with them to perfect that which was lacking in their faith. Meantime he gave vent to his desire for them, that the Lord would establish their hearts unblamable in holiness before God, even the Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints. And this would be effected by their increasing and abounding in love towards each other, and towards all men, even as Paul and his companions did towards them. (Chapter 3:12,13) How remarkably was the enemy really baffled whilst apparently triumphing! Sorrow and persecution, he could cause them and Paul; but a joy which nothing could extinguish those Christians experienced, and the

future, when his power would be broken, was only the more vividly presented to their hearts.

Paul's desires expressed for them, the needful exhortations follow. He had spoken of holiness and of love. As to both he would now remind them. Holiness in conduct became them, and he would enforce it. (Chapter 4:18) The debasing character of idolatry, and how it blunts the moral sense of men, these verses clearly demonstrate. Man becomes a slave to his passions, and seeks to satisfy them at the expense, if need be, of his neighbor, a brother. That would not do for the Christian. Moreover, he who in such a matter overreached his brother in Christ, sinning with his wife, despised not man, but God, who had also given His Holy Spirit to both; i.e. the offender and the one offended against. The indwelling presence of the Holy Ghost, which makes our bodies His temples, should restrain them from sinning in such a way. But if they did, the Lord, he reminded them, was the avenger of all such. Holiness enjoined, he passes on to the subject of brotherly love. Of that he had no need to write, for they were taught of God to love one another, and they did it, only he desired that they would increase more and more (chapter 4:9, 10) and be quiet, and do each their own work, walking honestly toward them that were without, and that they might have need of nothing. How he would have them increase and abound. (Chapters 3: 1, 2; 4: 1-10)

Love, the activity of the divine nature, was present among them, and they gave a proof of brotherly love unexampled in the whole range of the church's experience, sorrowing for their friends who had died in the Lord, fearing that by death they would miss the seeing and being with Him when He returned. To comfort their hearts as to this, the apostle explains, by a revelation vouchsafed for their benefit (chapter 4: 15-17), the order of events, when the Lord shall come for His saints All who sleep through Jesus will God "bring with Him" (chapter iv. 14), that is, when He appears in power to reign. How that is to be brought about, that the sleeping saints can come with Him, verses 15-17 explain. So these, if arranged in order of time, would come before verse 14, describing the gathering together of the saints, in order that they may come with the Lord. He whose they are (John 6:37; 17:10), though men may have forgotten them, will first think of His sleeping saints, and then of those still alive upon the earth. What a sweet thought is this! Those alive shall not go before those who are asleep; but both shall be caught up together in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air, and so shall they ever be with Him. With this they were to comfort one another. But what love had they manifested that they needed such comfort?

He had spoken of the Lord's return to reign. (Chapters 2:19; 3:13; 4:14) With that event times and seasons are connected; but of such he had no need to write. They had already learned from Paul about them, and what a solemn moment it would be for the ungodly, involving them in sudden destruction, from which they shall not escape. But the saints could not be taken unawares by that day; they were all sons of light, and sons of day. That day could not dawn on earth without them. Were they then to be careless as to their walk? On the contrary, they were to exhibit what it is to be sons of the day, and of light. Hence, though that day had no terrors for them, the certainty of its coming was to have power over them whilst still upon earth. "Therefore," he adds (for all Christians need the exhortation), "let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober. For they that sleep sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night. But let us, who are of the day, be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love; and for an helmet, the hope of salvation. For God hath not appointed us to wrath, but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him. Wherefore," he concludes, "comfort yourselves together, and edify one another, even as also ye do." (Chapter

5:6-11)

With a few more admonitions he closes. They were to know them that labored among them, and were over them $\pi\rho\iota\sigma\tau\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$ (see Romans 12:8; 1 Timothy 5:17) in the Lord, and admonished them, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. This exhortation evidences the nonexistence of an ordained ministry at Thessalonica, though it clearly supposes the existence of ministry, whether in the Word or in other ways, actively at work in their midst. Further, it was the concern of all to maintain order amongst those composing the assembly, to care for those who specially needed to be cared for (vv. 14, 15); and in addition to this they were warned not to quench the Spirit, nor to despise prophesyings. Such an exhortation evidenced a freeness of ministry among them to which Christians have for centuries been strangers.

As regards the saints individually, they were to rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in everything to give thanks; proving, too, all things, holding fast that which is good, and abstaining from every form of evil. If then the Holy Ghost was free to minister the Word by whomsoever He chose, it was incumbent on the saints to prove or try that which was set before them as truth. Then with a prayer for their sanctification in body, soul, and spirit, and with a desire expressed for an interest in their prayers, and an injunction to have the epistle read to all the holy brethren (for it concerned them all), the apostle closes with part of that formula afterward to be known as the token that an epistle which had it proceeded from him. A letter this was, then, of exhortation and encouragement, suited to the condition in which these saints were found. For exposition of doctrine we should look elsewhere; yet it may interest the reader to be reminded of some of the doctrines set forth, or referred to in it. Clearly the saints knew their souls were saved; for they were waiting for God's Son from heaven—a hope which cheered them. But final salvation was a different matter; for that they were looking, as the apostle reminds them. (1: 9) The indwelling of the Holy Ghost, God's gift to believers, was no unknown truth to the saints. (Chapter 4:8) The Lord's return to reign they knew well about. (Chapters 2: 19; 13; 5:13) To see Him was their desire (chapter 1: 10), and to be with Him would be their delight. (Chapter 13) A ministry unordained by man existed in their midst (chapter 5:12, 13), and freedom of ministry in the Word they were exhorted in no way to hinder. (Chapter 5:19,20) The coming of the Lord, too, to take up His saints before He comes to reign they were taught about by this epistle (chapter 4: 15-17), and what effect His return to reign will have on the ungodly then alive, they had personally learned from the apostle. (Chapter 5:2,3) Truths these are, known then; but by how many of God's children in these days are they still really unknown, and by some even resisted! It is no secret that many still refuse to accept the truth of the personal return of the Lord to reign. Many too have learned little about the Holy Ghost dwelling in the believer. To how many, we might ask, of the saints in Christendom is the exhortation to quench not the Spirit almost a dead letter?

C. E. S.

By Christ Redeemed

By Christ redeemed, in Christ restored,
We keep the memory adored,
And show the death of our dear Lord,
Until He come.

His body given in our stead,
Is shown by this memorial bread;
And so our feeble love is fed,
Until He come.

His fearful drops of agony,
His lifeblood shed for us we see:
The wine shall tell the mystery,
Until He come.

And thus that dark betrayal—night
With the last advent we unite
The shame, the glory—by this rite,
Until He come.

Until the trump of God be heard,
Until the ancient graves be stirred,
And with the great commanding word,
The Lord shall come.

O blessed hope! with this elate,
Let not our hearts be desolate,
But strong in faith, in patience wait,
Until He come.

Pure Minds Divinely Stirred

None of the apostolic writings are fuller of practical admonition than are those of Peter. In the epistles of Paul we have frequently one-half or more of doctrinal teaching constituting his thesis, followed by exhortations founded thereon. But in Peter's two epistles, after the introduction, which in the first occupies but twelve verses, and in the other only four, the hortatory portion begins, and constitutes the subject-matter, while doctrinal truth and denunciations of evil follow in its train.

The exhortations open in the first epistle with the stirring word, "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind," the "wherefore" being the point of impact between the striking and powerful statements of the antecedent verses and the beloved saints to whom he wrote. Begotten again according to abounding mercy, kept by divine power along the wilderness way, having already the salvation of their souls, and waiting for their amaranthine inheritance in the heavens, they were subjects of a ministry and depositories of a line of truth, which, embracing the sufferings of Christ and the resulting glories, were what prophets had "sought out and searched out," and angels had desired to look into. These things, so long concealed in the germ, had now blossomed in the gospel which they had received in the power of the Holy Ghost come down from heaven. Reciting these salient and blessed facts which changed the whole current of their "conversation," both nationally and religiously, but which equally pertain to us, the apostle brings forward his "wherefore" with herculean force. What indeed might not be enforced in high exhortation upon such premises?

"Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind" beautiful word for the Christian pilgrim. Diligence, devotedness, and unworldliness, are all implied in the girded loin. The loose flowing robes of the East would obstruct a man in labor, impede him in walking, and certainly contract injury or defilement over rough or dirty ground. Hence the necessity for a girdle, essential to secure the robe when any great work was in hand or an arduous journey taken, and more especially when the path was rugged, thorny, or defiling. How fitting then in its moral application is the exhortation to use the girdle, which, be it said, is ever in Scripture expressed as righteousness, faithfulness, or truth. How could we allow our robes to flow in such a scene as this, wet, as we may say, with the blood of Christ crying from the ground? Oh, for girded loins! Is it not a time for diligence, seeing that on the one hand the fields are white unto harvest, and on the other the sheep have but little pasture? Is it not a time for devotedness when "all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's?" and Paul's doctrine and manner of life are equally an offense. Is it not a time for unworldliness when more and more palpably the world exerts its every effort to be happy without Christ, so that what is not unmitigated evil is religious worldliness, worldly religiousness, or Christ less Christianity?

"Be sober," or self-restrained. What a truly needed word is this! How many there are who know deliverance from their sins, and deliverance from this scene, but who know not practical deliverance from dominant self. Self-allowance is closely akin to self-assertion. On the other hand, self-judgment is the parent and the power of self-restraint. Every germ of self-allowing or self-asserting is in principle disloyalty to Christ. The true heart loves to confess there is no word

truer and few more comforting than this, that we are not our own, but bought with a price.

Hope on, perfectly or steadfastly. Diligence and sobriety are here followed with confidence. Hope unto the end signifies fully, perfectly, the full assurance of hope (Hebrews 6:11); hope which maketh not ashamed. Be it remarked that the New Testament sense of hope is never uncertainty, but immature or deferred certainty. Confidence, therefore, characterizes it as much as expectation; and thus, instead of being in doubt and uncertainty, in quietness and in confidence is our strength. The world has its hopes, but they are so steeped in uncertainty that the word hope has become almost synonymous with doubt; whereas the believer is so 'confident as to that which constitutes his hope, that he can say, "If we hope for that we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Romans 8:25) "The grace that is to be brought unto us at the revelation of Jesus Christ" we surely see not. With patience then we wait for it, because our hope is steadfast and blessed. He will surely come, He will not tarry; and oh, what tides of blessing will His presence usher in! "The grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

"He who, with hands uplifted,
Went from this earth below,
Shall come again all gifted,
His blessing to bestow."

The fourth thing is obedience "as obedient children." Not the obedience of a servant or a slave, but the obedience of a child; or, to put it more forcibly and more accurately, "as children of obedience," the opposite of "children (or sons) of disobedience," which we were in our sins. (See Ephesians 2:2, and 5: 6) Such obedience is never irksome when the heart is right with God and the will broken before Him. Could we conceive the will of the Father to have been ever irksome to Christ? Did He chafe under it? Nay; says He, "My meat is to do the will of Him that sent me, and to finish His work." If, then, we ever find His will irksome, let us get into His presence in confession, being convinced there is something radically wrong, which only self-judgment can correct. "Children of obedience" is a lovely term for God's saints, implying as it does that which is characteristic of us, and which we should sedulously cultivate, is spontaneous filial obedience. Who amongst us has not viewed with admiration the obedience of a loving and devoted child, unhesitating, unquestioning, uncalculating, and with the ready grace that stamps it as a service of love? "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3)

Finally we have holiness. That which marked us in our unconverted state was lusts and ignorance; that which is to mark us now is divine holiness. "God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness." (1 Thessalonians 4:7) And He who hath called us, being Himself holy, says, "So be ye holy in all manner of conversation," or in every bit of your deportment; for if it savors of any contravention of holiness, this is a libel upon our calling, and upon Him who hath called us. That which should characterize us as saints is, on the contrary, that having got manumitted from sin and become bondsmen unto God, we have our fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life. How striking and complete is the triple contrast in Romans 6:20 to 22.

(1) We were the bondsmen of sin, but are now the bondsmen of God.

(2) We had our fruit in things of shame; we have now our fruit unto holiness.

(3) The end of those things was death, but of this is everlasting life.

The Lord grant us to have girded loins in this day of general indifference and worldliness, and give us sobriety in place of laxity, confidence instead of the doubtful mind, obedience in place of self-will, and the scrupulous observance as saints of that holiness which becometh Himself and His house forever.

W. R. D.

Fragment: the Glory of Christ

One ray of the glory of Christ will at once wither up all the defiled glory of this world like an autumn leaf.

Fragment: Dwelling in Christ Produces Quietness

One great evidence of my dwelling in Christ is quietness. I have my portion elsewhere, and I go on.

Fragment: Owning the Word of God

Owning the word of God is owning God in this world as He has spoken.

Occupy till I Come

Few portions of Scripture contain fuller instruction as to God's present ways than this parable. Its object is disclosed in the opening verse, where we learn that Jesus spoke it "because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear." Just afterward, as he entered Jerusalem, His disciples hailed Him as King, saying, "Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord." (v. 38) They expected, as the two disciples on the way to Emmaus declared, that He would at that time "have redeemed Israel" (Luke 24:21), and that the kingdom of God would thus be manifested. We see, indeed, from Luke 17:20,21, that the kingdom had already come, but it was not yet with outward show or "observation." It was even then "among" them, but neither then, nor now, as a visible kingdom, recognizable by the world. The real "children of the kingdom" may recognize it in its present hidden form; others in Christendom may acknowledge it as a kingdom in word, but with no true sense of God's sovereignty. The rest of the world can see in it nothing but a religious profession, with no character of a kingdom about it.

While, then, the kingdom of God, in the veiled form in which it now exists, had already come, it had not then, nor indeed has yet, appeared, or been manifested, and it was to check the eager anticipations of the disciples as to its immediate appearance that this parable was spoken. In it, therefore, the Lord details what is to happen before that appearing for which they were looking should take place. He Himself, seen here under the figure of the nobleman, was to go into a far country—in fact, to leave the world for heaven—there to receive the kingdom, and having received it, to return. Meanwhile, those who denied His rights—the Jews especially, but also the world as a whole—not only rejected Him in person while here, but "sent a message after Him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." (v. 14) Such a message was the stoning of Stephen, and the persistent refusal to hear the testimony of the apostles and of the Holy Ghost after Christ's departure. This is, and has been, the attitude of the world as a whole, and of the Jews in particular, towards Jesus since He "sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;" and this will be their attitude as a nation till He comes again. He will then return, having had the nations given Him as His inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession; and those who would not that He should reign over them will be dealt with in judgment.

But between His departure and His return there is, besides the citizens who rejected Him, another class of persons called His servants. These, though left among the citizens, are clearly of a different class. They are in the city to care for their Lord's things entrusted to their charge. While the citizens reject Him as their King, these own His authority; while the citizens have no thought of His return, these occupy till He comes. These servants, then, represent Christendom, those who, in name at least, acknowledge the authority of the rejected Lord. Is it not startling to contrast this picture of the responsibility of the Christian professor with the thought which even true believers commonly cherish as to their place in the world? What is spoken of here is no limited class, specially set apart as ministers or servants. The responsibility pointed out is the common responsibility of Christendom; and surely it is impossible to look at Christendom in the light of the responsibility here disclosed, without a sad sense of its utter failure to execute the charge with

which it has been entrusted. Nevertheless, the responsibility of the professing "Christian world" is to occupy for Christ till He returns; and according to this responsibility it will be judged.

By the mass indeed of nominal Christians the charge is simply disregarded. If the pound is not thrown away, or the very name of Christian abandoned, this is all that can be said. Hard thoughts of God are entertained; His gifts forgotten or despised; His demands regarded as unreasonable exactions. He is looked upon as "an austere man," taking up what He had not laid down, reaping what He had not sown. And yet man, with his usual inconsistency, while judging God as exacting more than is due, has taken no pains to earn, as it were, anything for Him. He is therefore judged out of his own mouth, and condemned as an unprofitable servant.

Leaving, however, the sad case of mere professors, let us ask to what extent we answer to the view here presented of the believer's responsibility. To how many true Christians is the thought present, "I am here for Christ, in charge of His interest in the scene where He has been rejected?" What would the world appear to one who had this conception of the place he was called upon to occupy? The cross, as the means by which sins were put away, is of course valued by all real believers, and in this sense they can and do glory in it. But Paul gloried in it for another reason, and saw in the death of Christ another aspect. To him that death was not only deliverance from sins, but deliverance "from this present evil world." To him that cross was not only the place where sin had been judged, but the means by which "the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world." He saw in the death of Christ the death of all, "and that He died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again." What complete separation from the world, what complete devotedness to Christ, do we see here! And yet this is only what becomes one who, in the light of Christ's own words, realizes the place he is responsible to occupy in this world. For must there not be a complete separation of heart and feeling between the servant who is truly occupying for Christ, and the world which has rejected Him? "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

It may be urged indeed that the citizens here do not represent nominal Christians who constitute the world around us. This is true; but if nominal Christians have become just as much "of the world" as the heathen, if Christ's lordship is just as little practically admitted among them as in the rest of the world, is the call for separation any the less urgent? Is the world any more allowable because it takes the name of Christ, while practically it disowns and rejects Him? If there is one rule of separation in Scripture more stringent than another, it is the separation from those who, while called by Christ's name, are walking in an ungodly fashion. If there is one scene over which judgment is impending with more fearful gloom than over any other, it is over this very Christendom which, on account of the privileges it has enjoyed, and the sad use it has made of them, is held as especially guilty in God's sight. The principle of separation, therefore, applies even with greater force to the believer in the world of Christendom around him at present than to the believer in the midst of Jews and heathen.

What the Lord desires in His people is wholeheartedness for Himself. This does not imply separation from the ordinary occupations of the world. But the question is, whether these occupations entangle the heart and become our objects? or whether, while pursuing these occupations, the heart is still free for Christ? Is getting on in the world what fills our thoughts? or

are we, while providing things honest in the sight of all men, really living among men and before men as those who are not their own, but bought with a price—as those who, being constrained by the love of Christ, are seeking, however feebly, to live, not unto ourselves, but unto Him who died for us and rose again? Few, of course, are called upon to preach Christ, but all are called upon to live Christ. And to live Christ involves taking His place in relationship to the world. “They are not of the world,” He said, “even as I am not of the world.” It is easy to put imaginary cases, and to ask where the line is to be drawn. The heart that is in communion with Christ, though it may not know how to lay down principles, will distinguish readily enough what will suit Him, and what would grieve His Spirit. Indeed it is only Christians who are anxious to mix with the world that have any difficulty in the matter. The world quickly enough discerns what is consistent and what is inconsistent in a Christian, and estimates without difficulty the value of the testimony given by a worldly believer. If the heart is really true to Christ it will unconsciously bear witness to Him, and separate from the world which knows Him not. The spirit and objects of the world cannot have a place in the soul that is filled with Christ. The pursuits and riches of the world will appear worthless to him whose affections are set on things above.

The character of the true servant will show itself in various ways. If to serve Christ is really the object, His own word and directions will be the rule of service. Who could suppose the servants of the absent Lord taking counsel with the citizens that had cast Him out, as to how they should care for His goods? Is it any better when believers go to the world, or resort to worldly principles, worldly wisdom, and worldly alliances, in the hope of furthering the cause of Christ? The power is of God, who does not need our wisdom as to the mode of carrying on His own work, but who does demand our obedience as servants. No truth is more needed at the present moment than that of the all—sufficiency of the word of God. Whatever, under the name of service, is not built on this foundation, is not service such as the Lord owns. There may, of course, be earnestness and truth of heart, which the Lord, does own, even where much is added which He could not sanction; but in these cases His blessing is on what comes from Himself, not on what comes from the flesh and the world.

There is another thing which will mark the true servant. He will be waiting for the coming of his Lord. If the heart is really estranged from the world and set on heavenly things, what expectation will bring such blessedness as the thought of the Lord’s return? The idle servant, whose heart was full of hard thoughts about his Lord, could of course entertain no bright hopes in connection with His coming again. To him the thought must necessarily be unwelcome. But what joy would the prospect bring to the heart of the faithful servant who had been living and laboring for Him during His absence! Are our hearts thus waiting and longing? Are we occupying for Christ during His absence, seeking to act in obedience to His word, waiting in joyful anticipation for His return?

T. B. B.

Fragment: Truth

We are only sure of the truth when we retain the very language of God which contains it.

Fragment: the Lord's Supper

The passover was the memorial of the deliverance out of Egypt for Israel. The Lord's Supper is the memorial not only of our deliverance, but of the love of Him who has delivered us.

Fragment: Do This in Remembrance of Me

When Jesus said, “Do this in remembrance of me,” He surely meant that it should be done; but by these words He only gave a motive, and did not establish an ordinance.

The Efficacy of the Blood of Christ

The New Covenant is founded and ratified in the blood of Christ. “This is my blood of the New Testament” (or covenant), said our Lord to His disciples as He gave to them the passover cup (Matthew 26:28); and we read also in the Hebrews of “the blood of the everlasting covenant.” (Hebrews 13:20) The force of these expressions will be best understood by a reference once again to the old covenant. Moses, when he had sprinkled the blood upon the people, said, “Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.” (Exodus 24:68; Hebrews 9:18-20) God thus confirmed His covenant with Israel at Sinai by blood—the blood of animals; but He has founded and made the new covenant immutably secure in the blood of Christ. By confirming the new covenant with the blood of Christ, God has declared not only its everlasting and unchangeable character, but also the priceless nature of the blessings which He has thereby secured to His people. How stable a foundation, moreover, God has thus laid for the confidence of His saints! In the olden time He often encouraged them to rest in the certainty of His word and promise; and in writing to the Hebrews the apostle speaks of the two immutable things in which it was impossible for God to lie—His oath and His promise—which afforded strong consolation to them who had fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before them; but even beyond these certainties He has sealed His truth as it were by the blood of Jesus Christ, His Son.

It is in the fulfillment of this new covenant, so ratified, that Israel’s hopes of future blessing rest. (Hebrews 8:6-13) At Sinai they rashly entered into the engagement of obedience to procure the blessings promised; but having failed and lost everything, God, acting in grace in pursuance of His purposes, and in virtue of the blood of Christ, will yet bring them into the enjoyment of all that He has promised. The new covenant, as such, is made, not with believers now, but with Israel. But all its spiritual blessings are ministered to us through the Spirit. Hence the apostle speaks of himself and his fellow-laborers as being “able ministers of the new covenant.” (2 Corinthians 4:6) As another has said, “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 Ghost and of divine righteousness in immeasurable and unending glory from a glorified Christ on high; liberty in the presence of the Holy Ghost, 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.” We enjoy these blessings now, blessings of a higher character than those promised to Israel, but in a future day God will cause them to enjoy every blessing specified in His word; but both we and they alike will owe everything to the precious blood of Christ.

In this connection, it should be pointed out that THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST HIMSELF, AS THE GREAT SHEPHERD OF THE SHEEP, is through the blood of the everlasting covenant. (Hebrews 12:20) This indeed was God's public testimony to its value—His declaration that the bloodshed in the death of Christ had made a full, adequate, and everlasting atonement for sin. Therefore He brought again from the dead the Mediator of the "better covenant," that all the objects thereof might be accomplished. Hence it is that as the Great Shepherd He will seek out and gather together the sheep from every land, in accordance with His own words to the Jews "Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one flock (not "fold"), and one Shepherd." (John 10:16) Thus the covenant, sealed by His blood, has been certified in His resurrection; the value of the blood securing all, and, finally, its entire and complete accomplishment.

There is another effect of the blood of Christ, similar to that of propitiation; but as it is in connection with the reconciliation of all things, it seems more fitting to introduce it here. We read, "And, HAVING MADE PEACE BY THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS, by Him to reconcile all things unto Himself; by Him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated," &c. (Colossians 1:20,21) The peace thus made, it must be carefully observed, is not the peace which those who are justified by faith have with God. (Romans 5:1) It is the peace of God's throne, the satisfaction of the claims of God's holy government, which has been made by the blood of Christ. Just as on the ground of propitiation God is able righteously to receive everyone that comes to Him trusting in it, so on the foundation of this peace He will bring back into order and harmonious relationships with Himself both things on earth and things in heaven. It is not persons, but things created things which will share in the blessings of reconciliation as well as saints. This reconciliation, as another has observed, "is not yet accomplished. Peace is indeed made, but power has not yet come in to bring back the whole into actual relationship with God according to the value of that blood." For this we wait; but the blood has been shed, and He who alone knows its value declares that peace has been made. Believers are already reconciled in the body of his flesh through death (the death of Christ); but the reconciliation of all things will not be fully accomplished until the introduction of the new heavens and the new earth. It is doubtless in virtue of the blood of His cross that the Lord Jesus will assume His power, and reign from the river unto the ends of the earth, when creation itself shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the liberty of the glory of the children of God (Romans 8:21); but glorious as His reign will be, and great as will be the blessings which this creation will at that time enjoy, evil will still exist, and, breaking forth under the leadership of Satan, will blight and darken the close of the thousand years. On this account judgments end all God's ways with this poor weary earth and with man; but thereon arises another scene, as perfect as God Himself can make it, wherein righteousness will forever dwell, "and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things have passed away." (Revelation 21:4) It is here that we behold all things reconciled, and the full and all-pervading efficacy of the precious blood of Christ; for all things are made new, and God is all in all.

We have thus traced some of the manifold effects of the blood of Christ. Space fails for the enumeration of all the aspects of its efficacy. We, Gentile believers, are made nigh by it. (Ephesians 2:13) The Church is said to have been "purchased with his own blood," or rather, as it

may be translated,” with the blood of His own; i.e. with the blood of Christ. (Acts 20:28) The saints of a later day will wash their robes, and make them white in the blood of the Lamb (Revelation 7:14), redemption being then as now through that precious blood. (See Revelation 5:9,10; correct reading) When Satan, moreover, seeks to compass the destruction of the saints of that day by accusing them before God, they are said to overcome him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony. (Revelation 12:10,11) All these things, yea, all that God in His grace has made us, all that we shall be when we are forever with the Lord, all the glories of Christ Himself which we shall share with Him as His joint-heirs, as well as the perfectness of the new creation, which will find its outward expression in the new heavens and the new earth, all these blessings and glories will flow from the efficacy of the blood of Christ. God Himself is the eternal source of all; but the blood of Christ was His own appointed way of fulfilling and establishing His own thoughts and purposes of love.

Surely, then, as these things pass before our minds, our hearts will be bowed afresh before God in adoration for the gift of His well-beloved Son. And as the blood of Christ ever awakens our highest praise while we wait for His return, so we find that the “Lamb as it had been slain” will be the object of worship in heaven. And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made them unto our God kings and priests: and they shall reign on the earth.

“Of the vast universe of bliss,

The center Thou, and Sun:

The eternal theme of praise is this,

To heaven’s beloved One:

Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,

That every knee to Thee should bow.”

And what of you, beloved reader? Are you under the shelter and infinite value of this precious blood? Let there be, we entreat you, no uncertainty on this point. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you.” (John 6:53) It is only they who “wash their robes” (as it should be read) that “have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.” (Revelation 22:14)

May God, in His infinite grace, grant that everyone who reads these pages may believe, and rest upon His testimony to the unspeakable efficacy of the precious blood of Christ. Amen.

E. D.

(continued from page 64)

Second Epistle to the Thessalonians

Between the dates of the two epistles to the Thessalonians there could have been an interval of no great duration, both having been written during the apostle's second missionary journey; for the tide of persecution, which had run so strong at Thessalonica, had not yet turned (2 Thessalonians 1:5-7); and Silvanus, or Silas, who was still with Paul (1:1), is not mentioned as working in his company during any part of his third missionary tour.

In the first epistle to the Thessalonians the apostle had corrected an error into which they had fallen regarding the sleeping saints. In this letter he corrects a mistake which was operating prejudicially on those then alive. They thought the day of the Lord was present (■ν■στηκε), not merely "at hand," as the Authorized Version renders it. (2: 2) He meets this error, first by showing in chapter 1 that could not be the case, for they were still upon earth; and, secondly, by reminding them, in chapter 2, of the apostasy, which must be developed ere that day can come.

Commencing with a recognition of their continued faithfulness to the truth, he tells them the effect that had on his soul. He could give thanks for them; for their faith grew exceedingly, and the love of every one of them towards each other abounded, so that he could boast of them in the churches of God for their patience and faith in all their persecutions and tribulations which they endured. (3, 4) Their work of faith, their labor of love, their patience of hope, he had written of on the former occasion with commendation; here he can acknowledge the continued growth of their faith, the undiminished fervor of their love, and their patience and faith in all that they endured. It may have been, as has been suggested, that their patience of hope was not so marked a feature as it once had been. His desire about it, expressed in 3: 5, would seem to confirm that. But if that was the case, the love of God at all events had not cooled towards them. This letter was a proof of it, and was surely calculated to strengthen, as probably was needed, that patience of hope in the Lord Jesus which formerly had so characterized the Thessalonian assembly.

What power the truth had over these saints! They could contrast their former condition when idolaters with their present circumstances as Christians. Then, as regards the world, perhaps it had been well with them; certainly persecution they had not known, and tribulation, which now harassed them, had not been their lot. Why not give up Christianity, and enjoy present ease and freedom from persecution? Such may have been, to some doubtless it was, the burden of the siren voice of the tempter. But none of them had listened to it. In an unbroken phalanx they maintained a front towards the enemy. He had not succeeded in detaching one of these simple but real souls from Christian ground, and from open and unflinching profession of the truth. "The love of each one of them toward the other abounded." A band of men, as firm through grace as a rock, had resisted all the efforts of Satan to penetrate their line of defense. No wonder that Paul gloried in them in the churches of God. It was a spectacle of no common kind; rare probably then, but how much rarer now!

Their present condition was patent to all. What did it portend? God, whatever men might be, was righteous. Their heathen friends might point to their sufferings as proof of the righteous

displeasure of the gods whose altars they had forsaken, and whose worship they condemned; and they might taunt them with the apathy of their God to interpose on their behalf. The apostle drew from their sufferings a very different conclusion, and here presented it to them. Their sufferings proved that they were God's people, and that rest would be their portion, with Paul and the others of God's saints then on earth, when divine judgment from heaven should overtake the ungodly in the world. So before enlarging on the signs which must precede the day of the Lord, he encouraged them with the assurance that it had not then come. If that day had really come, they would not have been still upon earth. Would Paul and the other faithful workers for Christ be involved in a judgment, which is to overtake those who have rejected God's testimony concerning His Son? Impossible, all will at once exclaim. The faithful when that day comes will be at rest. Hence the very sufferings of these saints were a proof that divine wrath would not overtake them. The day of the Lord is no myth. It will come, and judgment, unsparing judgment, will characterize it; but the judgment will be inflicted on the enemies of God, and not on His people. They knew whose they were. Thus, from their sufferings the apostle draws for them consolation of the most cheering kind; for their God was a God who judgeth righteously, and therefore would recompense tribulation to them that troubled them, and rest to His faithful though then persecuted saints, "when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Two classes of ungodly ones are here described; first, Gentiles who have not been evangelized; and next, those who, professedly God's people, have rejected the gospel of His grace. Suffering as they were from Jews and Gentiles, the apostle reminds them that both these classes will be objects of divine displeasure, and that forever, being punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power, when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be wondered at in all them that have believed, amongst whom these saints were reckoned, because they had believed Paul's testimony. With that hope in prospect the apostle prays that God would count them worthy of that calling, and fulfill all the good pleasure of His goodness, and the work of faith with power, that the name of the Lord Jesus Christ might be glorified in them by the constancy of their faith, and they in Him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

How the snare of the fowler was broken! Persecuting the saints because they were faithful, the devil attempted to ensnare them by the thought that they were involved in the fearful troubles of the day of the Lord, whereas their very sufferings were a witness to the contrary, and a proof, than which none could be stronger, that the day had not dawned on the earth. The effect of imbibing that error would be seen in carelessness of walk, of which some had already given proof by ceasing to work for their living, and casting themselves on the saints for support. (3:11) The watchful eye of the apostle detected, and pointed out the incoming of this evil; and knowing how deceitful the heart of man is, after setting them free from all fear that the day had come, or would come and involve Christians in the outpouring of the divine wrath, he prays for them to be kept on the road to the end. (1: 11, 12)

After this he enters on the subject of the apostasy, which must precede the day of which he had been writing. So he entreats them, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by their gathering together unto Him, of which He had written unto them in the previous letter (1 Thessalonians 4: 14-17), not to be shaken in mind, or to be troubled by spirit (i.e. a pretended revelation by the Holy

Ghost), by word or by letter as from Paul, that the day of the Lord was present. One learns how the hope of the rapture is a safeguard from the mistake into which they had fallen. But he does not rest contented with simply correcting it; he goes on to remind them, and thereby to instruct us, as to the characteristic features of the antichrist, who will be the soul of the apostasy on earth. There will be a man, an instrument of Satan, whom Paul here styles “the man of sin,” “the son of perdition,” and “the wicked,” or rather “lawless one,” who must be revealed ere the day of the Lord can come. Opposing and exalting himself against all that is called God, or that is worshipped, he will sit in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God; and energized by Satan with all power, and signs, and lying wonders, he will effectually deceive those who perish, because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved. This is the antichrist of whom John writes in his epistle (1 John 2:22), and describes at length in the Revelation. 11:1-7) Of this same person Isaiah (30: 33), Daniel (11: 36-40), and Zechariah (11: 15-17) had previously written; and to him the Lord Jesus Christ referred. (John 5:43) The prophets and the Lord viewed him in his relation to Israel; for he will be their king, and will be received by the ungodly part of them as their long-expected Messiah. By John and by Paul he is viewed in his relation to Christendom; for he will be concerned with both. As king of the Jews he will be reigning outside the bounds of the Latin Empire, that part of the old Roman Empire within which the imperial power will again for a time as such have sway. But though outside the limits of the old Latin Empire, he will be the instrument for upholding over the Jews as a protection the sheltering power of the beast (Revelation 13:1-10), who will be the political head of the revived Roman Empire, and also its last ruler. In Christendom he will appear as the false prophet, the leader of the revolt against all that men have venerated or worshipped, setting up the image of the beast in the temple at Jerusalem for all to worship. (Daniel 9:27; 12:11; Matthew 24:15; Mark 13:14)

It is of this one, the false prophet, that Paul writes to the Thessalonians, and not of the first beast; for he will work miracles by Satanic power, which the political head of the empire will not do. As the antichrist he will personify Christ. So he will turn men’s eyes to one greater than himself, as the Lord on earth spoke of the Father; and will work miracles in support of his teaching, as the Lord Jesus did. Such is the one who is to come, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of His mouth, and destroy with the brightness of His coming. Clearly, then, till this one appears the day of the Lord cannot come. He had not appeared when Paul wrote. He has not appeared yet, so that day is still future.

But how is it that 1800 years have rolled by, and still the appearance of antichrist is an event to be awaited? The mystery of iniquity, or lawlessness, was working when Paul wrote. Why has the lawless one, by whom it will be brought to a head, been so long in coming? The Thessalonians knew; for Paul had evidently told them. (v. 6) But by none of them, as far as we know, has that knowledge been handed down. Yet we may surely understand what it is of which he writes. He writes of a power (τὸ κατὰχρον) “what withholdeth,” and of a person (ὁ κατὰχρον) “he who letteth.” We believe the power and the person here spoken of are one and the same—the Holy Ghost, by whose continued presence in the assembly of God the development of Satan’s plans are delayed. But taken out of the way as He will be, when He goes with the Church at the rapture of the saints, God will cease for a time to dwell on earth, to hinder by His presence the full power of Satan being displayed. The Church must be taken out of this scene of judgment, as the Lord promised the Philadelphian saints (“I will keep thee out of (ὁ) the hour of temptation,” Revelation 3:10), ere the

antichrist can openly display himself as the tool of the enemy.

The day of the Lord, then, will be a day of judgment, in which those will be involved whom antichrist has deceived, and willingly deceived. But what were those really to whom Paul wrote? They were beloved of the Lord, chosen by God from the beginning to salvation by sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth, and called by the gospel to the obtaining the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2: 13, 14) How marked is the difference between them and those in Christendom who will be involved in the coming judgment, as the contrast between verses 10-12 and 13, 14 shows. Could the beloved of the Lord be objects of His unsparing judgment? The refutation of the error was complete. Exhortations only were wanting, and such he gives them.

They were to stand fast and hold the traditions (παράδοσις) which they had been taught, whether by word or by his epistle. It was apostolic teaching, derived direct from the apostle, whether orally or in writing, which they were to hold. Men in later years have invented traditions about that which the Church held, or taught. It was not of such that Paul wrote. The traditions to which he points them are the truths, the teaching he had delivered to them. (3:6) An instance of such we have in 1 Corinthians 11 He delivered (παρέδωκα) to them that which he had received of the Lord. The institution of the supper, as there set forth, was a tradition the Corinthians received from the apostle. The injunction too that no one should give way to idleness, instead of supporting himself, was a tradition the Thessalonians had already received. Such were apostolic traditions. Such they were to keep. Besides that, he desired on their behalf an interest in himself and his work, which would be evidenced by prayer for him; and that they should be led into the love of God, so needful and helpful in times of trouble. (Jude 20), and into the patience of Christ, they waiting on earth for that for which He was waiting in heaven.

Next brethren walking disorderly are noticed. Such were those who walked not after the tradition received from Paul. In subjection to apostolic precepts characterizes such; illustrated in this assembly by those who cast themselves on the bounty of their brethren, instead of laboring for their own support. From such he commands the saints to withdraw. Such too he commanded to cease from their ways. (3: 6, 12) Putting out was not here called for. Withdrawal from them was the suited action which he both inculcated, and would have enforced. Would any among them refuse compliance with the apostle's commands and exhortations (3: 14), with such an one they were not to keep company, but were to mark him that he might be ashamed, and an admonishment administered to him as a brother would be the suited treatment for such a character in their midst. We should observe that the treatment prescribed in verse 14 would apply both to the one who walked disorderly, and to any who did not withdraw from him as well. Then closing with prayer that they might have peace always in every way the gift of the Lord of peace, he authenticates this epistle by his salutation, the token by which they would know each one of his letters. Was the token the formula, "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all," written with his own hand? With this all his epistles are marked, either amplified, as in 2 Corinthians 13:14, or contracted, as in Hebrews 13:25; and during his life no other writer in the New Testament closed his communications in the same way. It had been needful to authenticate his writings (2: 2), so he did it with his own hand.

C. E. S.

Note on Propitiation

To remove all doubt as to the truth of propitiation, it should be distinctly stated that while it is true that God did not need to be reconciled to us (2 Corinthians 5:18,19), and that while He in His grace and love provided all that was necessary in the propitiation to meet His holy claims on the sinner (Romans 3:25, 1 John 4:10), yet that He absolutely required the propitiation as the alone ground on which He could righteously meet and justify the sinner. (Romans 3:25: 1) Moreover, while God has Himself provided the propitiation, He meets the sinner in His perfect and blessed grace in Christ's upon the ground of his being guilty so as to need it, so that his conscience should be exercised according to God's estimate of his state.

When it is sometimes said that God did not need to be propitiated, it should be understood as meaning that He did not need to be moved or disposed to act in grace toward us; for, indeed, He "commended His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Romans 5:8) The truth is, God could not, consistently with all that He is, receive and justify the sinner until propitiation had been made; for it was that alone which met His claims upon guilty men, and this propitiation was made only by the blood of Christ. To ignore or deny this would be to undermine, as far as man could do it, the very foundations of God's holy throne.

The Editor

The Cross of Christ

If we come to the cross, we must come by our wants and sins. No one comes truly unless he comes as a sinner, whose sins brought him there. But when we pass through the rent veil into the presence of God in perfect peace through the efficacy of the work He accomplished, and look back at the cross by which we came, in contemplating it in a divine way, we find that the cross then has in it a glory and excellency all its own, of which everything in God's ways is the result, even the new heavens and the new earth. God was perfectly glorified in it. It was the climax of good and evil. All was met there. We must come to the cross as sinners to find the good of it; but if we have found peace by it, coming into God's presence reconciled, it is everything we shall see forever. We never shall forget the Lamb that was slain. But still we can contemplate it in a divine way. I get in the cross the perfectness of man's sins, positive enmity against God present in goodness. Nothing would do for man but to get rid of Him. "Him ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." "If I had not come and done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin," then they would have been justified in rejecting Him; "but now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father." There I get the extreme of man's wickedness. When God was presented in goodness, it only drew out his hatred. The power was present in Christ to meet all the effects of sin by His word. The manifestation of it drew out the enmity of man's heart against Him, and they crucified Him. There you get all that man is brought out in the presence of God. He had broken the law before, and now God had come in in perfect goodness and power (power that could remove all their distresses); but it was God's power, and they would not have it, they crucified Him. On the other hand, we see there all the power of Satan; therefore it says, "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out." They were all led by him against Christ. "This is your hour, and the power of darkness." He had overcome him in the temptation in the wilderness. It is said in Luke, "He departed from Him for a season." Now He says, "The prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me." He who had power over the earth (for Satan was really the prince of this world) had come back, and succeeded in moving up the hatred of man's heart against Him.

But now see the absolute perfectness of the second Man: "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do." I get in man (more than man) perfect love to the Father, and perfect obedience; and when He had the dreadful cup to drink (mark the absolute need there was of it). O that perfect obedience and love to the Father made good in the very place where He stood as sin. On the other hand, in the cross I find God's infinite love and grace abounding over sin: perfect love, giving His Son for us; and then at the same time perfect righteousness judging against sin, and God's majesty vindicated. "It became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings." I see thus perfect evil in man and Satan: perfect good in man (but He was God), and perfect love in God, and righteousness in God against sin when it was met as such, all brought out in the cross; evil and good meeting there. And it is what has laid the immutable foundation in righteousness for all that will come in in goodness and

blessing in the new heavens and new earth, resting not upon responsibility, but upon the accomplishment of the work, the value of which never can be known.

The more we think of the cross (we have come as sinners needing it; but as Christians reconciled to God we can sit down and contemplate it) we see it stands totally alone in the history of eternity. Divine glory, man's sin, man's perfectness, Satan's evil, God's power and love and righteousness, all were brought out and met there. Accordingly it is the immutable foundation of man's blessing, and of everything that is good in heaven and earth. Then, when our souls are reconciled, we look at Him and learn of Him "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest." He sees that the world had given Him up, there was no rest upon earth. He searched with wonderful patience for a place of rest, but there was no such thing to be found. He knew it, and had tried it: the Son of man had not where to lay (not merely outwardly) His head, but to rest His heart; no more than Noah's dove found rest for the sole of her feet. "I looked for some man to take compassion, but there was none." Yet feeling this, it is just there He says, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke.... and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

I desire then, that while we rest in the blessed efficacy of the sacrifice, our thoughts should be formed by the Blessed One—that is the practical secret of going through this world. "He that eateth me, shall live by me." No doubt the taste ought to grow continually in us. There are the two sides of Christian life. If it is to give, courage, victory over the world, I look at His glory as in Philippians 3 There it is the energy that runs after to win Christ at the end, counting all else dross and dung. In the second chapter it is the other side, not the object, but His lowliness in coming down, is set before us.

J. N. D.

Words of Man's Wisdom

The most familiar and most forgotten of truths is, that the flesh in the believer is just the same as the flesh in the unbeliever. This was doubtless known, but certainly neglected, by the saints at Corinth; and as the evil which the flesh brings into the Church always resembles that prevailing in the world around, so here we see the vices of Greek society penetrating into the Corinthian assembly. License of walk and license of speculation distinguished the world in which these new converts dwelt, and license of walk and license of speculation were the evils which soon appeared in the church. The license of walk showed itself in their tolerance of moral conduct such as was not even "named among the Gentiles," in their drunkenness and indulgence at the Lord's table, and in the disorderly and lawless character of their meetings. The license of speculation showed itself in their skeptical reasonings about the resurrection, in their lax thoughts about identifying themselves with idol worship, and in their readiness to divide into schools of doctrine according to their preference for certain teachers.

They did not, in fact, see man's ruin. They believed, of course, as Christians do now, in the fall as a fact; but they failed, as these also do, to grasp the consequences it involved. They would have allowed that it alienated man from God, but that it so utterly blinded his moral nature as to render him incapable of seeing the truth of God they do not appear to have understood; and this is just the error of our own times. Many indeed think that the flesh wants mending, and is susceptible of improvement. Others, again, admit its moral ruin, and confess the need of a new nature; but how few see the total incapacity of man's natural wisdom to judge rightly in the matters of God. The Corinthians, overlooking this truth, brought their own fleshly wisdom to divine things, and the inevitable result was confusion and division. They were splitting into schools of doctrine, the germs of sects like our own; and the apostle declares that they were carnal, and walked as men.

It is for the purpose of meeting this tendency to exalt, or rather to allow, man's wisdom that the passage before us was written. Paul says that Christ sent him "to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect." How solemn this in the light of what we see around us! In how much of the preaching of the day is human wisdom not only allowed, but demanded? Preachers are sought after for their eloquence, their logic, their talents, rather than for the fidelity with which they present the truth of God. Simple subjection to Scripture is not up to the level of modern thought, shows that the preacher has not kept abreast with the progress of the age. But God's word is clear. The cross of Christ and the wisdom of man cannot go together. If the cross of Christ is to be exalted man's wisdom must be brought low. If man's wisdom is to be magnified the cross of Christ must "be made of none effect."

The reason is simple; "for the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." So widely do man's thoughts diverge from God's, that even in the most marvelous display of God's saving power man can discern nothing but foolishness. No wonder; for if God is to be known at all He must be known morally. But men's consciences shrink from looking at God in His moral character. Therefore, long ago, "even as they

did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind.” The very wisest became fools in the things of God. The most learned and philosophical people in the world owned their ignorance by raising an altar “to the unknown God.” Others groped in idle speculations, but all were equally blind as to what God was. This was according to God’s wisdom; for as He is holy and righteous, these are the first things that a sinner must learn, and these are just the truths to which natural wisdom can never attain. God must be known, not as fallen man can understand Him, but as He has revealed Himself; and this only the soul taught by the Spirit can comprehend. “The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.”

But when “in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.” For God’s salvation must address itself to man’s moral ruin, and this is just the fact which the pride of human wisdom will not and cannot recognize. Hence the cross becomes the scoff of the wise, the stumbling-block of the worldly-minded. Power and wisdom are the two things which man admires, but they must be power and wisdom suited to his own thoughts. The Jews looked for a messiah arrayed in worldly majesty and glory; the Greeks sought after a god suited to their own philosophical speculations. How could either, then, recognize or receive a Saviour who came clothed with humility and weakness? “For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and. the wisdom of God.”

It was impossible for the Jew, with no sense of the moral ruin of his people, to recognize the power of God in the One whom he had seen scorned and spit upon, scourged and crucified. It was impossible for the Greek, with no consciousness of sin or need, and seeking only for the gratification of his intellect, to discern the wisdom of God in the death of an obscure Galilean peasant who had been crucified between two thieves. To perceive the wisdom and power of God in such a scene there must be the complete giving up of all human pretension, the submission of heart to God’s righteousness, the consciousness of need as a lost, ruined sinner. It is only “unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks,” that the power and wisdom of God can shine out from such a background.

But to them what marvels of power and wisdom are here disclosed! Where was victory so complete and so far-reaching as that which was achieved when this Man of sorrows bowed His head and gave up the ghost? The iron bondage of sin and Satan, of the grave and death, was forever broken; the veil which hid God from man, and kept man from God, was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; the righteous judgment of God was borne by the spotless sacrifice, and the fountain of His grace and love set free to flow out in streams of richest blessing to a ruined world. Such was the display of God’s power in Christ crucified; nor was His wisdom less conspicuous or less adorable. If it is in the Church that God now displays His manifold wisdom to the principalities and powers in heavenly places, where would that Church have been but for the hours of darkness passed by the Holy One upon the cross? There it was that the cunning and craft of Satan were turned to his own confusion, his seeming victory changed to defeat, Christ’s seeming overthrow converted into triumph. Thence, from that lowest depth, it was that He ascended up on high, led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men; for truly “the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.”

And this is always God's way, that "no flesh should glory in His presence." So it was when Jesus was in this world; for then the things of God were hid from the wise and prudent and revealed to babes. So it was of old. It was by the foolishness of blowing rams' horns round a powerful fortress that "the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days." It was by the weakness of Shamgar's ox goad, Gideon's three hundred, Samson's jawbone, that Israel was delivered, and the armies of the aliens were turned to flight. Everywhere we see God choosing "the foolish things of the world to confound the wise," and "the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty."

Such is, and ever has been, God's way. That man's natural wisdom is corrupted and useless in the things of God, and that God has poured contempt upon it, and chosen to work by that which the world's wisdom despises as foolish, is plain wherever we look. He would strip fallen man of all glory in order that He may make Christ Jesus to be to the believer "wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption." How worse than useless, then, to bring in the thing which God has thus discredited, to the preaching of the gospel, the teaching of God's truth, or the ordering of His Church. When brought into the preaching of the gospel, its effect is to make the cross of Christ of none effect; when brought into the teaching of God's truth, its effect is to cause strifes and sects, to substitute "philosophy and vain deceit" for that mystery in which "are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" when brought into the ordering of the Church, its effect is to displace the directions of Scripture for rules and forms of man's devising. Whether it takes the form of wisdom or ceremonial, of rationalism or ritualism, it is, as we see in the epistle to the Colossians, an intruder and disturber, from which those who are dead with Christ should know their deliverance.

There is but one rule for the new man, and that is the word of God; but one interpreter of Scripture, and that is the Holy Ghost. Here we have God's wisdom, and not man's; and if we would rightly understand it, we must do so by discarding man's wisdom altogether and taking the place of learners in God's school. If any man "seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wise." In an age when man's wisdom and science are exalting themselves against God, and even true believers are beguiled by their pretensions, it is well to see clearly the utter worthlessness of these things in helping us to understand the mind of God, and to grasp with firmer hand the truth of the all-sufficiency and sovereign authority of that Word which "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

T. B. B.

The Government of the Father

“And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear.” (1 Peter 1:17) This passage introduces us to the government of the Father, which, it may be observed, is not exactly the same thing as the government of God. The latter has more direct reference to the earth and the world—that economy of things from which we are morally delivered by the death and resurrection of Christ, that scene in which God’s throne has been usurped by Satan, and where the “rights of man” have displaced the rights of God. But if men of the world refuse Him His place of government as God, ought not we as saints with ready hearts so much the more to make space for the government of the Father?

In the fourteenth verse we get the beautiful term the Spirit of God uses in speaking of those who answer to His word; viz., “children of obedience.” All such will be found calling on the Father. He, in short, who has the Spirit of adoption, cries, “Abba, Father.” Well, the Father holds in His hand the sovereign administration of the affairs of His family, and grace and government go along together. It is ever so; for God is sovereign, and He must be. Because through grace God’s grace is so precious to us, we are in danger of losing sight of His governmental dealings—this government of the Father.

In the present day, the decay of filial piety and of reverence for parents has told upon us seriously, and those marks of the last days which Paul describes to Timothy “disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection” are becoming more and more pronounced; so that, even in the natural relationship, children’ rarely render, and parents as rarely expect, the honor and reverence which are not only morally becoming, but which God accounts to be due from one to the other. In result parental government is relaxed, and often the merest semblance of it prevails even in the families of believers.

Accordingly, in divine things the government of the Father is little recognized or understood. The thought of the Father has carried with it, and rightly so, the blessedness of a known relationship of the highest character, which blessedness has been enjoyed according to the degree in which the Spirit has been ungrieved and the affections divinely engaged; but yet in connection with this how little place has been given to the direct government of the Father in that peculiar sphere which is constituted by the saints in their relationship of children. To many such the very thought of government would savor of legality, and possibly be refused as anomalous. But it is an ever-abiding principle, that “the righteous Lord loveth righteousness;” and though grace be regnant now it is true, yet is it still further true that “grace reigns through righteousness.” While therefore our souls hold fast to the blessedness of this relationship in respect to the renewed affections, we must no less recognize that it demands of us a wholly surrendered will. If it be true that “mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have embraced each other,” then what God hath joined together may not be put asunder, grace and government may not be severed. When the loving heart and the broken will keep company together, the Father will assuredly find His delight in each. But He is no respecter of persons; all man’s pretensions must give way; He

respecteth no man's person, but judgeth according to every man's work. "His eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. The Lord trieth the righteous." (Psalms 11:4,5) What then? Then falls upon the opened ear the weighty exhortation, "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear."

What a mighty motive have we had before us! He who has called us has called us to the relationship of children; the Holy Ghost seeks to fashion us as "obedient children;" the children call upon the Father, who respects not our persons, but governs according to our works and ways within His family circle, administering there His own blessed will, that we may give no place to ours. What an appeal this makes to us to walk softly, retiringly, meekly, with guarded footsteps, giving no place to the will of the flesh! In God's government of the earth He is met by Satan's power as god of this world, and by the men of the world carried along in the strong current of utter godlessness. But the Father in His governmental dealings with His children is—alas, how often, met with the flesh in us—unjudged, uncurbed flesh—the allowance of which is seen in the working of the natural will, which is totally unfruitful toward God, and can only chafe under His government. What marvel if when this is allowed, the Father has to lay His chastening hand upon His child! Whom He loves He chastens, that He may not condemn with the world. And when the exercised heart has been fittingly broken down before Him, how graciously, in forgiveness of His child, does He remove His afflictive hand, and nothing remains but to reap in lasting result "the peaceable fruit of righteousness." (Note the word)

But in the words, "Forasmuch as ye know," we have coupled with this exhortation of Peter the divine basis of the ways of the Father with His children; viz., that we are redeemed with the precious blood of God's immaculate Lamb—the One who from before the foundation of the world was foreordained for this blood-shedding, but now is risen and glorified! Blessed ground upon which the Father claims from us the allegiance of beloved children, that He has redeemed us at the mighty cost of the blood of that spotless Lamb, who from all eternity was the Son of His love!

"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently." (v. 22) Their souls were purified in obeying the truth; this was light, divine light, illuminating their souls; their hearts were purified by faith; and now the apostle exhorts to love, that other thing which in Scripture, God Himself is said to be. Their souls were purified, they obeyed the truth, and had genuine love to the brethren, but he urged them to it afresh with purity and with fervency. "Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God;" it is of His nature, and comes from Him. Thus, when it flows forth from our hearts, it should have for its special objects those who are the special objects of His own love; and when in purity and in fervency, it is only the more like His. For we are born of God by the incorruptible seed of His own word, which liveth and abideth forever; while, on the contrary, all flesh is before God as transitory as the grass, and all its glory as fading and as fugitive as the flowers of the field!

"But Thy compassions, Lord, to endless years endure, and all Thy people ever find Thy word of promise sure."

W. R. D.

SIN existing in the world, to exalt oneself is ministering to it. It is far from God morally.

The Character of our Testimony

What is the character of testimony we have to bear in the present day?

There are certain principles which are alike as connected with testimony in all ages. There has been a testimony of God, and for God, from the beginning. Out of the ruins of the fall there were things that God would take up, and bring out a testimony for Himself. Then arises the question, who can bear testimony for God but God Himself? And those who are witnesses for Him are those who have learned that “all flesh is grass.” There is a certain word that is peculiarly dear to God—Son—the only—begotten of the Father. In Ephesians the Son is connected with the Father’s house and the Father’s bosom. That Son is to have a certain place which He would share with poor sinners saved by grace.

Look at the Son rejected on earth by Jews and Gentiles; and God saying, “They will not have Him on earth, but I will give Him a place at my right hand, and then I will send down the Spirit by which they can call me Abba, Father.” Think of that! I am set here, not to be saved, but to be a witness of the Father’s love to me in Christ. Seeing how Christ can say, “Abba, Father,” I can say, “Abba, Father.” God leaves you down here to show what a son of the Father is, what the Father’s heart is, what the Son of the Father is! If I am but to be a witness of the Father’s love to me in Christ, seeing how Christ can say, “Abba, Father,” I can say, “Abba, Father.” God leaves you down here to show what a son of the Father is, what the Father’s heart is, what the Son of the Father is. If I am not that, I am short of the mark. Testimony for Christ does not consist in separating from this bit of worldliness and that, but in manifesting the spirit of sons. If I am here as a witness, it is clear that the relationship has existed before. Your starting-point is, that you are inside the house. You are children, those whom the Lord Jesus can call brethren. Directly I begin with that (perfect liberty indeed), I say, who is sufficient for these things? I have my sonship made known to myself, and every step of the way must be in that spirit of sonship by the direct operation of the Spirit of God Himself. What we have to seek after, what to separate from, what the difficulties of the path, and what the joys, are four points to be considered in connection with this testimony for God. The Lord Jesus was separate from sinners purely and perfectly for God. When God is acting in us, who have bodies of sin and death, all the things around we find against us, therefore we are in conflict.

Testimony or witness is merely what we show out. What we have to show out is, that we have a birthright, and onward to heaven in our path God has to put down the little world SELF, which is making itself comfortable with things around and shutting out God. The testimony for the present day, then, is specially one of sonship; and another thing to be remembered is, that testimony must always be a real thing, because a witness is that which God is showing now in grace what we shall have eternally. We have to show the reality of this life which is in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The breaking down we get here as saved ones is all connected with that. To walk in simplicity as a child with a father my will must be refused. (Philippians 2: 13-15) For me to live is Christ; Paul was a dead man, bearing a living Christ. (Ephesians 4:10) It has been often remarked that a saint rejoices in the value of the blood at the beginning of his career, then he goes on to learn other

truths, and the blood is less prominent in his thoughts; but as he nears the end the blood is again the uppermost in his mind, and it is said this shows that the leading truth with which he begins is the one with which he ends, and other truths are spoken of disparagingly. But I believe it is in a different way the blood is looked at in the beginning and at the end of a saint's career. It is my value of the blood at first, it is God's value of the blood at the end, so that there is acquisition of new truth in this case about the blood.

G. V. W.

Sanctification: What Is It?

Sanctification signifies literally a setting apart to God like a vessel for the use of God in his temple. (See 2 Timothy 2:21)

The ground of it is the blood of Christ. (Hebrews 10:29)

The measure of it is the person of Christ. (1 Corinthians 1: 30)

The power of it is the Holy Ghost. (1 Peter 1:1,2)

The application of it is by the word of God. (John 17:17-19)

Sanctification is both positional and practical.

As to position, all believers are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus once. (Hebrews 10:10)

To all believers, Christ is made unto them sanctification. (1 Corinthians 1:30)

All believers have sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 1:2)

All believers are sanctified through the truth. (John 17:19)

All believers are sanctified through faith. (Acts 26:18)

As to practice, the apostle desires that the God of peace may sanctify believers wholly (oloteleis); i.e., entirely to the end. (1 Thessalonians 5:23)

The will of God was their sanctification, which is divided into four parts:

1st. Abstaining from fornication and uncleanness.

2nd. Positive practical holiness, which is the same word as sanctification in the original language.

3rd. Love to one another.

4th. Orderly walk, and working with their own hands. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-12)

The Lord also prays for the believers as to practical sanctification. "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." (John 17:17)

The epistle to the Hebrews is the great epistle on sanctification.

The object of the apostle in writing the epistle was to separate or sanctify the Hebrew Christians from everything to Christ. They were still clinging to Judaism, the Jewish religion, which had just crucified the Lord.

Chapters 1, 2, 3:1, 2, shows them to be sanctified brethren in association with the Son of God.

Chapters 8, 9, 10, shows them to be sanctified worshippers in association with Christ the glorified High Priest, the center of worship.

Chapter 12, they are disciplined to become partakers of the Father's holiness, because they were settling down in the world, and clinging to the earthly religion.

Exhortation, chapter 13:13.

Let us go to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach.

If a man purge himself from these (i.e. vessels of dishonor), he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and meet for the Master's use. (2 Timothy 2:21)

My reader, the first Adam and his descendants have set themselves apart to evil and the rejection of Christ. Christ, the last Adam, set Himself apart from all evil to God, and by His death and resurrection is now fully separated to God. Do you belong to Adam, or to Christ?

A. P. C.

Epistle to the Galatians

Galatia was evangelized by Paul during his second missionary journey. (Acts 16:6) He revisited it on his third missionary journey (Acts 18:23), strengthening all the disciples. On the first occasion he entered that province from Phrygia; for he started from Antioch to revisit first the assemblies established in Cilicia and Lycaonia. On the second occasion he passed through Galatia before he entered Phrygia, taking these provinces in the inverse order.

Probably it was after the second visit that he wrote his epistle to the assemblies of Galatia. We must say probably, because there is nothing known by which the exact date can be determined. But his language in chapter 4: 13-16 seems to throw some light on it, where he speaks of the warm way in which they had received him at the first, and how he had become their enemy because he told them the truth. Visiting the churches of Galatia a second time, his purpose was to establish them in the faith. Assuming that he found the germs of the evil, against which he writes, then working, his language in chapter 4: 16 would be plain. He had evangelized them on the first occasion. (Chapter 4:14) He had warned them on the second occasion against the teachers and the doctrines, which they had now openly espoused and accepted; and he was in consequence regarded as an enemy where once he had been hailed as a true friend.

But if we cannot fix definitely the date, we see clearly the purport and the need of this epistle, addressed, as was no other of Paul's writings that we possess, to the assemblies of a province the churches of Galatia; and differing from most, if not all, his other epistles, he wrote this with his own hand (chapter 6: 11), a proof of his love and earnest longing for their welfare; for he often employed an amanuensis to write for him. (Romans 16:22) "Ye see," he writes, "with what large letters" (not how large a letter) "I have written unto you with mine own hand." Another marked feature of this epistle is the style in which he introduces himself: "Paul, an apostle not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised Him from the dead." (Chapter 1:1) He writes with all the authority of an apostle, or sent one, but not of men; for he carried to the Galatians no message from men, however pious or eminent in the church, as he afterward shows. He was an apostle, but not by man. His official position was conferred on him by no human authority whatsoever. Apostles there were whose appointment dated from an earlier day than that to which Paul could point (chapter 1: 17); but from those, whom he owns fully, he received not his apostolic commission, nor the gospel which he preached. He was an apostle of Jesus Christ, one sent by Him, and by God the Father, who raised Him from the dead. An apostle of Christ he often styles himself, but here only does he add "of God the Father" also, and this addition is not without significance; for if the Judaizing teachers would attempt to draw a distinction between Christ and God, and to insist on the Galatian converts conforming to that which God gave to Moses, and through him made known to Israel (we refer now to circumcision—John 7:22), Paul would remind them that he was sent by God the Father as well as by the Lord Jesus Christ. He was an apostle from both. Hence no earlier revelations of the divine mind could override that communicated to him by God (chapter 1: 15, 16) and preached by him among the Gentiles.

But whilst writing as an apostle, and so in that position here standing alone, he connected all the brethren that were with him in his salutation to these saints, showing that his doctrine was such as others held. He then wishes them grace and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from this “present evil age, according to the will of God and our Father.” The Galatians were hearkening to Judaizing teachers, whose doctrines we read of in Acts 15:15. The apostle reminds them at the outset of this letter that they had to do with Christ in resurrection, who had, therefore, no longer any connection with Judaism or ordinances suited for men in the flesh. He had risen out of it all, having first died on the cross, there giving Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us out of the present evil age. They were putting themselves under law to be made perfect in the flesh (chapter 3: 3), whereas deliverance from sin’s power and the influence of the present evil age, as well as deliverance from guilt, was only to be effected by the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. These few words at the opening of the epistle dealt a deathblow to all that teaching, which they were so readily and injuriously imbibing.

But he would develop this, so he commences with reminding them first how he had received the gospel, beside which there was no other, whatever might be said or thought. What was now preached to them as gospel was different indeed from the glad tidings they had heard from him It was a different **■**τερον; gospel, but it was not another **■**λλο; for there are not, there cannot be, two gospels of the Christ. The Judaizing teachers were perverting the gospel. But if an angel from heaven, or Paul himself, were to preach anything contrary to that which they had already received, all that the apostle could say was, “Let him be anathema.” The full gospel he had preached to them. There was no other, nor could it be supplemented. In the gospel, then, which Paul preached we have the full gospel of God, the glad tidings concerning His Son, and in Paul himself the example of an uncompromising servant of Christ. (Chapter 1:10)

Now whence did he get his gospel? He received it not from men, nor was he taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ; and this statement he verifies by a chapter out of his early history as a Christian. (Chapter 1:13-24) Further, he acquaints them with the results of his conference with James, Peter (called here Cephas), and John, when he went up to Jerusalem fourteen years after his first visit. He went up on this occasion by revelation, and conferred privately with the three abovementioned, communicating to them the gospel which he preached, which they fully endorsed, adding nothing to it, only desiring that he should remember the poor, which, writes Paul, he had been forward to do.

Conference, then, with those who seemed to be pillars added nothing to his gospel. Nor this only; they endorsed what he preached, and fully recognized that his field of service was the Gentiles. Besides this, he had taken with him on that occasion Titus, a Greek, and uncircumcised, and who was not compelled at Jerusalem to be circumcised, whatever the false brethren said. Now this historical relation puts the matter in a clear light. Was Paul an inferior apostle to the others? God had revealed His Son in him. He had received his gospel direct by revelation of Jesus Christ, and James, Peter, and John fully endorsed what he preached, and admitted that he was an apostle of the Gentiles, and allowed with him, the presence of Titus at Jerusalem being proof of it, that converts from amongst the nations had no need to be circumcised.

As far as credentials could be adduced on behalf of any apostle Paul had them, and others of the apostles owned them. Further, at Antioch, in Syria, when Paul, and Peter, and Barnabas were there together, Peter having failed to maintain the truth for which he had contended at Jerusalem (Acts 15), was rebuked by Paul in terms which the apostle here recalls. (Chapter 2:14-21) Peter, born a Jew, had lived as the Gentiles, the revelation made to him on the housetop at Joppa having taught him to call no man common or unclean. Why, then, did he now Judaize? Had he not, learning that a man is not justified by works of law, but by faith of Christ, believed on the Lord Jesus to be justified by faith of Christ, and not by works of law? For by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. Now if, in seeking to be justified by Christ, they became sinners, as Peter's retrogression at Antioch would imply, Christ was the minister of sin; for He had taught them to do what Peter now by his conduct declared was wrong. The folly of Peter's act is thus clearly evidenced; for building the things he had destroyed he made himself a transgressor. Besides, as the apostle adds, "I through law have died to law, that I may live to God." So the truth for which Paul contended did not frustrate the grace of God; for "if righteousness come by law, Christ has died in vain." Into what grave peril had the truth been brought by Peter's weakness. Barnabas too was carried away. Paul alone stood firm. Just one strand of the rope preserved the whole from giving way. At that moment the testimony of God upon earth, humanly speaking, depended for its continuance on the faithfulness of one man.

With the second chapter the historical details needful for the matter in hand come to an end. Paul now (chapter 3) addresses himself to the Galatians: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ has been evidently set forth crucified? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are ye so foolish? having begun in Spirit, are ye now made perfect in flesh?" (Chapter 3:13) They had received the Holy Ghost. The fullest Christian blessing was theirs. On what principle had they received the Spirit, the attestation as God's seal that they were His? They knew. This at once should have settled the question for them. But as with them, so often with us, spiritual intelligence does not keep pace with the grace bestowed on the believer. So the apostle does not rest there; he proceeds to expose the error still further in a threefold manner.

First (chapter 3. 6-14) he contrasts faith and law, showing the principle on which God justifies. Next he contrasts law and promise, showing the ground on which the inheritance is secured. (vv. 15-22) Then he contrasts the condition of a saint under law with that of one who believes on the Lord Jesus Christ. (Chapter 3:23-4: 7) If they would be justified by law, they never could be in the company of Abraham, nor be reckoned as his children; for he was justified on the principle of faith. But more, they put themselves under a curse, from which the Lord Jesus Christ by His death had delivered those believers who were once really under law. If they put themselves under law to obtain the inheritance, they would never get it; for God gave it to Abraham by promise. If they would put themselves under law, they put themselves under that from which all believers from among the Jews had been redeemed, in order to receive sonship; and only if they were Christ's could they be Abraham's seed.

The doctrine, then, that they were imbibing was all wrong, and senseless too, and subversive of the spirit and teaching of the gospel. It is instructive to remark how the apostle rests on the written word in chapter 3, making good his points, as far as they could be substantiated, from the Hebrew Scriptures. It is equally instructive to learn that a believer on the Lord Jesus as such has the Holy

Ghost, is justified by faith, will share in the inheritance, is of Abraham's seed, and a son and heir of God. The Galatians knew how they had received the Spirit. Paul here lets them know how those formerly Jews had received it. Turning then to Jewish ordinances to be justified was in principle a return to the condition of things out of which they had been brought by the gospel—weak and beggarly elements to which they desired again to be in bondage; for it was to principles suited to men in the flesh to which they were returning, who were really in the Spirit.

But what proof was there of their departure from the faith? He tells them, "Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you," he adds, "lest I have bestowed on you labor in vain." (Chapter 4:10) What a change too in their spirit towards him had come over them. (vv. 11-20) Would they wish to be under law? Let them read Abraham's history aright. If such was their desire, they must be thrust out of the house with Ishmael, instead of remaining inside with Isaac. But in truth they were, if Christians at all, children of the free woman, and on the burgess roll of the heavenly Jerusalem. Let them stand fast therefore, and not be again held in a yoke of bondage. (Chapter 5:1) Accompanying this exhortation are three most solemn warnings— (1) "Behold, I say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." (2) "I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." (3) "The Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by law; ye are fallen from grace. For we by the Spirit, on the principle of faith, wait for the hope of righteousness."

In chapter 2: 20 Paul had spoken of being crucified with Christ. In chapter 3:27 he wrote of those baptized as baptized unto Christ. In that same chapter he had stated (v. 28) that all believers were one in Christ. Now (chapter 5: 6) he teaches them a little more of what being in Christ really involves: "In Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love;" i.e. producing fruit by the activity of the divine nature. Now, was that seen in them? Alas, no! The results of their doctrine, for doctrine does produce results, was painful evident. For the teachers of it he desired that they would cut themselves off; they were troubling the saints. Was that uncharitable, unchristian? How could it be unchristian to desire the real welfare of the saints? As for the Galatians, he desired that they should walk in the Spirit, by which means they would not fulfill the desires of the flesh; and the Spirit, he reminds them, was given for that purpose. "For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other, in order that ye should not do those things that ye would." (Chapter 5: 17) In connection with this a contrast is drawn out between the works of the flesh and the fruit of the Spirit. (vv. 19-23) Now, those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts. So if we live in the Spirit, we should walk in it likewise; and so doing, there would be care manifested for those overtaken in a fault, and thoughtfulness for those who are burdened. (Chapter 6:1,2) Thus they would fulfill the law of Christ. Putting themselves under law, self-became rampant. Walking in the Spirit, the opposite effect would be produced, and charity or love abound. Let them care for those who taught them the truth, and do good to all, but especially to those that are of the household of faith.

Now he closes. Those false teachers boasted of their converts, whom they had influenced to be circumcised, glorying in their flesh. Paul would only boast in the cross of Christ, through whom the world was crucified unto him, and he unto the world. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision, but new creation. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. From henceforth," he adds, "let no man

trouble me.” He bore in his body from what he had suffered for Christ—the evidences of what he had preached. “Brethren,” for they were really Christians, is the salutation, “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit. Amen.”

Thus he exposes the baneful error of putting oneself under law to be justified. It upsets the gospel, would separate the soul from Christ, and does not produce holiness.

C. E. S.

Shall I ever Die?

“Of course, you will, sooner or later,” most men will answer. “I DO NOT KNOW,” is the answer which most Bible students ought to give.

Of believers, it is only those who have a special revelation that they will die, as Peter had had (John 21:19; 2 Peter 1:14) and Paul (2 Timothy 3:6), who are justified in saying, “Certainly I shall die.” Peter could say so; for the Lord Jesus had promised to him in particular the martyr’s crown. Paul knew the same of himself; but I am only an ordinary Christian, and I do not pretend to be either a Peter or a Paul, and I do not either pretend to have had any revelation direct from the Lord Himself to me about my own private self in particular, therefore I am obliged to be satisfied with the general light which God in His word gives to His family as such, that clear and broad light which shines upon the people of Christ as such.

I am thus obliged to be satisfied with such words as these: “As it is appointed unto man (man as a sinner; not, as often wrongly quoted, unto all men) once to die, but after this the judgment (so far we read of what awaits man in fallen nature, death and the judgment, then comes what is true of the believer only) (5: 28);” so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for Him shall He appear the second time without sin unto salvation. As mere man is a sinner, and as such is appointed to death and judgment, so the believer (every believer) had all the penalty due to his sins borne by Christ. He looks for Him; to “them that look for Him He will appear a second time without sin unto salvation.” Again, 1 Thessalonians 1:9: “Ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” Again, 1 Thessalonians 4:15-18: “This we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words.”

Again John, in Revelation 1:7, says, “Behold, He cometh with clouds;” and (chapter 3: 11) the Lord says to John, and to us too, “Behold, I come quickly;” and, in chapter 22: 7, 12, “Behold, I come quickly; and (v. 20) when the Spirit and the bride (v. 17) invite Him to come” The Spirit and the bride say, “Come” He answers, “Surely I come quickly.” To which John replies, “Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” These Scriptures and many others show: first, that the path of the believer, as laid down in Scripture, leads the mind, not down to the grave, but up to meet the Lord at His coming; and secondly, that the believer in apostolic times did look up that bright and shining way to the Lord returning as their hope, even as it becomes those “whose conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Philippians 3:20)

Thus did they, as I, having no special communication of my death, act up to the word of the two in white apparel, who stood looking up steadfastly toward heaven (where a cloud had received Jesus

from their sight). Why stand ye gazing up into heaven? 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 1:10,11) Being myself only one of the flock, nor bell-bearer, nor shepherd, the prospect of the flock is my prospect, nor more nor less. Special communication to myself as an individual as to what ought to be looked for by myself in particular have I none, so I must content myself with the hope set before all Christians, and seek to be like unto one that waits for His Lord from heaven, "who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." (Philippians 3:21)

It must be so. The Lord has not yet fulfilled the promise which He gave to poor self-confident Peter (see John 13:38;14:13): "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow, till thou hast denied me thrice. Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." Yes, such is our hope; that "when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory." (Colossians 3:4)

Someone may say; If these things are so in the Scriptures, how come the religious people of our day not to see them? To this I answer, The Pentecostal Christians were by faith, and through the Holy Ghost, occupied with the ascended Lord, who, having by His death cleared them of all guilt, was in heaven caring for all their heavenly and spiritual interests, and about to come again, that He might receive them unto Himself. Few of the religious nowadays know even what the value of His death and resurrection is to them; they, therefore, cannot study His glory in heaven, and they do not long for His return, or even wish to do so.

It may be said, "Are you alone right, and everyone else wrong?" I reply, "Thank God, I am not alone in this; but if I were alone, I would be alone in truth, rather than with a multitude in error." "But are you sure you are right?" Of this I am sure: first, that God's word is with me; and secondly, that God will not suffer those that prayerfully search His word, and lean not to their own understanding, to err in their faith and hope.

Certainly Christ in His coming, and not death, was the hope of the early Christians. Certainly too it is written at the end of the Revelation (and it cheers my heart to read it for others' sake as well as for my own), "The Spirit and the bride say, Come."

"Surely I come quickly. Amen.

Even so, come, Lord Jesus."

G. V. W.

This Light Bread

It has often been noticed that the burst of song which broke forth from redeemed Israel on the banks of the Red Sea had scarcely died away before they began to murmur against Moses, saying, "What shall we drink?" Though they had been slaves under the iron yoke of Pharaoh, they were not prepared for the hardships of the desert; and as a consequence their hearts were filled with rebellion, and their lips with murmurs.

There were three things that made up the bitterness of their daily lives, all of which are most instructive to ourselves. First, there was "no bread, neither is there any water" (Numbers 21:5; Exodus 15:16); secondly, they loathed, became weary of the bread which God had provided for them, saying, "Our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all, beside this manna, before our eyes" (Numbers 11:6); and thirdly, they longed after the food of Egypt, "the fish, the cucumbers, and the melons, and the leeks, and the onions, and the garlic." (Numbers 11:5; Exodus 16:3)

These things together became so insupportable that they again and again avowed that they would far rather have remained in Egypt. "Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples (as types): and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come." (1 Corinthians 10:11)

The first thing then that troubled them was, that they found no bread and no water in the desert. As the psalmist expresses it, they found it "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is." Brought out of Egypt—type of the world of nature, of man in his natural condition—they had lost their accustomed food; and the wilderness on which they had entered was destitute of all the sources from which they had hitherto drawn, as well as those from which they needed now to draw, their life and sustenance. They had lost their old life forever (in figure) in the Red Sea, the life which Egypt fed and nourished; and they now possessed a new, the springs of which were afar from the scene through which they were passing.

It is so with the believer now. For the new life which he possesses in a risen Christ there is neither bread nor water in the desert. Time was, before he was met by the grace of God, and brought out of darkness into His marvelous light, when all the springs of his life were in the world; but now the world has become to him "a wilderness wide," and looking out upon it he has to learn that it can offer him nothing either to stimulate or to refresh him in his pilgrim way. Not of the world, even as Christ was not of the world, as dead with Christ to it, and risen with Him out of it, how could he find his suited food in it, or slake his thirst at its polluted streams?

These truths are as familiar as household words; but we need to challenge our hearts continually as to their practical acceptance. Do we then habitually act in the remembrance that, apart from the few and simple requirements of our bodies, the scene of our stranger-ship contains nothing for us, nothing to aid or invigorate; but, on the other hand, everything calculated to blight and deaden, the life we have in Christ Jesus?

It is of the last importance, especially for young believers whose feet have just entered upon the sands of the desert, to have this continually in our minds, that there is no bread or water to be found for our souls in the wilderness; for we belong to another scene. Christ Himself at the right hand of God is our life (Colossians 3:3), and it is therefore from thence, and from thence alone, that we can derive our nourishment and strength. "All our springs" are in Christ risen and glorified. With Him alone is the fountain of life. The believer who walks through the world in the power of this truth, expecting nothing, nothing but snares and dangers, from it, will be kept in independence of it; he will be conscious of a life that has no affinities to anything round about him, and he will exhibit a life, fed from on high, which, shining as a light in the moral darkness of this scene, will be a testimony for Christ, a testimony of grace, and also, alas! of coming judgment.

The second thing that afflicted these poor pilgrims was, that they became weary of the food which God had provided for them. It was in response to their murmurings (for as yet they were under grace, Sinai not having been reached) that He in His tenderness and mercy gave them the manna "The whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and against Aaron in the wilderness: and the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the fleshpots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger." (Exodus 16:2,3) Such conduct merited judgment; but the Lord acted in grace, and hence He said to Moses, "Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you." And this He did day by day for forty years, until they passed over the Jordan. (Joshua 5) The manna was Israel's food, suited food for the wilderness, and it was of this that they tired, until at length they dared to say, "Our soul loatheth this light bread." (Numbers 21:5) Now the manna, as our readers know, is a type of Christ, of a humbled Christ, of all that Christ was in His tenderness, grace, sympathy, &c., as He passed through this scene; of all that He is therefore as suited to us in wilderness circumstances as strangers and pilgrims. Christ then in this character is our only food (see John 6), the only food that can sustain and strengthen us; but Christ, it should be observed, in every aspect in which He is presented to us as the Manna. We need all that He is as thus, given; but we need nothing outside of Himself—nothing but Himself; for since He Himself is our life, it is He only that can sustain it.

How, then, is it possible for the believer to weary of it? We have two natures, the old and the new, and "these are contrary the one to the other." If therefore we are not walking in the spirit (see Galatians 5) the flesh will assert its desires, and the flesh never loves Christ; the mind of the flesh, indeed, is enmity against God. (Romans 8) It is the flesh therefore that wearies of Christ, that, desiring its own proper food, begets in us a disrelish, a distaste, for the heavenly manna. But the flesh is subtle, and when thus acting in the believer generally loves to conceal its true character. But flesh is flesh, whatever the forms in which it is expressed; and even as Satan knows how to transform himself into an angel of light, so the flesh knows how to assume most pious forms. It is necessary therefore to be on our guard, lest we also fall into this grievous sin of loathing "this light bread."

Signs of this tendency often appear where least expected. For example, if a ministry which appeals to the intellect instead of to the heart and conscience is preferred; if the exposition of interesting principles, in which the natural man can even delight, is welcomed rather than a simple presentation of Christ Himself; if we become restless under sound doctrine, and after our own desires help to ourselves teachers having itching ears; if we turn to books which deal with spiritual

or prophetic problems (though these may have their place) rather than to those that unfold the excellencies and the graces of Christ; if we seek companionship with those who can entertain us naturally or socially in preference to those with whom we could have spiritual fellowship, those with whom Christ alone would be the bond; if we are losing our appetite for the Scriptures, and, it may be added, if we are losing the sense of our pilgrim character, and are gradually settling down into the enjoyment of things around—then there is reason to fear that we are becoming weary of “this light food.” But the test may be a positive one. Let us then boldly ask ourselves whether we are satisfied with Christ, satisfied to the full in Him as our daily food. Let us ask ourselves this question in our homes, in our daily and social life, in our leisure moments, when listening to ministry, when gathered together in the assembly of the saints. It is one thing to sing— “Jesus, of Thee we ne’er would tire; The new and living Food can satisfy our heart’s desire; And life is in Thy blood.”— and it is another thing to know it practically. May the Lord keep us from the grievous sin of losing our appetite for Himself.

Combined with this, in the case of the Israelites, there was an intense desire for the things of Egypt. How often did they longingly recall the fleshpots, the fish, the leeks, the melons, and the cucumbers of Egypt! The two things always go together. Losing appetite for Christ is sometimes the consequence of indulgence in, and sometimes the cause of desiring, Egyptian gratifications. But let us ask plainly what this means. To long after the food of Egypt, then, is for the believer to seek after the same gratifications, amusements, sources of enjoyment, as the man of the world. The natural man has his suited food, that in which he endeavors to find his life, as the Christian has his. If the believer turn from Christ to that on which the worldling feeds, he is in exactly the same case as the Israelites. Thus, if the Christian look with desire of heart to the world’s amusements and social enjoyments; if he take delight in the world’s subjects of pride painting, sculpture, architecture, national greatness; in its leaders in science, philosophy, literature, and art; if he is becoming interested in politics and party conflicts; if he would feed his mind with the world’s books; if he court worldly society, the world’s fashions, distinctions, luxuries, and ways; if he cultivate the world’s habits and manners; if, in short, he is turning to any of the sources of earth, any of its sources of enjoyment, pride, pleasure, or exaltation, he is, in fact, longing after the fleshpots of Egypt.

What, then, have we to say to these things? Are we, you, beloved rendering this case? There is no sadder spectacle than that presented by some who once knew what it was to feed on Christ, and to find their all in Him, but who now are turning back to the very things which they had gladly refused for His sake. They did run well, but they have been hindered through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life. Whatever is not Christ, and of Christ, is Egypt, and of Egypt. We need therefore to be so attracted, possessed, and absorbed by Christ as to have every want satisfied in Himself, this is the effectual antidote to every fascination and allurements that Egypt can present.

“Art thou weaned from Egypt’s pleasures?”

God in secret thee shall keep;

There unfold His hidden treasures,

There His love ‘s exhaustless deep.”

E. D.

Fragment: Sufficient Grace

He has said, "My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness." The day may be one of trial, a hot day; the way weary—not a green thing there on which the eye can rest; the land a dry and thirsty one where no water is—not a single spring for the new man from the ground; but at the same time there is the rain from heaven—nothing can intercept that. God, who commands the heavens, can make the valley of Baca a well, and the rain also to fill the pools. "All our fresh springs are in God." The object of the enemy is that the Christian should be as little of a Christian as possible.

How to See Good Days

“Laying aside therefore all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envyings, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire earnestly the pure mental milk of the Word, that by it ye may grow up to salvation, if indeed ye have tasted that the Lord is good.” (1 Peter 2:1,2) As in the first chapter the flesh gets its true estimate in God’s sight, so here its activities are distinctly disallowed. God having “condemned sin in the flesh,” it is impossible for us to have His thoughts of it and yet tolerate those things which are manifestly its active energies. In so far as the believer allows the works of the flesh, he denies that God has condemned it on Calvary. Nor is the doctrinal assent enough; the Spirit of God commends a practical “laying aside;” for allowed evil in the heart rapidly becomes overt evil in the life. Guile, hypocrisy, and evil speakings are the outward expression of malice and envy working within. Therefore God goes to the root. The inward working and the outward works are alike revolting to God. The practical “laying aside” of both root and branches will alone clear the way for what follows—the earnest desire after that which is divinely provided for the positive growth of the soul. The newborn babe has an instinctive and laudable craving for that which is suited to its healthy development. So also we, if the flesh be indeed judged, and all its activities sternly disallowed, shall need little incitement to draw from the ever-flowing spring of the word of God that which His grace has so generously furnished for the growth “up to salvation” of those who have tasted of the goodness of the Lord.

There is then the “coming” to Him, the One who, cast away as worthless by men, is chosen and precious to God—His elect and precious cornerstone! To us who have believed and are living stones is that preciousness; and as a race are we chosen too, a kingly priesthood, a holy nation, a people for possession, raised up to set forth the excellencies of Him who has called us to His wonderful light, and to be a people unto God, enjoying His mercy; and as a holy priesthood, offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

“Beloved,” says Peter, “I exhort you as strangers and sojourners to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; having your conversation” (or way of life) “honest among the Gentiles,” &c. Again he warns against the energies of the flesh, which “war against the soul;” striking word of admonition indicating the deadly effect of sanctioning the flesh in its lusts. Remembering his own terrible experience of what the flesh is capable of, how could he as a shepherd of the flock of God do other than warn the beloved sheep against every activity of it? Further, the eyes of “the Gentiles” are upon us; nor do they refrain from speaking against us as evildoers; and the will of God is, that we put their ignorance to silence. Let us take heed, then, that through our good works, themselves being witnesses, they glorify God in the day of visitation, while from nothing short of the whole scope of the works of the flesh we make manifest that we are “total abstainers.”

Next, there are political duties insisted upon. The king is supreme, and rulers are his messengers for vengeance or for praise. Not a word about political rights, nor could there be without doing violence to the character given us by the Spirit of God of “strangers and sojourners.” Our political duties are summed up in two words “subjection” and “honor.” Subjection is to be rendered to the

king, whether in his own person, or in his representatives; for authority is of God. Honor is to be paid to all men; for man is the image of God. Preeminently, however, to the king; for he is exalted by God. Our freedom and our liberty is as God's bondsmen. Our fear is due to Him. "Happy is the man that feareth alway." (Proverbs 28:14) Our love is due to the brotherhood.

Such as are servants—another phase of subjection—must be subject with all fear unto their masters; and how needful is the added word, "Not only to the good and gentle, but also to the ill-tempered." Can any master read this, or anyone directly or indirectly exercising authority, without being forcibly impressed with the suggestive way in which the Spirit of God here commends goodness and gentleness, and deprecates ill-temper in the treatment of those who are under that authority? That which is distinctly acceptable with God is (1) doing good, (2) suffering for it wrongfully, and (3) taking it patiently; this is acceptable with God. Do you say, who is sufficient for these things? Why it is that to which we have been called! It shone with divine luster and lovely grace and peerless perfection in the Master, and He has left us a model that we should follow His steps. In Him was no sin, nor guile, nor reviling, nor threatening; He was the One who, accepting in all points the will of Him who sent Him, and who judgeth righteously, gave Himself up in unreserved, unqualified subjection to suffering and to shame, even unto death.

Wives also are to be subject to their husbands, and husbands to honor their wives; they are heirs together of the grace of life; their prayers are to be unhindered. If the wives have unbelieving husbands, not subject to the Word, it is an occasion for faith to display itself in seeking to win them by godly deportment, chaste conversation, and becoming fear. Their dress too, their hair and their ornaments, are none of them beneath the notice and the solicitude of the Spirit of God, who prescribes for their adorning no outward attire but that which is of the "hidden man of the heart," and for their ornament "a meek and a quiet spirit," which is priceless in the sight of God! Finally, we are exhorted to oneness of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, tenderheartedness, and humility (or perhaps courtesy), the beautiful fruit of the Spirit among brethren in their relation to one another. No evil for evil, or railing for railing; but, being themselves inheritors of blessing, also blessing others. This is the way to go on quietly, peacefully, happily in this life, and he supports it by quoting Psalms 34:12-14. But should we be called to suffer for righteousness' sake, that also we can take happily. It is blessed thus to suffer. "Be not afraid of their fear, neither be troubled; but sanctify the Lord Christ in your hearts, and be always prepared to give an answer to everyone that asks you to give an account of the hope that is in you, but with meekness and fear; having a good conscience, that (as to that) in which they speak against you as evildoers, they may be ashamed who calumniate your good conversation in Christ."

W. R.

Things Revealed by the Spirit

People quote this passage, "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him," to show how great these things of God are. They have not entered into the heart of man, "but God hath revealed them unto us by His Spirit:" such is the Scripture—just the opposite of the common use of it. You see God means us to know them, though we may have been bad scholars at the lesson. But He has given us a title—to what? Simply to be pardoned? Is that all? Is it nothing to say, I am come to God, the Judge of all; I can look down upon things that are for judgment, the reproach of Egypt being done away; I am in Christ, and see the glory of the Son of God and Son of man—the Son who earned God's love? Yes; earned it¹ for He says, "Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life." Is it nothing to see the Lamb slain? Have we not far more than pardon? And where is to be your place? You are going to be like Himself. Did you never think of this? "As we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly;" "And we have received the Spirit, not which is of the world, but which is of God, to know the things which are freely given unto us of God." It is not the redemption—though we must know that truly, and get clear as to it—it is more. Again I ask, Have your souls never tasted what it is to be where there is nothing but holiness—not a jar with what God is? What a delight! And all around not a flaw, not a thing that does not answer to the glory of God, as God and to the love of God, as love! Nothing. Christ is the center of it, and we, in a certain sense, so too, as in Him Are our souls living there? Well, you will get a white stone; but you say, Am I to have God's approving delight upon me? Yes; and the new name. Ah, this will be a secret between you and Christ! Is there nothing in that? Is there nothing in His approbation so put upon us? Does it not come into your heart as that which is unspeakable joy? Again, "The glory of God doth lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof." But if I see the Lamb in the midst of the throne, Ah! I say, now I am indeed at home; that is the sight that dazzles every other, and that is the sight which is for me. The Lord God and the Lamb are the temple there. We shall sit on Christ's throne with Him—conferred glory surely, but none the less real. Will this be nothing? There will not be a thing in Christ's heart that is not satisfied towards us, and is this nothing to us? And is it nothing to us to see the man that suffered for us glorified? Now the Spirit of God has taken these things and revealed them unto us that we may live in them.

J. N. D

Fragment: Why we are left Here

I am left here for two things—to learn a great deal about myself, which is ever humbling; and to learn of God in Christ the unmistakable patience and love and goodness of God.

First Epistle to the Corinthians

The assembly at Corinth was founded by Paul (1 Corinthians 3:10;4. 15) during his second missionary journey. At the outset of his labors there he met with great opposition from the Jews, but was especially encouraged by the Lord, who spake unto him at night in a vision, promising protection for his person, and assuring him of success in that city. So Paul continued to labor there for a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. Opposition increasing on the part of the Jews, who led Paul to the judgment-seat of Gallio, the proconsul, the Lord's promise to His servant was fulfilled: "I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee." Gallio declining to interfere, the attempt to stop the work failed, and Paul remained there some time longer. (Acts 18:1-18) In these few verses is summed up all that we know of the work at Corinth, except that which Paul supplies by his remarks in the two epistles to the Corinthians.

To work in Corinth was evidently in Paul's eyes no ordinary task. It was highly civilized, noted for its wealth and commerce, and, as may be the case where civilization and wealth abound without the restraining power of the grace of God, it had earned a most unenviable reputation for licentiousness and all that ministers to the natural man. Into that city the apostle, led by the Holy Ghost, and knowing the character of the people, had determined from the outset, surely guided of God, as to the spirit in which he should there labor. Anything which would have pleased the natural man, and thus attracted people to hear him, he carefully avoided. We quote his own account of himself: "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God." (1 Corinthians 15) The results were great, and a special feature of God's work in the assembly there formed, was the rich endowment of spiritual gifts enjoyed by the converts. "In everything," writes Paul, "ye are enriched by Him, in all utterance, and in all knowledge; even as the testimony of the Christ was confirmed in you: so that ye come behind in no gift, waiting for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 1:6-8)

After he had left that city, endeared to him by so many ties formed between himself and his converts, for households embraced the truth (Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:16), it was no wonder that communications were kept up between them and him; and when questions arose in their midst which they did not seem able to solve, it was not unnatural that they should write to Paul respecting them. (1 Corinthians 7:1) Private friendships had been formed, which bore fruit, as evidenced by the visit to him of Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus (1 Corinthians 16:17), who personally ministered to his need. But they were not the only people who visited him, or brought him news about the assembly at Corinth. There were those of the house of Chloe (1 Corinthians 1:11), whom he mentions, from whom he had heard of the sad state of the assembly. That moved him to write this letter to them whilst he was at Ephesus. (1 Corinthians 16:8) It is a letter dealing with the state of things among them, and divides itself into two great parts. From chapter 1. to

chapter 6. we have certain disorders of which he had heard, exposed, and corrected. From chapter 7. to chapter 16. Paul is chiefly occupied in answering questions which they had put to him in writing.

Commencing with a reminder of his apostleship, he connects Sosthenes with himself in the salutation here addressed "to the Church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called saints, with all that in every place call on the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, theirs and ours." No other epistle of Paul has an address so wide in its application as this, which embraces every professing Christian throughout the world, and through all the time that the Church of God shall be upon earth. No one therefore, even in these days, who bears the name of Christ, outwardly calling on the name of the Lord, which expresses profession, whether real or not, can excuse himself from submission to the teaching of this epistle. It is most catholic in its application. To it let us turn.

Beginning with the acknowledging of every good thing in them that he could, and counting on God's faithfulness to accomplish His purposes of grace towards them (chapter 1: 49); Paul first treats of those evils rife amongst the assembly of which he had been informed. "I beseech you, brethren," he writes, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no schisms among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you." (vv. 10, 11) Schism had begun its work, and heresies would appear to test them.

(Chapter 11:18,19) Schools of teaching they had fostered, which engendered divisions, pupils ranging themselves under different teachers, calling themselves after their names. But who were the teachers they ran after who allowed this, and, worse, fostered it? We may ask, but ask in vain. Their names, then familiar as household words, have perished; whilst those of God's faithful servants of the same date, as Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, remain to this day. What a lesson to any who would gather round themselves and encourage such a practice in our day! Such forget, or, at all events, by their action contravene, the teaching of this epistle.

How, then, did the apostle deal with this? He reminds them that he had not labored with any such intent, and asks the pertinent questions, "Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized unto the name of Paul?" How carefully he had worked at Corinth, baptizing very few, lest any should say that he had baptized unto his own name. His work was to preach the gospel, not to baptize; to call on souls to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not to make disciples to be surnamed after him. John the Baptist had disciples called after him. Paul avoided all that for himself; for what was right in John's day would have been wrong in Paul's day. (Chapter 1:13-17) He preached too, but not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For he had understood the principle on which God was working; viz., to bring down all high thoughts of man, as evidenced: first, in the subject preached, the cross, and the person exalted, Christ crucified (chapter 1: 18-25); next, in the people called, and the instruments used for the preaching of the truth (vv. 26-29); and thirdly, in the way of blessing provided for souls, for the Corinthians and all others. "Of God," he writes, "are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom from God, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." (vv. 30, 31)

Now in the spirit of all this Paul had labored at Corinth (chapter 2:15), as a vessel feeling his weakness, but as a faithful servant refusing to resort to any methods of working attractive to the natural man. Such might have made the truth appear more palatable, but they would not have been of God. Now he worked that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of man, but in the power of God. How dim had been their perceptions, that all this had escaped their observation! Evidently, they had perceived neither the principle on which God was working, nor the spirit in which Paul had labored in their midst. Was all his labor, then, in vain? No. He had begotten them in the gospel, however little many of them understood the preaching of the cross and the deep teaching of Christ crucified, whom alone Paul had desired to know among them. Some, however, had perceived it, and to them it was wisdom, for they were perfect; i.e. souls come to manhood in Christianity. But the natural man, ψυχικος; i.e. one unconverted, understands not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man, πνευματικος, discerneth all things, yet he himself is discerned of no one.

Did this last term fitly describe the saints of the Corinthian assembly? Alas! no. Taken up with their teachers and schools of doctrine, the apostle still had to speak to them as he had always done, as to fleshly σαρκινοι, even as to babes in Christ; for in them the Spirit, though they had received that gift, was not really working. That a quickened soul can be described as fleshly yet not carnal, Romans 7:14 really teaches, and that characterized the state of the Corinthian saints. (1 Corinthians 3:1) So he had fed them with milk, not with meat; for they could not have profited by the latter, neither yet, he added, were they in a condition to receive it. "For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not men (ανθρωποι)?" he asks. (Chapter 3:4) Their strifes and divisions proved they were carnal (σαρκικοι), the flesh being at work in them. Their spiritual condition was that which he described as (σαρκινοι) fleshly. Hence they not only stood in the way of their own spiritual growth by encouraging the formation of parties, but they were robbing themselves of the value and profit of gifts which the Lord had given for edification.

If we take up exclusively one line of teaching, following one teacher, we deprive ourselves of the benefits we might derive from other gifts to men. "Therefore," he writes, "let no man glory in men. For all things are yours; whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's." (Chapter 3:21-23) How foolish were they! how shortsighted!

And what were the laborers in truth? In what light ought they to view them? Paul, and with himself he here joins Apollos, would have them remember that such are but ministers (πηρτας) of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

Thus, fully does he enter into this question of parties and schools of doctrine. It was the early introduction of a sectarian spirit, which has done so much harm in the assembly of God. Now the reader may remark how throughout these chapters the apostle traces all up to God. Some might make a party name of the Lord Jesus Christ, none could of God; for there is but one God. They were God's assembly, and God had called them. (Chapter 1:2,9) It was God's testimony which Paul declared, and God's wisdom in mystery which he spake, and which God had revealed (chapter 2:1, 7, 10); and the result was, that whilst Paul planted, and Apollos watered, it was God who gave the increase. And the Corinthian saints were God's husbandry, God's building, and God's temple too, by the Holy Ghost; and the teachers were God's fellow-laborers, called by Him

for His service. (Chapter 3:6,9,16) Furthermore, the laborers were but stewards of the mysteries of God, and by-and-by each would have his praise of God. (Chapter 4:1,5) What was there in this way of presenting the truth to encourage the formation of parties among them? There were many and weighty objections against it then, are there not such still?

But other disorders were rife. An incestuous person was in their midst, with their full cognizance, the sin unrebuked, the guilty party being unjudged, and the assembly unconcerned about it. (Chapter 5:2) In decided language he writes about this. They were unleavened. Let them be a new lump by purging out the leaven that had come in. Watchful should they be against any introduction of evil into the assembly; and as for the guilty person, they were to put him out from among themselves. (v. 13) The responsibility of the assembly in cases which call for, discipline is here distinctly asserted.

Passing on from that, he next takes up the unrighteousness practiced amongst them, some doing wrong and defrauding their brethren, others resorting to law before the heathen, the world, about matters which the least esteemed in the Church might easily have settled. Let such, he tells them, decide those cases. And what truth does he bring to bear on these saints? They were going to judge the world, and angels too; could they not judge such small matters, things which pertain to this life? Besides, they were inheritors of the kingdom; their conduct then ought to be in harmony with that which befits the kingdom. Now all this proceeded from their natural will being in action instead of being kept in subjection; a will which when checked in one outlet will make a way for itself, if permitted, through another channel. If I may not act unrighteously to my neighbor, I may at least do what I like, a man may say, with my body. This liberty is for the Christian negated at once. The body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. It is also a member of Christ, and indwelt by the Holy Ghost; and he adds, "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body." (Chapter 6:19,20) Here the apostle really stopped; for his thesis was the proper treatment of his body by the individual Christian How low morally and socially have men sunk through sin that such directions should be needed! How great the grace in which the Christian capable of sinning, really shares! His body is both a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Ghost. With this the first part of the epistle ends.

C. E. S.

(To be continued, D.V)

The Cross

O God, what wondrous love and grace
Are in the Cross where Jesus bled!
The light of truth shines forth in Him,
Scorned though He be, with bowed head.
We joy to view His lowly path
Which through this sin-stained world He trod,
The perfect One, who had no stain,
Whose life delighted Thee, O God.
Sad was His pilgrimage and brief,
Yet thought of others filled its days,
Familiar with the deepest grief,
Unwearied grace His path displays.
But in the Cross—oh, love unknown! —
His heart for others gave its all:
They left Him to His fate alone,
Or gave Him but the bitter gall.
Under Thy wrath, to justice due,
He bore the sin they then displayed;
Though all Thy love He brought to view,
They railed on Him—for them He prayed.
E'en for His murderers He sought
Thy pardon; while He died for them,
In hideous hate they heeded not
How they displayed their heart again.
Meek is the gentle, tender lamb,
And silent in the shearer's power;

So murmured not that lowly Man
When yielded to their cruel "hour."
E'en as a victim to the knife
Goes unresisting to its death,
To slaughter led, the Prince of life
With meekness yielded up His breath.
Under Thy judgment dire and due,
"Forsaken," left to deepest night,
Yet He upheld Thy glory true,
Proclaimed Thee holy, sinless, right.
Yielded to Thee an offering,
Burnt on Thine altar whole and pure,
Glory and rest He did Thee bring,
Firm to obey, strong to endure.
Though for Himself He needed not
Love, yea, or glory bright, to win,
Fain to reverse our wretched lot
He bowed beneath the weight of sin.

The Revised Version of the New Testament

It is surely significant that God should be calling, in these last days, such public attention to His own word. Never, perhaps, has there been such eager and widespread interest in the appearance of any volume as in the Revised Version of the New Testament Scriptures; and never certainly has any book obtained such a rapid sale. Its first delivery in London was counted by hundreds of thousands, and this huge supply, it is credibly stated, entirely disappeared in a few days. It has therefore acquired an unprecedented circulation, a circulation which by this time will have embraced every quarter of the globe. Whatever the causes of this, there are few spiritual minds who will not discern in the fact a distinct action of the Spirit of God; for whether men will hear, or whether they will forbear, God has spoken, and so loudly, that His testimony has gone “out through all the earth, and His words to the end of the world.” The Lord is at hand, and it may be that this testimony is the immediate harbinger of His coming.

It will not be without interest to our readers to inquire, what is the result of this revision of the English Testament? The result on the whole, it may be safely affirmed, is to the advantage of the truth of God. There are blemishes—errors indeed—arising from the want of spiritual understanding—that understanding which no scholarship can supply, because it is the fruit of the indwelling and teaching, the anointing, of the Holy Spirit; but while making allowance for these, many mistakes have been rectified, and many doubtful translations have been made more intelligible. Our readers will discover most of these improvements for themselves, and hence we shall simply call their attention to some passages that have been omitted, and to some of the mistranslations that affect the truth.

Several verses or parts of verses have been entirely rejected. The first of these is what is commonly termed the doxology of the “Lord’s prayer:” “For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.” This has created much feeling in certain ecclesiastical quarters—as was to be expected; but there need to be no hesitation in accepting the exclusion on the ground of entirely insufficient evidence of its inspiration. No Christian would dispute the truth of the language; but the only question to be decided was, is it a part of the inspired word of God?

The next passage omitted of any importance is Acts 8:37: “And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.” The context shows that this verse is by no means necessary to the narrative, and for many years past it has been admitted on all hands to be an unwarranted addition. To believe with the heart is a divine condition (Romans 10:9,10), but let us thank God—for who could stand the test?—that we are not required to ascertain if we believe with the whole heart.

Passing onward to the first epistle of John, a part of the much-contested passage in chapter v. 7, 8 is also omitted, and it now reads, “For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one”—a change already anticipated in what is known to many as “The New Translation,” and one which clears away a great difficulty in the apprehension of the teaching of the Spirit of God.

So far we can thank God for the alterations made; but in two passages, while not omitted, so much doubt, and very unnecessarily in our judgment, is thrown upon them, that it will lead in many minds to their positive rejection. The first of these is the narrative of the woman taken in adultery.

(John 7:53;8. 1-11) It is freely conceded that this passage is not found in some very important manuscripts. It should be borne in mind, however, that the most ancient manuscripts do not reach back further than the time of Constantine; and Augustine expressly says that it was left out “for fear of allowing immorality.” One can readily perceive, how that those who failed to understand the significance of this striking scripture, and the characteristic position of the Lord in it, should thus miss the mind of God, and be animated by such motives of prudence; but the spiritual mind, not governed by human feelings, but by the Spirit of God, will have no difficulty in rejecting their action, and in regarding the scripture as a precious unfolding of divine truth, of the Person, indeed, of our blessed Lord. The other passage alluded to is the close of Mark’s gospel (16: 9-20), which, as the revisers inform us, is omitted “by the two oldest Greek manuscripts,” &c. Even the casual reader will perceive that this passage does not follow on with the narrative, but forms a kind of appendix to the gospel itself, as it gives a general account of the special manifestations of the Lord to His own after His resurrection. This, no doubt, occasioned the difficulty; it would be sure to perplex human wisdom, and hence the attempt to obviate it. The source of much controversy of this kind has been the confusion of the question of authenticity with that of inspiration; that is, if the authorship of a part of any of the books of Scripture has been thought doubtful, the temptation has arisen to reject it. So here, instead of asking whether this close of the gospel were inspired, they discussed whether Mark penned it. Now it is quite clear, from many books of Scripture, that inspired additions may be made by those who were not their authors.

(See Deuteronomy 34, &c) Remarks of this kind need not therefore trouble simple souls.

In the translation many passages, as already remarked, have gained in clearness and accuracy, while others have lost both in respect of point and truth through the want of spiritual intelligence. A few examples of the latter class may be given. In Acts 2:47 the Revised Version reads, “And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved.” So in 2 Corinthians 2:15, and 4:3 we find, “them that are being saved,” and “them that are perishing.” There is no doubt whatever as to the tense of the verb, or that a hard literality, apart from the knowledge of divine truth, might so translate. But it is not difficult to conjecture that the origin of the translation in these cases is unbelief in the fact that man can either be saved or lost before death. Even evangelical Protestantism very unwillingly admits that the sinner is already lost, or that he may know he is saved during his life. It will press very earnestly that he will be lost if he does not believe in Christ. But this is another thing, and ignores the teaching of the word of God as to the truth of the cross—that the cross, indeed, was the demonstration of the fact that man was both guilty and lost, and thus the termination of his history as man in the flesh, and as such responsible to produce fruit for God. It is this which displays the magnificence of God’s grace. At the very moment when all that man is, in all the depths of his corrupt and totally depraved heart, was revealed, God revealed Himself as the God of grace through the death of Christ. But even if the revisers were ignorant of this, a little more knowledge of the Scriptures would have saved them from their mistake. To show this, we transcribe part of a note to Acts 2:47, in the version known as “The New Translation”—“As to the form of the word, σωξμενοι “(the word in Acts 2:47),” &c., are all found in the LXX. The difference of σωξμενος is that it gives the character instead of the fact; as I might say, the spared

ones,' or those to be spared,' or the fact, those who have been spared.' It is not this last here. It is the class of persons then God was saving. It is not a doubt as to their being saved, nor a state, but a class. Compare Luke 13:23, 'Are the σωξεννοι, that class, few?' So the English means there, 'that be saved.' The Jews discussed this point much as may be seen in Lightfoot and Schoetgen."

The translation of Ephesians 2:6 is still more unhappy. It is as follows: "And raised us up with Him, and made us sit with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus." This contains a double error. Although not put in italics, there is nothing in the Greek text to answer to the first "Him." In fact, the "Authorized Version" is correct, and the revision erroneous; for it is really "raised us up together" not with Christ, albeit that is true, but believing Jews and Gentiles together all distinction now having been abolished, as will be immediately seen if the apostle's use of the pronouns "you" and "we" is apprehended. The last clause of the verse is nothing but confusion, as we are said to be made to sit with Christ in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. No; we are not with Him yet. We shall be when He has come to receive us unto Himself, not before; but we are in Him, as the Scripture states. The truth is, it should be, as in the first clause, "made to sit together" i.e. Jew and Gentile— "in the heavnlies in Christ Jesus." This is a striking example of the necessity of understanding the truth of God in the power of the Holy Ghost as a qualification for the translation of the Scriptures.

We had marked other passages for comment, but we must content ourselves, for the present, with reminding our readers of the need of care in accepting the alterations made by the revisers. At the same time we unfeignedly rejoice at the many improvements effected, and to some of these, if the Lord will, we hope to call attention at another time.

E. D.

Fragment: Christ

Christ was that which others could write of.

Fragment: Divine Love

Divine love not only answers need; but it also makes them speak.

Fragment: the Single Eye

The single eye sees nothing but Christ.

The End of All Things Is at Hand

The fourth chapter of the first epistle of Peter, in which this striking word occurs, also contains a further statement not less remarkable “The time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God.” Evidently therefore the accompanying exhortations have definitely in view these closing days. They have consequently especial application to ourselves, and for this reason should possess momentous interest.

“Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin, no longer to live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles,” &c. How striking is this argument! There is no time to be lost; the end is at hand, judgment is at the doors, and begins with us who are of the house of God. “Holiness becometh thine house, O Lord, forever.” (Psalms 93:5) Living to the lusts of men ought to be perfectly abhorrent to us; long enough have we traveled that fearful road. Pandering to our own will is lust, and lust is born of the flesh, and therefore is flesh. The will of the flesh is the will of the Gentiles; how can we run “with them?” It is absolutely appalling to contemplate, and reminds us of that word in Titus “hateful, and hating one another.” But they “shall give account to Him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.” Mark the urgency, the imminence of the case. The Judge is ready; are we? He standeth before the door! Have we our hand upon the latch to open to Him! Have we everything in readiness for Him to make His own award upon it?

The apostle writes to believers, to saints, but he writes of judgment. Let us not overlook it, but face the solemn fact. Surely if we know our standing in grace, having positive peace with God, and are in practical righteousness according to that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord, we shrink not from judgment, neither from the word nor the thought. Boldness in the day of judgment is our true prerogative; but how many are they—saints by calling—whom their own consciences make cowards! Who can deny that the Holy Ghost has here an especially suited word for such? It is time to stir; for judgment is advancing apace. It will not linger. It begins not with the world, but with us. Yes, even with “us.” Dear reader, do you quake or quail in view of this? Or have you everything in readiness for the righteous appraisal of the Judge? Every matter between you and God, between you and your Lord, entirely cleared up? Not a particle of reserve on any point whatever? And is your service, that which He appointed you, all filled up? Your mission, whatever it was, fulfilled to the day? If stamping our work will not suit our earthly master, how much less the heavenly and is all honestly and honorably squared with the world? If we be known to men of world as of His company, and we leave this earth with all sorts of evidences behind us of crossed and crooked transactions, obligations unfulfilled, and claims which cannot be met, will not these things be cast, like a filthy clout, around the holy, blessed name of Him whom we have made our banner? Little, perhaps, need we reek what the world will think of us; but are we entitled to compromise His name? Oh, if anything could grieve us then, surely it would be the reflection that in our houses and our businesses we had left behind us many a telltale indication how little, after all, we had made of Him! “Awake to righteousness, and sin not; for some have not the knowledge

of God. I speak this to your shame.” If such a word were needed by the saints at Corinth while yet apostolically cared—for, how much more in these days of declension? If at this time we are subjects of the divine government, preeminently it is “that we should not be condemned with the world.” But all who in His house resist His authority must remember that God is not mocked; judgment is fast approaching, and His word is, “Begin at my sanctuary.” (Ezekiel 9:6) If we are not sighing and crying for the existing abominations, we have not won our mark. The Lord must at length vindicate His name and glory by giving full effect to His holy indignation against all allowed evil, and all that is not brought into subjection to Him must be swept away when He makes bare His arm. Assuredly He will preserve His saints, but the perverse will He not pity, nor will His eye spare! It is for us to suffer now rather than to sin; for in the days of His flesh Christ suffered Himself, and for us too, yet not in this connection as bearing sins, but as not sinning, in order that we should arm ourselves with the same mind, resisting, if needs be, unto blood, striving against sin rather than follow the flesh in its lusts, to which through grace we have died. But this involves suffering, even when armed with His mind. For when the will works I must needs on the one hand resist it, and suffer, or on the other hand yield to it and sin. Thus, the apostle draws sharply-defined contrasts; doing the will of the Gentiles, or doing the will of God; being judged according to men in the flesh, or living according to God in the Spirit.

Then follow the Christian graces—sobriety, watchfulness, prayer; these are Godward. And then among ourselves love in divine energy and fervency, love which hides another’s fault rather than exposes it (while seeking none the less its correction), and that hospitality which is ungrudging. After these come exhortations as to service. Every receiver of a gift is responsible for its exercise to edification. He is a steward of the manifold grace of God. God is the alone source, and so much so, that if anyone speak he is God’s mouth, and must speak as such; that is, as for God and from God. So if he be a distributor of God’s good things to others, it is according to the competency of God to bless. Whatever the nature of our service, do we sever it from its source, not only its luster, but its very character is violated; for how, then, can God in all things be glorified through Jesus Christ? Again, the apostle forewarns the saints of suffering—the fiery trial of persecution loomed luridly ahead, and the devil, their arch-adversary, as a roaring lion was pacing threateningly around; but they were not to be surprised nor affrighted. They had only to take care that their sufferings were of the right sort; that is, not for evil-doing, but for well-doing. If partakers, or having the fellowship, of Christ’s sufferings, how much reason have we to rejoice! If reproached for His name’s sake, how much cause to be happy! If suffering as Christians, how much occasion to glorify God! For to us suffering is the converse of judgment. But all that is merely nominally aright will, so far from escaping judgment, be the first to fall under it. God will bring all His own through the arrayed opposition, but it is no little thing; let us not think lightly of it. He who died for our eternal salvation is the ever-living Captain of our present salvation, and He will bring us through, but only He can; for with difficulty are even the righteous saved from the phalanx of evil against them here. But if by the will of God we suffer in well-doing, we can commit the keeping of our souls to our faithful Creator. Even a Jew could do this; how much more we!

And the elders are specially exhorted. How beautifully does he appeal for his warrant in this to the sufferings of Christ and His waiting glories, standing on the line which linked these contrasted things, as a witness of the one and a partaker of the other. How pathetically does he commend to their disinterested care and solicitude the flock of God, that they should feed and take oversight

thereof. Himself an elder and a shepherd of the sheep (John 21:15-17), he points to the epiphany of the chief Shepherd, and the unfading crown of glory He would then bestow. The younger are exhorted to submit to the elder; yea, all to be girded with humility toward one another, humbling ourselves under the mighty hand of Him who, resisting the proud, giveth grace to the humble, and will exalt us in due time. Meanwhile the cares are to be cast where once were the sins “upon Him;” for He careth for us. We are to be sober, to be watchful; for fearfully alert is Satan, making much mischief now by his serpent wiles, as then he sought to destroy as a lion roaring upon his prey, whom resist steadfast in the faith. This implies that we have not to attack him, nor to encounter him in conflict; but simply resisting him, the issue is as certain as it is prompt “he shall flee from you.”

Thus, the ground is cleared. Suffering alarms us not—the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon us. Judgment appalls us not—perfect love has cast out all fear; we are perfected in love. Satan affrights us not—we are more than conquerors through Him that loveth us. And finally, “the God of all grace, who hath called us unto His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you. To Him be glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.”

W. R. D.

Fragment: Government of God

One sometimes wonders that a good part of the life of a devoted and spiritual person should be passed in mistakes and wanderings. One asks oneself how the presence of the Spirit of God, necessary to produce this life, comports with these mistakes. I say, on the contrary, that, in the government of God, it is a necessary consequence. Can God place His stamp upon that which is contrary to His thoughts? Will He refuse blessing as the answer to real devotedness, because there is error? He cannot sanction the former, nor deny Himself to the latter? What is the consequence? Blessing is found as well as tender care. He keeps the foundation even through all the wanderings; but He abandons to their natural consequences the evil and the false confidence which accompany it; otherwise He would justify evil.

J. N. D.

First Epistle to the Corinthians

Paul now turns to answer certain questions which they had written to him. The change from heathenism, with its vices, was immense; the change, too, from Judaism was great; questions therefore might well arise on which the Corinthian saints desired the mind of the apostle. To answer such, he now sets himself. And first about marriage, and about virgins; for these were two questions, as his language implies. No one was compelled to marry, but it was God's institution in Eden for His then unfallen creature's happiness and comfort; and since the fall it has become a provision against uncleanness as well.

The sanctity, and for the Christian the inviolability, of the tie once formed is here insisted on. No Christian is to break it. That is God's distinct command. (v. 10) If an unbeliever left a Christian, well and good; the Christian was not in bondage in such a case. "Let him depart," is the advice of the apostle; wise advice, in full accordance with the mind of God, though not set forth as a command from the Lord. If the unbelieving partner consented to remain with the Christian, the latter was not to put him or her away; for herein lay a difference between Judaism and Christianity, the unbelieving partner being sanctified by the believing one, else were their children unclean, but now, he adds, are they holy. Under the law no marriage was legitimate, nor could be legitimized, where one of the partners was of a race with which Israel was forbidden to intermarry, and the children of such unions were unclean. With Christians it is different. Hence separation on the part of the believer from the unbeliever was not called for. So the children now of such marriages are holy; i.e. they are not by reason of birth incapacitated from entering into the congregation of the Lord, to use the language of the Old Testament; for holy in this sense, we need scarcely add, is spoken of them as living on earth, not of their souls' standing before God. The difference between the unbelieving parent and the children should be noticed. The unbelieving partner was sanctified (■γιασταται) whilst the believing one lived, but the children were holy (■για). Circumstances could not change their condition, which flowed from their birth; whereas if death took away the Christian partner, the unbelieving one would be sanctified no longer.

But these directions only applied to those who were united in wedlock before conversion. Hence, he adds a few remarks, to guard the saints against the thought that with conversion a change in their outward condition should necessarily be effected. Such a thought, if entertained, might make some restless and dissatisfied, so he says, "Let every man abide in the same calling wherein he was called; "and" Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called, therein abide with God." (Chapter 7:20,24) So, to put an extreme case, but then a common one, a converted slave was to go on quietly in slavery until, if it should please God, emancipation was permitted him. That he was free to accept; but he was not free to run away, or to refuse to serve his master. Of this Onesimus was an example, how carefully did the apostle guard the rights of Philemon, and maintain the duty of a slave, preserving to the master the right and privilege of manumitting his brother in Christ.

Concerning virgins (chapter 7: 25) the term here applies to both sexes—Paul had no commandment; but he gave his judgment. "It was good for the present distress," he writes, "so to be." The advantages of that condition he sets forth (vv. 32-35), the approach of the end he recalls to mind (vv. 29-31); but celibacy he does not enforce. Marriage is not wrong; a second marriage was not forbidden, if in the Lord; but, he adds, here writing of a widow, "She is happier if she so abide after my judgment (γυναιχη). (See 5:26). And I think also that I have the Spirit of God." (v.40)

The next question taken up was that concerning the eating of things offered to idols, raised, it would seem, by the conduct of such as pleaded for their liberty or right (ελευθεριου) in such a matter. The apostle, while examining this plea, and dealing with it, raised a point which they had evidently overlooked. The inanity of the idol he fully admitted (v. 4), yet knowledge in such matters is not all; for knowledge puffs up, but love edifies, lit. builds up. A Christian was to act in this matter out of care for his brother. Due regard for a weak brother's conscience was to be shown, lest, emboldened by the act of the one who had knowledge sitting at meat in the idol—house, the weak brother, having conscience still of the idol, should partake of the food as of a thing sacrificed to idols, and thus his conscience be defiled, and he perish, a brother for whom Christ died. (Chapter 8)

Acting in such a way they would sin against Christ. Would they then plead for the exercise of their liberty? Why did they deny Paul the exercise of his in the preaching to them without charge? In this they showed their inconsistency. (Chapter 9) Of course his right to be supported was incontestable; he affirmed it. The principle of it all men owned. (Chapter 9:7) God's word too recognized it (v. 9), and the Lord upheld it. (Chapter 9:14; Luke 10:7) But Paul did not claim it, desiring rather the welfare of others among whom he labored. What were they doing? How great the difference between them and him! But his example was evidently lost on them. They were gratifying themselves, ministering to their bodies. He was deeply conscious of the need of soberness and watchfulness. He, whilst preaching to others, kept his body under, lest he should be a castaway; for one might preach most attractively to others, yet not submit oneself to the truth; be, after all, not really a Christian His practice proved he was not such a one. Liberty was a plea which should, in such matters as they pleaded for it, be carefully examined; and Paul's example it was well to keep in mind. Care for others should characterize them, and a walk like Paul's should instruct them.

Now the importance of watchfulness over oneself the history of Israel exemplified. How many came out of Egypt How few of them entered the land! Had they forgotten that history, written for

our admonition on whom the ends of the ages have come? Watchfulness became them, and a taking heed to themselves, lest they should fall, wherefore let them flee from idolatry. (Chapter 10:14) Would they make the question raised simply one of the exercise or not of a right? Had they forgotten that he that eat of the sacrifice was partaker of the altar? Now they were partakers of the Lord's table. Between that and the table of demons there was, there could be, no fellowship. If the former was their place and privilege, they could not be partakers of the latter. Our right, our liberty, is not all that we have to think of; another question has to be remembered, Is such a thing expedient? All things are lawful; but all things are not expedient or profitable. All things are lawful; but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but another's welfare. (Chapter 10:23,24) Yet there was to be no bondage in such a matter. Whatever was sold in the shambles they might freely eat, asking no questions about it for conscience' sake. The earth and its fullness are the Lord's. An invitation even to a heathen man's house to dine they need not refuse, if minded to go, and there they might freely eat of all that was set before them. But if told that food set before them had been offered to an idol, they were not to eat of it for the person's sake who told them, and for that one's conscience. Let them show real care for their brother's welfare, and that communion with demons must at all cost be refused; and let them do all to the glory of God, putting no stumbling-block in the way of any, but seeking their welfare, thus becoming imitators of Paul as he was of Christ.

Amid all that he had to blame there was one point, however, on which he could speak with approval. They remembered him in all things, and kept the ordinances which he had delivered to them. A practice, however, it would seem, was springing up amongst them, or at all events was pleaded for, of women praying or prophesying before others with their head uncovered just like men. In Christ, it is true, there is no distinction between the sexes. In creation, and in the assembly there is. Women were to remember that, and to show it by a covering on their head, if they prayed or prophesied. "The head of every man," writes the apostle, "is Christ; the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God. Every man praying or prophesying, having his head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven." Thus creation order is to be maintained, and the teaching of nature to be hearkened to. (Chapter 11:14,15) Would any gainsay this? We, says Paul, have no such custom, nor the assemblies of God. (v. 16) Then passing from the subject as to what became women in the circumstances indicated, he proceeded to deal with the disorders rife in the assembly when gathered together for the Lord's Supper. The scandalous conduct allowed by these saints he reproved and corrected, reminding them in the most touching way of that which might have checked such grave disorders; viz., that the showing of the Lord's death was the avowed purpose for which they met. What became them at such a time? Then giving them that revelation about the supper which he had received, he points out what apparently they had not perceived, how the Lord had been dealing with them for those gross and scandalous goings on. Sickness and even death had come in amongst them, the Lord thus judging because they had not judged themselves. Now, what did the supper set forth? The surrender of the Lord to death on behalf of others. What did their ways at it indicate? Selfishness of the grossest kind, in the presence of that which spoke of His dying for them.

From correcting the disorders at the supper, he goes on, as was natural, to treat of the exercise of gift in the assembly. (Chapters 12-14) Endowed richly with spiritual gifts, and living in a day when

revelations were vouchsafed by the Spirit, it became necessary, since the enemy was counterfeiting the working of the Holy Ghost, to guard the saints against being misled by the activity of demons. Hence at the outset of this question he gives a clear rule, by which a Christian could judge who was speaking in the power of the Spirit of God, and who was energized by a demon. No one speaking by the Holy Ghost would say, "Cursed is Jesus." No one could say "Lord Jesus" but by the Spirit of God. (Chapter 12:3) No demon is allowed to declare the dignities and exaltation of the Lord Jesus. God has thus provided a test by which the presence and energizing power of a demon can be detected.

Now, if the Holy Ghost is working, "there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations or services, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but the same God which worketh all in all." (vv. 46) The Corinthians, unmindful of these truths, were desirous of exercising the gift of tongues to their own exaltation and self-glorification; yet what was it but a gift given them, and by the Spirit just as He would? In truth, every gift was, as its name implied $\chi\alpha\rho\iota\sigma\mu\alpha$ favor bestowed on its possessor by the Holy Ghost according as He chose. The individual had not deserved it, nor could he claim it; he only received it; and each endowment of the Spirit was for the profit of all. Further, by the Spirit, who had bestowed the gifts, they were all baptized into one body, so were members one of another, being Christ's body.

Let them learn then from the ordinary treatment of the human body what became them who had received such gifts as members of Christ's body. (vv. 14-26) The more abundant honor is bestowed on the uncomely parts. Was that their thought about others? And did they think that the exercise of supernatural powers were the highest gifts to be desired? God had set the gifted ones in the assembly in an order of His selecting, in which such as could exhibit miraculous powers were far removed from being in the front rank. (vv. 28-30) Would they desire gifts? Let them desire the best. Howbeit there was something better than any spiritual gift; viz., the activity of the divine nature, love, in which they were sadly deficient, and without which the person, however richly endowed with gifts, was nothing? (Chapter 13)

After this he treats somewhat at length of the difference between speaking with tongues and prophesying, and lays down rules for their exercise, pointing out that if they would glory in speaking with tongues, he valued most the ability to prophesy, so as to speak to men to edification, to exhortation, and comfort. Then he ends this part of the subject with directions concerning women—what became them when all met together in assembly. There might be, those of them who could prophesy, but such were not to do it when the assembly was gathered together.

Looking back on all that we have gone through, one governing evil principle we plainly see was at work in Corinth—the gratification of the natural man in one way or another. Varied were the manifestations of it, from the indulgence of the grossest licentiousness to the enjoyment of intellectual pleasure. Self really ruled, whether at the table of the Lord, in the house of feasting, before the heathen tribunals, or in the assembly of God; and that evil so strongly noted at Corinth was at the bottom of the false doctrine which some of them (chapter 15:12) were imbibing, which denied the resurrection of the body. (vv. 32-34)

Now, the gospel which Paul preached, by which they were saved, made resurrection of the body a fundamental part of its teaching. (Chapter 15:14) And the Lord Jesus, who had' really died, had

been seen by many after He rose, and of witnesses to His resurrection Paul was one, who had seen Him as risen, though only in glory. The attesting witnesses to His resurrection were many and various. (vv. 5-11) But if there is no resurrection, Christ was not risen, and the consequences, if that was true, were serious. The testimony of God in that case was not true. The Corinthians, too, were yet in their sins Those who had fallen asleep in Christ had perished, and Christians such as Paul were of all men most miserable. Doubtless they had never intended to surrender all that. "Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird." (Proverbs 1:17) But self so rife among them was thus producing disastrous and deadly fruit. Christ was risen, so a resurrection is not only possible, but the resurrection of all who die is thereby made certain. He, the risen One, is the first-fruits of those fallen asleep. Yet all will not be raised at once; His own will be raised at His coming; and by-and-by, since death is to be annulled, all the ungodly dead must rise too. The consequences therefore of Christ's resurrection are traced out to the end. (vv. 20-28) How stupid as well as wrong was that new doctrine! Why were gaps in the ranks caused by those who died filled up, as others came forward and made a profession of Christianity by being baptized? If their new doctrine was true, "Let us eat and drink," says the apostle; "for tomorrow we die." Responsibility we may fling to the winds, and let self-gratification be the guiding star of our life. (vv. 29-34)

Then addressing the man who would argue it out, and would ask in a caviling way, "How are the dead raised up? and with what body do they come?" he calls such a one a fool. The operations of nature could teach him that resurrection is not impossible. The revelation of God would teach him that it is certain, and the study of God's works would show him that there are different kinds of flesh, and there are heavenly bodies and earthly bodies. The body then will be raised, and a change will pass over it. Sown a natural body it will be raised a spiritual body. We have born the image of the earthy man (χοικῆς); we shall also bear the image of the heavenly one (πυλινος) (vv. 35-50); and in a moment will that take place, so the suddenness of the Lord's coming is here dwelt on. Therefore, he concludes, "be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord." (v. 58)

In the last chapter (16) Paul dwells on service, and it may be read somewhat as a commentary on the verse just quoted; and surely part of it must have been a rebuke to many there who were glorying in gifts instead of caring for others. Directions for the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem were first given. (Chapter 16:19) Then Timothy, a worker for Christ, as Paul was, is commended to their care and consideration, should he visit them. The servant's responsibility to the Master is fully owned in the case of Apollos. Next those who devoted themselves to the saints, exemplified in the house of Stephanas, they were to acknowledge and submit to; and besides this they were to own servants, such as the three from Corinth, who had ministered to Paul's temporal necessities. No service too small, too commonplace, to be noticed, recorded, and remembered.

Then with a salutation from the assemblies of Asia, and especially from that in the house of Aquila and Priscilla at Ephesus, Paul appends his own salutation, and pronounces a withering curse on anyone who does not love the Lord Jesus Christ: "Let such an one be Anathema Maranatha;" i.e. devoted to destruction at the coming of our Lord.

He had written strongly, but faithfully; and his last words attested that it was all in love: "My love be with you all in Christ Jesus." Having dispatched the letter, he waited with intense anxiety to learn

its effect on them. He did not wait in vain.

C. E. S.

(Continued from page 167)

Spirit, Soul and Body in the Light of the New Testament

It is unnecessary for those who believe in the divine inspiration of the whole word of God to seek to prove from the New Testament that which we have already seen brought before us in the Old. We merely remark that examination will show to any who seek it, that Old Testament truths are all established in the New; and fully unfolded. But there are others which come before the reader of the New Testament respecting "spirit and soul and body;" for now He, on whom in Himself death had no claim, has gained the victory over death and all its power, and has brought "life and incorruptibility to light through the gospel." And this for man. Let us then first observe the distinct words (as in the Old) employed to distinguish "soul and spirit" in the New Testament.

It is generally admitted, by those who have had ability to examine it, that our Lord and His apostles quoted the Scripture from a Greek version of the Old Testament, then in common use, and not from the older Hebrew. This Greek translation of the Old Testament from the Hebrew was called the Septuagint. But by thus using it our Lord accredited this version, and set His seal upon it as the word of God. This is an important fact; for in this version we have before us the words then used as the equivalents in Greek to the Hebrew "rooagh" and "nephesh," words we may also expect to find distinctively employed therefore by the writers of the New Testament.

Now in this Greek translation of the Old Testament (MSS. of which still exist) we find in the passages we have already referred to; viz., Genesis 1:20,21,24, 30;2: 7, speaking of the soul's formation, the Greek word "psukee" as the equivalent to the Hebrew "nephesh." For spirit (Hebrews "rooagh") we find in Job 32:8, where its existence is declared, as also in Zechariah 12:1 and Amos 4:13, where its origin and formation at first by God are spoken of; in all these places, the Greek word "pneuma" is given as the equivalent for "rooagh." In this same translation also, where all three parts of which man is composed are spoken of in one chapter (Job 10) the same distinction as to the use of the words is maintained. "My soul (psukee) is weary of my life. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul (psukee)." (v. 1) "Thy visitation hath preserved my spirit (pneuma)." (v. 12) "Thou hast clothed me" (the man Job; i.e. both soul and spirit) "with skin and flesh, and hast fenced me with bones and sinews." (v. 11) In Ecclesiastes 12:7, Haggai 1:14, Ecclesiastes 1:14,17, Malachi 2:16, passages already referred to, the Septuagint has also "pneuma" for "rooagh."

In entire harmony, and using the same words for soul and spirit as the Septuagint version gives, we find all the scriptures of the New Testament. There is no confounding of them, there is no confusion. In coming to the New Testament, we are emerging from a night of shadows into the full light of day as to all that concerns man. "The darkness is passing, and the true light now shines." (1 John 2:8) But, apparently small thing as it is, is it not fitting that we should see in this entire harmony of both Old and New Testaments God's care of His word?" He is the Rock. His work is perfect." (Deuteronomy 32) Thus sang Moses, and this perfection is manifested in the little (as men speak) as well as in the greatest of His works. May it give to us, as we ponder it, increased confidence in Him who, Jehovah to Israel, is to us our FATHER (John 20:17), and while He will

permit us to trace both Him and His ways (1 Corinthians 2:10), while in His word He will speak to us and instruct us therein (John 6:45), as to all that it is necessary for us to know, may the knowledge of who He is humble us. While our Father, He is, nevertheless, the Alpha and the Omega, the unchangeable God. As He says, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty." (Revelation 1:8)

There is an hour when the three parts of which man is constituted, "spirit and soul and body," must for a time be separated. That hour is DEATH. "Man dieth and wasteth away," says Job (14: 10), when regarding the body, and Paul in the New Testament repeats it, but follows him beyond the grave. "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." (Hebrews 9:27) Death is the penalty attached to sin." Sin entered into the world, and death by sin." (Romans 5:12) It is that condition of the body when seen without a tenant. The body is the man's earthly house or tabernacle, the habitation of both spirit and soul, so that while in it he is said to be "at home in the body." While in the body also he is said to be "clothed." (Job 10:11 to 2., or 5. 4, 6) But he leaves the body at death. Thus we read, "Desiring rather to be absent from the body; again," "To depart and to be with Christ, which is far better" (Philippians 1:23); and again, "The body without the spirit (pneuma) is dead." (James 2: 26) Here we learn that at death the spirit is not there. But we also read that the death of the body does not affect the soul. "Fear not them that kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul" (psukee). (Matthew 10:28) At death the soul (psukee) is "required" (Luke 12:20), and then all that ministers merely to the body is left behind for others. The body only is that part in man which is mortal. In Hebrews 9:27 it is seen to be both capable of, and liable to, death, and after that also to corruption. (Compare Acts 13:36, 1 Corinthians 15:42, Romans 7:12, &c) "Flesh and blood (of which the body is formed) cannot inherit the kingdom of God." So the remark of Martha "Lord, by this time he stinketh" (John 11:39) though spoken of the man, could only refer to the body. Corruption she knew had begun in it, but the cry, "Lazarus, come forth!" from Him who was both the Creator and the Life, was answered at once by the whole man, "spirit, and soul, and body." "And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with grave, clothes, and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go." We see therefore that that part of the man, the body in which he dwelt, and in which he is said to be clothed, "Flesh and skin, bones and sinews," this only rested in that grave at Bethany, where corruption had already begun its work.

It was there in the condition of which James speaks "without the spirit" (pneuma); for the Lord had before said plainly, "Lazarus is dead." That the sorrow attendant upon death is also because of the absence of the soul (psukee), we learn from other scriptures. Paul said, "His soul (psukee) is in him," as a reason why they should not be troubled about the young man whose body they took up (Acts 20:10); but this only shows that the usual trouble and mourning at death are because the soul and spirit have left the body. (Compare also Acts 7:2) And it was certainly so that day at Bethany; for they well knew that Lazarus would "rise again" (v. 24), but at present, and from them, their brother was gone. H. C. A.

(To be continued, D.V)

Fragment: Two Classes of Religious Movement

There are two classes of religious movement at this time. The first takes the Word, sees man, the child of Adam, dead through sin, and will have nothing but Christ, His death, His resurrection, a heavenly state. The second-class clings to the world, observes worldly connections as an accepted system, and does not consider the world as that which must be traversed by motives which are outside of the system.

Fragment: Full Acceptance of Death and Resurrection with Christ

If we stop short of the full acceptance of death and resurrection with Christ, though we may have peace of conscience, we shall never have our hearts at rest, and, at the same time, we shall have no protection against the temptations of the world.

A Gospel Address on 2 Corinthians 4:5

I have read these chapters together because they present the gospel in the way in which Paul learned all the leading points of it. There was a certain man very remarkable for his self-righteousness—Saul of Tarsus. He thought he could put forth his power mightily to vindicate God's cause against One whom he thought an impostor—Jesus of Nazareth; and when he saw the light of the glory shine down on Stephen, it had no effect on him whatever; it only stirred his heart up to go to the high priest to get letters to Damascus. All the hard thoughts he had about Christ had a response in the heart of Christ. He looked down and saw that man with those clothes laid at his feet; and He said, "That is the man I will take up; and I will put him into Stephen's place, whether he likes it or not." The Lord called him as he went down to Damascus "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" Saul's answer was, "Who art thou, Lord?" "I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." What gentleness of the Lord Jesus! The next word is, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" The Lord put that man for the first time into the place of an enquirer about the person of the Lord Jesus. He says, "The first time I ever asked the question, who art thou? was when I saw the divine glory shining down, and heard the voice of Him who I thought was an impostor calling me by name; what could I do but give up all to Him?" He gives up all his thoughts, and says, "I know Him, and I am at His disposal." Peter, James, and John did not know the Lord Jesus in this way till He was risen from the dead. Both Peter and Paul had to learn what was the main object for which Christ came into the world; and they got the light of it after He rose from the dead. The revelation of Christ as being gone into heaven had to be made known to Peter. Now, how many of you can say, I know Him? Do you know Him? After what sort of fashion? With any sort of intimacy? When I was nineteen, if friends talked to me about Christ, I knew nothing; but when the Lord came and introduced Himself to me I thought that a person was close to me, and that everything I had done was out in the light; but instead of coming to condemn me, there was nothing but love in Him. I could have told you who Jesus Christ was, and who Caesar was; but as to knowing Himself, I was utterly ignorant. But as He made His passages of love into my heart, out came the confession of what I was. I have had forty-seven years' apprenticeship under Christ; and of all the things on which my heart dwells as to eternity, I say, "I have got One who is gone there before me."

God says, "Let there be light." (v. 6) The One who spoke light out of darkness could speak light into darkness, as He does into the heart of the poor sinner. I want to call attention to what Paul had to learn. Peter learned it too, that it was not what men did to Christ in crucifying Him that contained the full meaning of His death, but there was a "determinate counsel of God." He let men run their whole course, because He could not be a just God, and the Justifier of him that believeth, without the blood of Christ. They had God in the world, and they would not have Him there, and now the blood is in heaven. They say, we will not have that either. It is the world, not the earth, spoken of here the world, the system man has set up to make himself happy without God. God comes into the scene, and man says, "I will not have you." "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them." He did not come raking up their transgressions. God saw that reconciliation was what was wanted. He saw that unless He could take that enmity

out of my heart, we could never come together. And now Paul says, "He has committed unto us the word of this reconciliation." The unconverted say, "I cannot admit that I need reconciling to God, or else I should be lost." "Oh," says the Christian, "that is just where I get my rest!" Even a child very soon displays will. What does God say? "Very unlike my Son; I cannot get on with it." Does He turn away? No; He says you want reconciling. "You are in a path of I will 'and' I won't: it leads to hell. My Son went through the world, and only said I will' twice, and that when it was My will." Does God deal with will in man? Yes; He sent out the apostles and others with this word, "Be ye reconciled to God."

Let me say a word about the need of this reconciliation, because I knew so much about it for nineteen years. When I learned I was going down a sloping path to hell, I set myself to work out righteousness, and worked myself nearly to death, having no idea of doing things by halves. And what did I see all this come to? God says, "I must do the work." What! that no one but God was to have the credit of salvation? That I was to come as a poor sinner? Why that will let me down so very low! It just proved that I wanted reconciling. I was saying, up to that time, "I don't like Thy way." Perhaps some of you are saying to God, "I don't like Thy way; I must do something." God says, "I did it eighteen hundred years ago. My Son died. I shall not do the work again. If you come into My presence, saying, I am going to do everything for myself, I say, I do not know you." Are you going to displace everything in heaven? Are you going to undo the work of Christ, and bring in a new way? That work has stood before God for more than eighteen hundred years, and are you, an upstart creature, going to say, no that work must be set aside, and a way must be made for me, to let me figure out and show what I am?

In the last verse we get the basis of it all. If we pause on verse 21, we shall find how different God's thoughts are from man's thoughts. "For He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Very well put by the apostle in a few words, because we cannot say, Who can this be? for we know there was only One who "knew no sin." It might be placed over the Lord Jesus in heaven, "This Man hath done nothing amiss;" but more than that, "He knew no sin." "Holy, harmless, undefiled," &c. God made Him to be sin; now what does man think about that? I heard it said, "I don't think there is any justice about that;" but man, when he undertakes to judge God, is in the dark. It would never have been just or righteousness if He had been made sin contrary to His will. I just remark, that in all these infidel reasonings men take things for granted that are not true. Had not God a right to do as He liked? Had not He a right to sit in heaven from all eternity? Yes. Had not He a right to leave that place, and take His place on the cross? Man must keep his own place, or else he comes into judgment. Who can say to God, Thou must not be here? All that it brings out is, that when the gospel is presented to man, he says, "I do not like God, or His ways." It shows another thing, that the wisdom of God was such that He knew how to take the absolute ruin of man, and make that the means of the greatest glory to Himself. Look at man in the garden; he turned his back upon God, and followed Satan. How did He remedy it? Could man? No; God says, "I will step in there, and turn that very ruin to My own praise." How did He do it? His Son comes down to drink that cup of wrath for sinners; the Son of God was made sin. He is the only Person yet who has ever tasted the wrath of God against sin, and I am bold to say He was the only One who could taste it fully. Take a man who goes to "his own place:" he knows what it is to be separated from God; but how can a finite being learn what is infinite? But when the Son of God came into the world He took the cup of

wrath. Who will measure what He went through? the thought of God hiding His face from Him? Many a believer has tried to measure sin, and he says, "No, I cannot; I find the measure in the cross which I cannot measure." He was forsaken of God; that is the sort of God who sent Peter and Paul with this message to poor sinners. "I have made Him, who knew no sin, to be sin for you."

Then you get the other thought brought out in the latter part of the verse, "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." God hid His face from His Son, just as the Jews and Gentiles were mocking Him; but He did not mean it to end there. He says, "Now come to My right hand, and let Me show the world what I think of You; and everyone who comes to Me in Thy name shall receive a hearty welcome." It is as simple as possible. Suppose I had been into a foreign land, and saved the life of some man out of a river. I return, and I want a favor of some of you who are akin to him; I come to you; you say, "I do not know you." I reply, "Have you heard from your son lately?" You tell me all that has passed, and I say, "I am the man who saved him." "Oh," you say, "what will I not give you! Come and sit down, and make my home your home." Just so with God and Christ; if you come in your own name He does not know you, if you come in His name you get a hearty welcome. The thing is as clear as possible, and you have firm ground to go upon if you come in His name.

What is the connection between this and human righteousness? Human righteousness is, I do this and that, and when I have done, God forms the judgment of it. God's righteousness is God saying, "I have done something, and I want someone to recognize it, and to come in His name." That is heart-work when we come to know a loving Saviour; faith-work when we come to think of what God has done. Then there is conscience-work; you cannot look into my conscience, or I into yours. We see a beautiful conscience-work in the apostle. He says we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ; not the great white throne—that is at the end of the thousand years. Those who appear there will never appear at the other judgment-seat. Here it is like a man who has been away from home; he comes back and settles up his accounts in a loving way: good servants like their masters to keep short reckonings. When Christ gathers all His people together there, it is a question of how He shall place them in the kingdom. If I speak of appearing in a place, I mean I shall be manifest. Paul says, my doctrine is manifest, and we must all be manifested. People do not like that: what, all come out there? I will tell you why they do not like it, they have not been manifested to themselves yet; but you cannot escape it if you mean to be in the glory. But stop; what are you afraid of? Who are you going to meet there? The Lord Jesus Christ. No mistake about His having known you as a sinner, and as a failing saint He does not expect you to be just like Himself. He expects a poor sinner saved by grace. Will it be a very painful thing to be there? He will say, as He did to Peter, "I had not a bit of faith in you, but you had a bit of faith in Me, and that is what brought you here." Will it be painful if He says, You owe it all to Me; do not go and say, that you did it yourself. Are you afraid to appear before Him there? What does God think about me? what do saints of God think about me? what do I think about myself? If I have not weighed myself up in God's presence, no wonder I am not at ease at the thought of being at the judgment-seat. Is your thought about yourself anything but the blood of Christ as to acceptance? I would rather come cleansed by that blood than in my own righteousness even if it were possible.

What do I think of all that blessed favor into which I am brought? Christ is gone into heaven, and I am to go in there. It is what I think of Christ, not what I think of myself; it clears out every thought of

myself. Where are poor sinners who do not know they want cleansing by blood? Lost! lost! lost! No matter who you are—either a poor sinner with a Saviour, or a poor sinful man cleaving to his sinfulness. Paul says, I do not come to teach you human righteousness, but Jesus Christ who is revealed to you and me. The eye of that Lord looks down on us now. When He was on earth He looked down on a little company like this; He knew Nicodemus at the first glance, and He knew the woman of Samaria at the first glance. As He looks down on us, does He see one who knows His blood, His finished work, or one who cares nothing about Him? I am connected with One who is the center of all God's purposes; I know that all that is true of a believer, and a great deal more. It is wonderful, God's way of setting aside all that is of the flesh, and making a way that lets naughty sinners down in self-abhorrence, and makes them say, "My trust is in the Lord." Who else should ruined sinners trust in? Everything in connection with sin about me makes me loathe myself, and cling to Him and say, Christ for me.

G. V. W.

Fragment: the Cross

The cross is the center of the universe, according to God, the basis of our salvation and our glory, and the brightest manifestation of God's own glory, the center of the history of eternity.

The Revised Version of the New Testament

The more the revised version of the New Testament is examined the more apparent are the honesty and the industry of the revisers. The mistakes into which they have been betrayed are in no case, as far as can be seen, the result of either theological or ecclesiastical bias; but they have sprung rather from lack of spiritual understanding, and from dependence, perhaps, upon scholarship, instead of upon the teaching of the Holy Ghost. For example, Philippians 2:10 now reads, "That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow," &c. The Greek will undoubtedly admit this translation, as it would also that which the revisers have superseded; viz., "at the name of Jesus." This being the case, the decision must be grounded upon the truth involved, and once accepting this principle, the difficulty disappears. To bow the knee in the name of Jesus, and to confess that He is Lord to the glory of God the Father, would be salvation. But this could not be in this Scripture, inasmuch as even infernal beings "things under the earth" are included. 'To bend at the name of Jesus would simply express, willingly or unwillingly, acknowledgment of His authority and supremacy, and this is what God has declared that all in heaven, earth, and hell shall do. Hence, while the alteration may seem to be slight, the truth implicated is of the gravest importance.

2 Corinthians 3:18 is another illustration of the misleading character of mere critical knowledge. As revised it runs, "But we all, with unveiled face reflecting as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." As an alternative translation it stands in the margin, "Beholding as in a mirror." Had the truth of the passage been understood, it would have been instantly perceived those etymological considerations could not govern, as in this case they appear to have done, the translation. The apostle had been drawing a contrast between the ministration of condemnation and death, and the ministration of righteousness and of the Spirit (3: 7-14); i.e. between law and grace; and in connection with it, he recalls the fact that when Moses came out from the presence of Jehovah, he "put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not steadfastly look to the end of that which is abolished." For in truth, being under law, and having, moreover, failed under it, and become amenable to its righteous penalties, the very glory which shone in the face of Moses was their condemnation. They could not endure to behold it, because, as sinners, and without atonement, to come into contact with the holiness of God was to encounter destruction. But under grace all is changed. Christ has glorified God concerning the question of our sins, and God, having being glorified in Him, has glorified Christ in Himself (John 13:31,32), so that the glory that shines in His face tells not of condemnation and death, but of accomplished redemption, and the putting away of believers' sins forever; for if the One who went down into death under our sins has been raised from the dead, and put into the glory of God, it is manifest that our sins are forever gone. The face of Christ is therefore unveiled, and we, unlike the Israelites, in respect of Moses, can look

upon the glory that is there. displayed; indeed, we delight to gaze upon it, inasmuch as it is the indubitable proof that our sins are completely cleared away. Moreover, as the latter part of the Scripture tells us, we are transformed by the glory, through the power of the Spirit, in the very act of beholding it—transformed, changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit. The two thoughts are thus: that through grace we are able to look upon the unveiled face of the Lord, and that the glory we behold in that face is used to transform us into His image. It will therefore be seen that to put the words “in a mirror,” even after “beholding,” as in the margin, confuses the teaching of the passage; while to translate “reflecting as in a mirror,” is to miss it altogether. But more than this, it adds the error that we reflect the glory of the Lord before we are transformed, and that we are changed, or transformed, into the image of our glorified Lord by reflecting His glory!

It is a matter of great regret also that the Revisers did not use their opportunity to give the true sense of Colossians 1:19. They have retained the added words “the Father,” rendering the passage, “For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in Him should all the fullness dwell.” The very fact of the words being added shows that it is interpretation rather than translation, and this might have thrown them back to a more patient study of the context, which brings out in a special manner the glorious dignity of the Person, the preeminence and headships of Christ. They might have then discovered the possibility of a rendering with which many of our readers are familiar; viz., “For in Him all the fullness was pleased to dwell” the only one, it may fearlessly be said, that exactly represents the original, harmonizes with the context, and expresses the mind of the Spirit of God.

We now turn gratefully to some very decided improvements; and, first of all, to those of an ecclesiastical character. In John 10:16, the Revisers have rightly substituted “flock” for “fold.” There is little doubt that ecclesiastical leanings led to the false rendering, with the object of bolstering up a particular church establishment, and thereby condemning all who should venture to stray from this human fold. But Judaism is the fold of John 10, and out of this our Lord expressly tells us that He leadeth His sheep. (v. 3) The fold thenceforward ceases, and the sheep, whether gathered out from among the Jews, or afterward from among the Gentiles, were to form one flock.

It is also a great advantage to have the word “ordained” (which was gratuitously inserted in the Authorized Version) omitted from Acts 1:22. In Mark 3:14, “ordained” has been exchanged for “appointed.” So also in Acts 14:23, the word “appointed” replaces “ordained.” Knowing how largely the episcopal element was represented in the revision company, and the increasing pretensions of sacerdotalism, and its claims for priestly sanctity because of “ordination,” such changes were hardly to be expected, and fill us with corresponding gratitude.

Another slight change in Acts 20 proves the sincerity of the Revisers. In verse 17, we find that Paul sends for the elders of the Church in Ephesus. When addressing them he says, “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers,” &c. (v. 28) In the revised version bishops “supersede” overseers. This will make plain to the English reader that the elders of the assembly were bishops, and hence that modern episcopacy finds no support in the word of God.

Passing to other changes, we note with great satisfaction the faithful rendering of 1 John 3:4. It ran, as our readers will remember, as follows: “Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the

law: for sin is the transgression of the law;" a translation not only serious in its consequences, but amounting to a falsification of the word of God. For inasmuch as the law was given to the Jews, and to them alone—if this were a true definition of sin—Gentiles could never have committed it! How different is the statement of the Spirit of God as now given by the Revisers, "Every one that doeth sin doeth also lawlessness: and sin is lawlessness." Sin is thus shown in its true character and essences consisting in independence of God, doing one's own will with freedom from every other law, and thus lawlessness. To the Jew sin, in addition, was transgression of the law; but sin in Jew and Gentile alike is lawlessness, a definition therefore that leaves no loophole of escape for any one upon the face of the earth, but brings in the whole world as alike guilty before God.

In 1 Corinthians 9:20 there is an addition of great importance. It formerly read, "And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law," &c. The Revisers have restored the clause omitted after "as under the law; viz., not being myself under law." Many of our readers know that all competent scholars have long confessed that this clause was most unjustifiably rejected; but it is a great gain in the interests of the truth to have it now brought before the mass of believers in this country. Rightly interpreted, it is the settlement of that hotly contested question as to whether the Christian is still under law; for while no additional evidence is needed for those who understand what Christianity is, and the truth of the Christian's position, the new place into which he is brought through the death and resurrection of our blessed Lord, it is of immense importance, in dealing with candid souls, to be able to point to the fact, that the apostle Paul himself carefully states that he himself was not under the law, which is not, as he explains, to be "without law to God; but under law (a different word altogether from what he had employed before—one meaning "enlawed;" i.e. brought under authority) to Christ."

The alteration in Revelation 22:14 fully warranted—will be acceptable to most, and is most valuable as a closing testimony to the value of the precious blood of Christ. "Blessed are they that wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter in by the gates into the city."

There are many improvements and also defects other than those indicated. These our readers must note for themselves. But there are few who will not recognize in the whole result matter for thanksgiving to God. May He lead His people into an ever-increasing acquaintance with His word, and bring them more and more under its sanctifying power through the energy of the Holy Ghost.

E. D.

Reconciliation

“You hath He reconciled.” (Colossians 1:21) This is a thing to give thanks for now. If I am to return in heart and mind to God, I must be reconciled. God saw the need, and from the fullness and perfectness of His own love He did it all. “We have known and believed,” &c. Such is the condition of the Christian; and if you ask a proof of it, this is the answer: He laid down His life. “You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath He reconciled.” Not only have we a wicked nature in us (“children of wrath”), but more than this, we have done wrong, thought wrong, spoken wrong; and then, besides that, our hearts are alienated, the sure consequence of sin. Did you ever see a servant or a child do wrong, and glad to meet his master or parent afterward? Does not the sense of having done wrong keep them away from those against whom they have sinned? Yes, alienation of heart there is, because we do not want God to come and say to us, as to Adam, “Where art thou?” There is, first, lust, then the commission of sin, then the mind turned away and at enmity. Then, in this condition, God comes to bring it back. How can He do it? Ruined, unhappy, wretched as I am, if God is for me, I can come to Him. Grace can come and make me happy. God comes in grace to win me back when thus alienated, and tells me He has dealt about my sins. This will bring me back. Law convicts, but never wins back—never. It is as though we said to God, my conscience makes me dislike you, makes me, unhappy with you; take away my sins, and I will come back. This certainly is in substance what the gospel of God says to us, both about our sin and about His grace.

And will He half reconcile? No, He has completely done it: “In the body of His flesh through death.” There were you under your sins. Christ came as a real, true man about these sins that are distressing you and keeping you away from God. I see Him made sin, bearing to take the dreadful cup of God’s wrath; all the sins laid upon Him like the scapegoat. Jesus Christ coming in a body, not with a message that it shall be done. No, the thing is done. God has visited sinners in love. I meet God by faith there where He had met me, and I see in the body of Christ’s flesh, through death, He has put sin entirely away. I have nothing to do with it. Who could do anything to add to such a work? Men may wag their heads at it in derision, but the work is done fully and completely. Christ is gone up, and He is gone to present you holy, and unblameable, and unproveable in His sight. Was there any mistake, any uncertainty? No; the soul knows and feels that God has done it. If He has me in His sight, He must have me holy, and unblameable, and unproveable, and He has made me so; and when He finished the work He sat down: “After He had offered one sacrifice for sins, forever sat down on the right hand of God.” Well, then, may it be said, “Giving thanks unto the Father, who hath made us meet,” &c.

The work is done; and now God sends “to declare,” as the apostle says, “His righteousness.” Did you accomplish it? Did you do anything towards it? Nothing but your sins; He has made peace. Our souls, then, can rest in this blessed peace. And it is not only that I have this peace. No; God has peace for me; and the nearer I get to God, the more I see the fullness and perfectness of this peace. It is God’s peace, and I have peace in it. All there is according to His own perfectness; He rests in Christ’s work for my sin. If He had nothing more to require, what can I require? All the

ground of my connection with God is, that His love has been manifested in putting away my sins; and I have peace in that. If you think you must satisfy God as a creditor, you do not know God. God is love, and He is known through the cross. If I own God as my Saviour and Lord, it marks all my character; I have new objects and new motives. I may do the same things, harmless in themselves perhaps; but I have a different motive in doing them when I know God. It is not what a man does that marks his character, but why he does it. When I know God in Christ, I go and do right things because I love God. I may be outwardly correct and moral, but the spring and motive may be all known at once. A child may see, if you say He has translated me from the power of darkness into the kingdom of His dear Son. If I have peace with God, there is nothing between Him and me. The peace is made; it is a thing accomplished. Now, are you reconciled to God? Grace, and glory, and love, then, are brought before your soul by the Holy Ghost, and you will be changed into the same image from glory to glory, &c. If I know I am to be like Him at the day of His appearing, I shall be purifying myself, "even as He is pure now." May the Lord work in our hearts by His own Spirit, conforming us who believe into the image of Jesus, soon to be conformed to the Firstborn in glory. J. N. D.

Spirit, Soul and Body in the Light of the New Testament

Having thus seen that death is the dissolving of the tie that has kept together the man, "spirit and soul and body," and having noticed that he is variously spoken of as seen sometimes connected with the one part of his being and sometimes with the other, we may now ask, What light has the Lord been pleased to give us as to the place of the spirit and soul (or the man) when they have left the body? To this we will now turn, first remarking that, in seeking an answer, we shall have brought before us of necessity the wondrous way whereby Christianity triumphs over all the misery that sin and its consequence (death) have introduced into this world.

First, then, what is death to the believer? The Lord says to the poor thief, dying by His side, "Today shalt thou be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43) These words, addressed directly to the man, did not refer to his body; for that neither remained with the Lord, nor entered paradise with Him that day. The Lord's body was borne to Joseph's tomb, while the mangled remains (John 19:32) of the poor malefactor were "taken away" by other hands (v. 31) to find some other, and apparently in man's esteem, a more suited and fitting resting-place for such as he than the rich man's sepulcher. The Lord's body, resting there three days, saw "no corruption," while the other returned to its kindred dust. But it mattered little. The veil had been lifted from that dark future that lay beyond the grave, by His own hand who came to bring "life and incorruptibility to light," and to remove the sting from death. And what the Lord said to the thief He meant and fulfilled. The rejected and dying Saviour thus leaving the world, and the first believer who, dying, left it when the way had been opened by Him through death—these two can never more be separated. The words, "Today—thou—with me," eternally linked together thus, declare the extent and the value of the blessed work He accomplished that day for EVERY weary child of Adam's fallen race who will trust in Him. And this paradise was not a place that only existed for that moment (i.e. for the Lord ere He ascended) as some have taught. It was the place called also by the apostle Paul "the third heaven" (2 Corinthians 12) an existing place then long after the death of the thief; for he says he was "caught up into paradise." When there he had lost all consciousness of the existence of the body; for he says, "Whether in the body I cannot tell, or whether out of the body I cannot tell." Yet he retained the consciousness of a man; he heard words which it was not possible for him to utter.

Inexpressibly blessed was it to be in such a place, and freed from every hindrance, as one quietly reading the chapter must admit. And the blessedness of the place is also shown in the only other passage where this word “paradise” is used. The promise made to him that overcometh in the message to the Church at Ephesus (Revelation 2:7) is, that “He shall eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.” Paradise then, only named in these three places, is shown to us as a place of unspeakable, yet conscious pleasure, and rest, and delight. It is with the Lord, which in itself is enough, but it is also to be there to “hear” and to “feed,” which, though it may be figurative language, conveys to us clearly enough the conscious enjoyment of the place.

With this instant happiness of the believer after death all the Scriptures of the New Testament agree. Thus “to depart” is to be with Christ, which, he adds, is “far better” (Philippians 1:23); and he (Paul) who says that it is “far better” knew more of communion and fellowship with Him when on earth (v. 8) than many. He knew perhaps more of it than any saint has since known. Yet it is “far better,” for he says to be “absent from the body” is to be “present with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8) Peter also speaks of the putting off of the body (“my tabernacle” 2 Peter 1:14), yet looks onward to the day when he, together with those who have fed the flock, shall receive at the appearing of the Chief Shepherd “a crown of glory that fadeth not away.” (1 Peter 5:4) But as to the meantime, Jesus had said to him, “Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterward.” (John 13) And where He went, and whither Peter followed Him, we have already seen. Similar, if figurative, is the testimony of Luke 16:22.

Having spoken of Hebrews 9:27, it remains to say a word as to the future (that which is after death) for the unbeliever. The veil is lifted here also, and we read, “After death the judgment.” This is the awful and dark shadow that falls from the future upon the deathbed of the unbeliever, that renders it terrible. Into the world’s judgment, my Christian reader, you can never come. “He that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but is passed from death unto life.” (John 5:24) This is the record concerning such, though all shall appear (be made manifest) “at the judgment-seat of Christ.” (2 Corinthians 5:10) But though the believer cannot come into judgment, there is a resurrection of “judgment.” (John 5:29) How solemn is the declaration, “He hath appointed a day in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom He hath ordained.” (Acts 17:31) These judged are men “spirit, soul, and body;” for we read again, “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God... and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.” (Revelation 20:12) For as the death of the body was the severance for a time of the tie that bound “spirit and soul and body” together, so the destruction of death is the reformation of that tie, now no more to be severed, but to pass, one complete man, into all the horrors of the judgment and the second death—a death NOT marked by the separation of the parts, “spirit and soul and body,” but by their eternal union; for we are bidden to “fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” (Matthew 10:28) My reader, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.” (Revelation 20:6) To this first resurrection, and to one special class in it, “those who are alive and remain,” we will now turn ere we close this subject.

We have already seen that death is the fruit of sin, and that man in Hebrews 9:27 is said to be both capable of, and liable to, death, because there he is speaking of the fruit of sin, and of those who,

not having faith in Him who has once come, are not looking for Him to come the second time. But he immediately speaks of another class who are thus looking for His second coming. These may die or fall asleep, but, though capable, they are not liable to death. "We shall not all sleep," he says. There are some who "are alive and remain" when the Lord comes (1 Thessalonians 4), and who do not die, but are immediately changed. But what is changed? Spirit and soul? No; Philippians 3:21 says it is the body. There is a natural body (which we have), and there is a spiritual body, for which spirit and soul are waiting, and which Paul calls "our house which is from heaven." This we shall have "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump." (1 Corinthians 15) When He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. "We look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: who shall change our vile body" (or body of humiliation), "that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto Himself." (Philippians 3:21) Death then has no claim upon or power over such, and there is no separation of "spirit and soul and body." Death as to them He has met, and him who had the power of death and all its claims He has satisfied—all, and all that the holiness and righteousness of God demanded on account of sin. God was glorified too in it by Him, and it is proved by His own place now, so that "in a moment" they are to be caught away in the power of life. "That where I am there ye may be also." They do not die, but "mortality is swallowed up of life." (2 Corinthians 5:4) Such is our hope: to see and to be with Him who says, "Fear not... I am He that liveth and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."

As Christians we have ever to remember that the soul is the seat of the affections and desires, which must be, if we desire to grow in divine things, kept under control, so that the word of God may at all times be allowed to come in "quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul (psukee) and spirit (pneuma), and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4) The word "sensual" in Jude 19 is "psukeekoi," and may be translated "soulish;" i.e. they were controlled by it., Similar was the desire of the man of Luke 12:19: "Soul, thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." This has been the language of very many since. The natural affections, also, though formed of God, are strikingly referred to in many places as possible hinderers in the path of faithful discipleship if allowed to govern us. How many have made shipwreck on this rock! Among others thus "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26)

Fitting in the midst of all the snares that surround us, the varied attractions for the mind and understanding, the varied desires and affections of the soul—the "what shall we eat, and what shall we drink, and" (not least, the fashions of the day) "the wherewithal shall we be clothed," of the body-fitting, amidst all this, is the prayer of the apostle. And may it be increasingly our prayer for each other. "And I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Thessalonians 5:23) (Continued from page 196)

H. C. A.

And Having Done All, to Stand

Thou gav'st Thyself for me:
Then may I stand
Steadfastly, true to Thee,
In the foe's land.
For surely Thou art worth
The standing for;
Thou who this hostile earth
Hast trod before;
Finding no help or friend
To be Thy stay;
Yet faithful to the end
Of the dark way.
So may it be with me,
In these dark days
Looking alone to Thee,
Seeking Thy praise;
Standing for Thee alone,
Held by Thine hand;
And having all things done,
Yet still, to stand. A. L. M.

A Spiritual Difficulty

My Dear

You say that you want the assurance that God has spoken to you individually, and that without this you cannot have peace. You admit that you are a guilty, undone sinner, and that there is no Saviour but Christ, and that He is abundantly able to save you; but, in addition to this, you feel that you must have the conviction that God invites you personally before you are justified in expecting His saving power put forth on your behalf. This, I gather from your friend's letter, is a fair statement of your case.

Permit me then to point out the serious mistake—but not an uncommon one—into which you have fallen, and one which, if persisted in, cannot fail, through the subtlety of Satan, to rob you of all enjoyment of the knowledge of salvation. The fact is, God does not testify to sinners in this way. The testimony He renders is to CHRIST, His own beloved Son, and His testimony is to the completeness and the efficacy of His finished work on the cross. He tells you indeed that you have sinned and come short of His glory, and that it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment (Romans 3:23; Hebrews 9:27); and thereon He proclaims that a work has been accomplished, on the foundation of which He is able righteously to save every one that comes to Him in the name of Christ. The question therefore you have to ask yourself is, Do you believe God's testimony to Christ? But it is possible that you may ask for the character of this testimony. The grand testimony God has rendered to Christ is His resurrection from the dead; and hence the prominence which this fact obtains in the apostolic preaching. Take an example or two. "Him," said Peter to the Jews, "hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." (Acts 5:31) "If Christ is not raised," said Paul, "your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins" (1 Corinthians 15:17) Again, "Who was delivered for our offenses, and was raised again for our justification." (Romans 4:25) God thus set His seal upon the work of Christ in raising Him out of death; and in glorifying Him at His own right hand, He declares in His word, not only that all His claims upon the sinner have been met by the perfect efficacy of the sacrifice on the cross, but also that He has been so glorified in that death, that He can, in perfect consistency with all that He is—in harmony with all His attributes—and indeed with glory to Himself, save every poor sinner who receives His testimony to the death and resurrection of Christ.

But you may perhaps reply, how do I know that this testimony is addressed to me? Again, I must remind you, this is to miss the point. The testimony is concerning Christ; but the message of the gospel is to you, and to all who will hear. Nothing can be more evident. "Preach the gospel," said our Lord to His disciples, "to every creature." (Mark 16:15) "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) "There is no difference... for whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." (Romans 10:11-13) With such Scriptures it is impossible for the utmost ingenuity of unbelief to contend that any single soul on the face of the earth has not sufficient warrant for faith.

If you, however, still say that you are not sure of being included, I would once more very affectionately remind you that your attention is directed to yourself instead of to Christ. It is Christ that fills the eye of God, and it is with Christ that His testimony is concerned, and as soon as you look away from yourself to Christ, and receive His message concerning Christ, all your difficulties will disappear.

Having said this, I may now point out another thing. You have been wanting the conviction that God has spoken to you. This you cannot have until you receive His testimony. Receive it, and you will know immediately that He has both spoken to you and made you the object of His love. "He that hath received His testimony hath set to His seal that God is true." (John 3:33) "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made Him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of His Son." To know therefore you must believe, and believing you will be able joyfully to say, "He loved me, and gave Himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

Believe me, dear,

Yours affectionately in Christ,

E. D.

To grow in the knowledge of Christ is our life and our privilege.

Fragment: Satisfied with Christ

Christ perfectly glorified His Father. He rendered testimony to the holiness of His will by accepting it altogether. We, on the contrary, seek but too often to exalt ourselves even among our brethren: we want their esteem and their respect. Christ sought but one thing—the glory of His Father, and not His own. For it, and so for us, He always went lower and lower down in this world. Wherefore also God highly exalted Him. He is accepted fully and on high; and if God is satisfied with Christ, we also ought surely to be satisfied with Him. We can find all repose for our hearts in Christ. Are you tired of the world, weary of the desert of sin, of strife? Well then look to Christ, where only is rest, perfect rest for conscience and for heart.

Fragment: Self Given up

In Christ self is wholly given up. He gave, not sought, Himself.

Fragment: Walking with God

It is a happy thing so to walk with God that He can use us as His voice, when He would speak to poor sinners.

Fragment: the Bible

The Bible, in its object, is a whole, which presents to us God coming forth from His essential fullness to manifest all that He is, and to bring back into the enjoyment of this fullness with Himself those who, having been made partakers of His nature, have become capable of comprehending and loving His counsels and Himself.

The Christian Walk

We find in Ephesians 4:5, a very seasonable unfolding of the principles of the Christian walk, of the height of the principles which ought to govern it, and of its moral elevation, to which I desire to draw the attention of your readers. In chapter 4 the apostle, after having developed Christian doctrine as to our relations with the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (relations founded on these two names, and afterward the relations of the Church with Christ), begins his exhortations to Christians with respect to their walk. They ought not to walk as the rest of the nations in the corruption which was bound up with the state of darkness in which they were found. They had not so learned the Christ, if they really knew what the truth is in Jesus; namely, to have put off the old man and put on the new man, which is created according to God in righteousness and holiness of truth; for there is the truth such as it is in Jesus, not that we should strip off, but, inasmuch as we are risen with Him, that we have put off the old man and put on the new man. And here is its character created according to God, not only the absence of sin, which was realized in the first Adam, but according to God fully revealed to one who has already the knowledge of good and evil, and created according to the thoughts of God Himself as to good and evil, according to the estimate which God by His very nature has of good and evil. What an immense privilege! The new man born of God is, in his nature, the reflection, and the intelligent reflection, of the nature of God Himself. Wherefore the apostle John says, "He cannot sin, because he is born of God." Also we find in the epistle to the Colossians, which is parallel to this, "renewed into knowledge according to the image of Him who has created Him." Such is the first principle of the Christian walk, a nature which comes from God, created as an expression and reflection of what He is in righteousness and holiness of truth. Here it is a life, a nature, that which we are.

The second principle is the presence of the Holy Spirit. "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God by whom you have been sealed for, the day of redemption." It is God Himself who dwells in us by His Spirit. Nothing unworthy of such a guest, unworthy of God Himself, ought to go on in us. Also our walk should be characterized by that which characterizes God Himself, for His love is active in us; consequently we find here love also, and not only righteousness and holiness. We forgive one another, even as God in Christ has forgiven us. Christ being ascended on high, and thus the righteousness of Christ being established, ourselves perfectly purified by the blood of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is come down, and the bodies of the believers are become the temple of God. It is the seal of God put upon their persons, the earnest of their entire redemption, and of their part in the inheritance of glory.

The walk of the Christian ought then to be the manifestation of the divine nature, and of the ways of God in grace towards us. Such is the instruction which chapter 4 gives us, but chapter v. furnishes still more light. Who is it that has been the expression of this nature in man down here below? Evidently it is the Saviour, the image of the invisible God. Thus God Himself becomes the expression of this divine life in man, the model of our conduct. Let us examine our chapter 5 in this point of view, that we may draw from it the instruction it contains.

“Be ye therefore imitators of God.” Have I not been right in speaking of the moral elevation of the Christian walk? Be imitators of God. Partakers of His nature and of the indwelling of His Spirit, we are called to imitate Him in the principles of His conduct. But then, as we have said, Christ is the perfect example of it, as the Holy Spirit goes on to say, “And walk in love, as Christ loved us, and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor.” This adds a very precious element to the principles of the Christian walk. Here love has not the character of the divine love which pardons, being above evil, when a wrong is done us, as God pardons (in virtue of Christ) sin against Him. Here it is devotedness, an offering made of oneself to God. It is no more a law which would have one love his neighbor as himself, which would be blessedness without any remains of evil in the world. It is not loving God with all the heart which supposes that evil is not there. It is a devotedness which supposes evil, a necessity which is the occasion for the exercise of love. One is given up for others, one is devoted; but for love in man there must be a motive, an object. For this love to be perfect, the object, the motive of the love, must be perfect. If one is given up to a man there may be a noble devotedness in it, but the motive is imperfect; love does not and cannot rise above its object. Just so, that there should be devotedness there must be needy objects. These two elements are found in Christ. He gave Himself for us, for needy beings, objects of compassion on His part; but He gave Himself to God, infinite and perfect object, which could not have been had He only given Himself to us and for us.

It is thus we ought to walk, ready to sacrifice ourselves for our brethren, always in self-abnegation to serve them whilst offering ourselves to God Himself, to Christ, whose we are. Thus the measure of our conduct is that of God Himself; Christ being our example in His life here below, in order that we should add love, the bond of perfect action, to brotherly kindness. It is not said that we are love, which is God's prerogative; He is love, and He loves, as to us, without any other motive than what He is, which could not be the case with a creature. We imitate Him in the matter of the wrongs that have been done us; but the love which acts from itself towards others is of God alone.

Again, light is a quality in itself, a purity which also manifests everything. It is the second name that God gives Himself to express what He is. God is light. So Christ, when He was in this world, was the light of the world. We were in darkness; we are light in the Lord. Thus in the epistle to the Philippians we find, respecting Christians, that which might be said in every point of Christ Himself, “blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life.” In this pure nature we share, inasmuch as we have Christ for our life—purity in motives, in thoughts, according to the divine nature, that which, manifested in this world, manifested the true character of all that is around us. We are light in the Lord.

Thus the two names, the only ones God gives Himself to express what He is—love and light—become the expression of what the Christian ought to be in his walk. He is even light in the Lord.

There exists another sort of motive and of rule, the relationships in which we are found as father and children, husband and wife, master and slaves. We are in these relationships also with God and with His Christ; but it is another ground on which I do not enter at present. That of which I speak is the Christian character, as having divine life and the Holy Spirit in Christ, so that one has to imitate the conduct of God and to take Christ for model on the earth. J. N. D.

Partakers of the Divine Nature

It is interesting to observe in 2 Peter 1 the grounds upon which the exhortations of that chapter are founded. (1) According to His divine power God hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, verse 3; (2) He hath given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, verse 4. These then are the grounds; and the object proposed is, that through these we should become partakers of the divine nature. This makes evident that the expression at the head of this paper answers not to the new birth, but expresses a practical state wrought in us as the moral result of the work of the Spirit of God. Wonderfully have we been endowed with God's "all things," for all things that pertain to life and godliness are ours, and not only so, but with all the promises of God, the greatest and most precious, which "in Him are yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us." And the object He has had in this has been, that we should become like Him by the action 'of the Holy Ghost in conforming us to Christ, that, being morally more and more after His pattern, we should evidence practically His divine nature of which we have partaken.

"Beside this" is weak; let us take the better rendering, "For this very reason," says he, on this very account, using all diligence. What a rebuke is this to our laxity and lukewarmness, our negligence and indolence; and if we glance down to the tenth verse we read, "The rather, brethren, give diligence to snake your calling and election sure." Again, in twelfth verse, he seems to say as to himself, "And I also will use diligence" (foot note, New Trans) We have thus a chain of allied thought, as though he said, how diligently hath God wrought for you; how rich, how precious the result of (1) His diligence. Now (2) for yours also, and "for this very reason." (3) Nor will I be lacking, but will myself use diligence on your behalf, putting you always in remembrance of these things; for though you know them, and are established in the present truth, yet so long as I am in this tabernacle it is meet that I should stir you up by putting you in remembrance. (See also chapter 31) Then follow (verses 5-7) the fruits of active diligence—faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, endurance, godliness, brotherly love, and lovea cluster of living, loving fruit, well calculated richly to repay diligence! Further, the existence of these things abounding in us shall testify (v. 8) that we are neither barren nor unfruitful as regards the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; in other words, as to the person of Him who Himself diligently trod the path of testimony here, and in view of our fruit-bearing left us an example to follow His steps. On the other hand, their absence witnesses against us that we are blind, or at the best see only what is close at hand, and have forgotten, not exactly that we are purged, but the purging from our old sins, in other words, have forgotten the cross; for he who forgets the cross of Christ can never give to the person of Christ its moral claim or value in the path of testimony. The apostle's aim was to bring things back to remembrance, and how needed it was we plainly see from the fact that even the cross was forgotten or displaced, and blindness or shortsightedness the issue.

He sought that the rather (v. 10) they should give diligence to make their calling and election sure. A thoroughly practical word this for every one of us. The calling and election is not of us, but of God; but the making it sure is not of God, but of us. The apostle clearly implies too, that if neglected we cannot wonder should we stumble or fall. Let us then challenge ourselves whether or

not we are habitually making good what God hath wrought for us. "The gifts and calling of God are without repentance:" the prodigality of His blessing is as marvelous as it is magnificent. Shall we therefore trifle or be indolent? The Church at Corinth was wonderfully enriched, but her moral state was simply shocking! Laodicea even more so; rich and increased with goods, having need of nothing, but morally wretched, miserable, poor, blind, naked! Let us give heed to this, if indeed we have an ear to hear.

Every blessing bestowed prefers a claim that it be put out to interest for Him who, as it were, never relinquishes proprietary rights in all that He confers. Were we asked to cite anything with which responsibility is not connected, we should probably say, "The calling and election of God;" yet it is this which He calls upon us to give diligence to make sure! Or should we try again, we should probably say, "Well, salvation, at all events, is alone of God;" yet it is that very thing which we are bidden to work out with fear and trembling! Do these exhortations then imply uncertainty? Nay, the very reverse. It is because they are so securely certain, and so blessed forever, that we are asked to exhibit a practical confirmation day by day of their being the divine realities and eternal verities that they are.

Moreover, the apostle would endeavor that after his decease these things should live forever in the memory of the saints. Thus by the Spirit of God have they been handed down even unto us for our profit, while we wait for the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. To us the word of prophecy is made even more sure, and we do well to take heed to it until day-dawn comes upon the soul and the morning star arises in the heart.

I pass over the second chapter, which is denunciatory rather than admonitory. In the closing chapter are seven admonitions, all in view of the Lord's coming.

1. To be mindful of Scripture, the words and commandments of the prophets and apostles of Christ.

(v. 2)

2. Not to be ignorant of the eternity of God, in nature and ways. (v. 8)

3. To be observant of the holy citizenship and godliness that becomes us. (v. 11)

4. To be looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God. (v. 12)

5. To be diligent that we be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless. (v. 14)

6. To beware of stumbling through the wiles of the devil. (v. 17)

7. To "grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To Him be glory both now and forever." Amen (v. 18) Let us in conclusion observe, that the purpose of all holy admonition is, that we may be partakers of the divine nature. In other words, the exhortations given us of the Holy Ghost are in precise and perfect accord with His own practical and diligent effort to assimilate us in the whole spirit of our minds, the purpose of our hearts, and the tenor of our lives and ways, to the glorified One who is in the presence of God for us; for moral perfection consists in being perfectly like Christ (alas! how all have failed in this), for He stood here in exact perfect relation as a man both to all persons and to all things that were around Him.

May the Holy Ghost so occupy us with Him, in the grace and excellency of His person, that we may more vigilantly detect every disparity in ourselves, and more diligently follow Him whom we have believed, for His precious name's sake!

W. R. D.

Master, Where Dweldest Thou?

An answer to the above query, as intelligible as it is direct, is afforded by the following quotation from Isaiah 57:15 “Thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit.” And the Lord Jesus in His own person illustrated the character claimed by the High and Holy One in that verse. Nay, more; to as many as received Him He vindicated it. Though come down in utmost lowliness, He was the Lord whom Isaiah saw (chapter 6; compare John 12:37-41); and those in the apostle’s fellowship can say, “We have seen His glory.”

Grace and truth come by Jesus Christ, and the development of this truth may be said to characterize John’s gospel. Even here the Baptist’s testimony, as it requires little discernment to perceive, is colored by that truth. Thus, on the first day, as recorded, in reply to the priests and Levites, he declares, “There standeth, One among you whom ye know not. He it is who coming after me is preferred before me” (for, as He afterward explains, He was before me), “whose shoe’s latchet I am not worthy to unloose.”

Let this testimony get hold of a soul, and it at once realizes the moral distance separating it from Him; it understands, too, the constraint under which Peter cried, “Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord.” The soul is bowed down before Him, and is on the threshold of a new day; this day dawns as it hears John’s second day’s testimony to Jesus. “The Lamb of God who beareth away the sin of the world.” The very same One whose penetrating glance makes the guilty sinner tremble is He whose death puts the sin away, as John insists, “This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a man who is preferred before me; for He was before me.” Not merely does He in death lay righteous grounds for the clearance of a believer from accumulated guilt, but puts sin away before the eye of God, so that He may henceforth view the justified believer with the utmost complacency “holy and without blame before Him in love;” and the redeemed one, on the other hand, is perfectly divested of everything which could interfere with or mar his contemplation of the love that wrought for him, and of the blessed One in whom that love has been declared, revealed, and made effectual—the Saviour.

Accordingly, on the third day (John 1:35-39), pointing to the resurrection, the Lamb of God Himself is seen in all His preciousness and worth. A ray of resurrection glory pierces backward through the shadows, laying hold on John, and he gives utterance to the feelings of his ravished heart in the exclamation, “Behold the Lamb of God!” Two of his disciples heard him speak, and leave him to follow Jesus. He that hath the bride is the Bridegroom. John was but the friend of the Bridegroom, and he had his joy fulfilled in seeing Jesus as the worthy object the attractive Center around whom devoted souls might justly gather. The two disciples inquire, “Master, where dwellest thou?” “Jesus said unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day,” &c.

We have here, then, a brief outline of the steps by which a soul is led on to the haven of true rest. Would that souls reached that haven in three days. It is, alas! otherwise. How far were even His

most favored disciples from discerning morally the abode of Jesus. Their impatience with the Syrophenician, their surprise at the interview between Jesus and the woman of Samaria, and their forsaking of Him at the last hour, as well as the fear of Peter, James, and John, as they entered the cloud of glory on the mount of transfiguration; all these circumstances alike manifested how little they knew of His abode, either in its height or depth. At the termination of His ministry He has to say, "If ye had known me."

Their dullness in learning of Him, however, affords no standard by which Christians now can judge of their culpability in respect of or find an excuse for, their lack of knowledge of the Lord, inasmuch as to faith, carnality, which ever hinders, ceases in the cross, and the Holy Ghost is come to lead souls obedient to the Word into all truth. Yet how few there are of those who by faith recognize the value of Christ's work for them, to whom the Lord Himself is known; and it is only as we know the Master that we can discern where He dwells. The bride in Song of Solomon 5 heeded not at first the voice of her Beloved; but a further manifestation of His grace arouses her to seek Him, now gone. She inquires of the daughters of Jerusalem, and their reply supplies the occasion for a touching rehearsal of His attractions. They then would seek Him with her (chapter 6); and being now under the power of what she knew concerning Him, she can tell where He is! What a lesson this is for any dear soul, precious, oh, how precious, to the heart of Jesus, when through selfishness it may have closed its ear to His sweet voice, if even for a moment!

The circumstances recorded in Luke 24 supply very precious instruction on the subject we are considering. There the "great Shepherd of the sheep, brought again from the dead through the blood of the everlasting covenant," in the activity of His unchanging love and tenderness follows two poor wandering ones, though with faith so weak as to be inappreciable perhaps to any eye but His. They "trusted it had been He who should have redeemed Israel," and certain women of their company made them "astonished.... when they found not His body, and came saying that they had seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive." Beginning with His death, "He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" Their hearts burned within them while He talked with them by the way (and no wonder!), so that when He applies His test, making as though He would have gone further, they constrain Him to abide with them, and He will even condescend to do so. Uninstructed, though devoted souls, they had not yet learned to inquire, "Master, where dwellest thou?" but were like many in our own day, who in unfelt self-will select a place suited to their tastes and judgment, and take the happiness afforded them there by the condescending Lord as sufficient argument for remaining in a place not sanctioned by His word. It is because they know Him not. The two disciples discern the Lord in that which figures His death. It is as the Lamb slain that we shall ever learn and ever adore our blessed Lord; and it is in view of Him dying for us, made sin for us, God condemning sin in the flesh in His sacrifice, that we learn the utter worthlessness of our tastes, judgment, wisdom, and to take the Word alone as our guide. Having discovered Him, He vanished out of their sight, and they can no longer remain there. They might then well ask, where shall we go? where, but to the few gathered in His name, at Jerusalem then; for there, and there alone, they might justly reckon on finding Him. There is a great difference apparent between the disciples when at Emmaus and at Jerusalem. There they ignorantly prepared an abode for the Saviour whom they loved, but recognized not; here they themselves, with other self-emptied simple ones, constituted His abode, as He says, "Whosoever two or three are gathered together in my name, THERE AM I," there is my abode.

His action in each place is very significant. He will not act the guest at Emmaus. It is He who blessed the bread and gave to them. In Jerusalem it is just the contrary; He is the guest, and puts them into the "more blessed" place as givers. (Acts 20:35) There may be much blessing received from Him who alone can bless, even in places which He cannot sanction, as at Emmaus; but communion and worship characterize the Lord's abode. And they who know what that is on earth best know what it is to be seated in heavenly places in Him above. (Ephesians 2:6)

Before concluding, there is also what corresponds to all this individually. Jesus said, "If a man love me, he will keep my word; and my Father will love him, and we will come to Him and make our abode with Him." This now. And for the future, already cognizant of the things that God hath prepared for them that love Him (1 Corinthians 2:9,10), even while "groaning" because of what he feels and sees around him here below, he can sing

"I have a home above,
From sin and sorrow free;
A mansion which eternal love
Designed and formed for me."
"The Father's gracious hand
Has built this blest abode,
From everlasting it was planned,
The dwelling-place of God."

J. K.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians

The second epistle to the Corinthians was written not long after the first, and when the apostle was in Macedonia (2 Corinthians 7), having gone there to meet Titus, who had been to Corinth to ascertain the present condition of the assembly in that city, and the effect made on the saints by Paul's former letter. In the former he had told them how to deal with the offender; in this one he stirs them up to forgive him, as really repentant.

More restricted in its range than the first epistle, which, though addressed primarily to the assembly in that city, takes in all professing Christians as well, this one, though written and sent to Corinth, was for the benefit also, we learn, of "all the saints which are in all Achaia;" for besides treating at length of Christian ministry (2: 14; 7: 1), Paul herein writes of some things with which saints in Achaia were especially interested; viz., the collection for the poor saints at Jerusalem, in which service the Macedonian saints had shone so brightly (8, 9), and the proof of his apostleship, which had been called in question at Corinth. Questions these were of more local interest than those treated of in the former epistle, yet not devoid of interest for saints in all time.

The first epistle was written whilst Paul was in great anxiety about the assembly at Corinth (2 Corinthians 2:4), and whilst the work at Ephesus was progressing, despite the presence of many adversaries. (1 Corinthians 16:9) This, the second epistle, was written after the tumult raised by Demetrius the silversmith at Ephesus had ceased, and Paul had left Asia for Macedonia (Acts 20:1), and when Titus had rejoined him in that country with the welcome intelligence of the salutary effect of his former letter on the saints in the metropolis of the Roman province of Achaia; so his heart was full, both of God's delivering power exhibited towards himself, and of joy for the conscience-work in the saints at Corinth. (7: 4) Hence we gather from these two epistles something of the exercises of Paul's heart, arising from the ministry to which he had been called, and of the sorrows and joys connected with it, to which he was no stranger. How he felt as he commenced his work in that city we read of in the former letter. (1 Corinthians 2) His deep sorrow of heart, caused by the condition of the assembly (2 Corinthians 2:4), and his fear as to the effect of his former letter (7: 49), coupled with the joy and relief that he experienced on learning from Titus how it had worked on them, we learn about in this second letter. Great as he was as an apostle, powerful as his letters were, uncompromising too as a champion for the truth of God, we are permitted in these epistles to see the man, the vessel, who felt keenly and deeply all that he was called to pass through, but who realized in proportion a joy and comfort such as one less exercised would never have known. It was no light thing to him that in places where he had been signally blessed, as Ephesus, Corinth, and Galatia, the enemy came in to make trouble and discord between him and the saints of God.

His heart full, he begins, after his customary apostolic salutation, with a thanksgiving such as is found at the commencement of no other epistle save that to the Ephesians, and the first of Peter: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and God of all comfort (or encouragement, παρακλήσεως); who encourages us in all our tribulation, that we may

be able to encourage them which are in any tribulation through the encouragement wherewith we ourselves are encouraged of God.” (1:3, 4)

It is right to speak well of God the Father, who exercises His children that they may minister to others in similar circumstances of the encouragement wherewith they have been themselves encouraged of God. Pressed beyond measure at Ephesus, so that he despaired even of life, having the sentence of death in himself, that he should not trust in himself, but in God, who raises the dead, he had proved delivering power as to his person, and the sustaining power of divine consolation as to his soul. Thus the enemy was outwitted. Attempting to crush the vessel of testimony at Ephesus, God had interposed, not to shield from trouble, but to bring His servant through it. And now the one so recently the object of the devil's attack, became the channel to communicate to other saints in trouble that encouragement which had been divinely ministered to him. But more. The persecution stirred up by Satan furnished an opportunity for prayer to flow forth from saints on behalf of Paul and those in trouble. (1:11) Thus the Christian bond would be strengthened, and the natural interest in each other deepened. (v. 14) Paul and his companions were their boast, as the Corinthians were his in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Now their prayers on his behalf he could confidently seek, for in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but in the grace of God, he had his conversation in the world, and especially toward them. (v. 12) They knew that, and acknowledged it, and he hoped they would to the end. For already had they in part acknowledged that he was their boast, as they were his in the day of the Lord Jesus It was in this confidence that he had wished to go to them, that they might have a second benefit. But he had not made out his purpose. Was it that he was fickle, or that he purposed such a thing lightly? He could appeal to the character of his ministry among them in refutation of such an idea. So he reminds them of the tenor of it. “The Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was preached among you by me and Silvanus and Timotheus, was not yea and nay, but in Him is yea. For whatever (■σσι) promises there are of God, in Him is the yea, wherefore through Him also is the Amen, to the glory of God by us. Now He that stablisheth us with you in (ε■ς) Christ, and has anointed us is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the Spirit in our hearts.” (vv. 19-22) All here is definite and unchanging, but only in connection with Christ. “Whatever are the promises of God, in Him is the yea.” Therefore God has firmly connected us with Him, that we may have part in their fulfillment. So we are anointed, that we may know the truth (1 John 2:20); we are sealed by the Spirit; thus marked by God as His own; and we have the Spirit too as the earnest of the inheritance, which we shall share with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Definiteness and certainty being characteristics of the truth he announced, his practice was in harmony with them. Why, then, had he not revisited them? He tells them: “To spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth.” (1: 23) Unless God worked in them in grace, how could he revisit them with joy? For that, however, he had not waited in vain. The Corinthian offender was broken down, so that his restoration was called for, and the assembly consequently were to forgive him. Further, the apostle's former letter had called forth an expression on the part of the mass (τ■ν πλε■ονων) of their sorrow and of their judgment of the sin. Hence Paul could write, “If any hath caused grief, he hath not grieved me, but in part (that I may not overcharge) you all.” (2: 5) So from the man. “Broken down in conscience and restored in soul, the punishment inflicted by the many was to be removed,” lest such a one should be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. “What care had Paul evinced for God's glory! what care does he here manifest for the offender! and what watchfulness

does he show to defeat any attempt of the enemy to make discord between the Corinthian saints and himself!" To whom ye forgive anything, "I also, for what." I have forgiven, if I have forgiven anything, for your sakes forgave I it in the person of Christ, lest Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices. (2: 10, 11)

What sorrow had he passed through from learning the sad state of that assembly! What anxiety had he experienced as to the effect on them of his first letter! His whole soul, which generally went out in burning desire for the gospel, had been so overburdened, that at Troas, where a door was opened unto him of the Lord to preach the gospel of Christ, he could not take advantage of it, because Titus had not rejoined him from Corinth. So, leaving it, he went to Macedonia, on the way to Corinth, the sooner to receive tidings of them by the arrival of Titus (2: 13) How little had they understood the feelings of his heart towards them! But at this point he interrupted his narrative, to resume it in chapter 7: 5, by a long digression on Christian ministry, which he commences by a thanksgiving to God, who always led him in triumph in Christ, and made manifest the savor of His knowledge by Paul in every place. A sweet savor he declares he was of Christ to God in them that are saved, and in them that perish, like the perfume burnt in the triumphal procession of the conqueror—the token of death to those captives who were about to be slain, but of life to those who would enjoy the conqueror's clemency. "But," asks the apostle, "who is sufficient for these things?" The answer to this is supplied further on (3: 5, 6). For himself, however, he could say, conscious of what God was doing by him, he did not adulterate the message, but as of sincerity, as of God, before God, he spoke in Christ. (2: 14-17)

Hereupon he gives us, first, distinctive features of the Christian ministry (4:6), then states circumstances into which the exercise of it brought the laborers (4:7-18), then motives which actuated him in his service (5:1-17), and the message entrusted to him.

(5:18, 6:1) After that he tells them of the care with which he walked, that the ministry should not be blamed; and how he approved himself as a minister of God (6:2-10), closing this long digression with the exhortation to the Corinthians, to respond in truth to this ministry carried on among them. (6:11-7:1)

Was there need, he asks, of a letter of commendation on his behalf to them or from them? They were his epistle, known and read of all men; for they were manifestly declared to be an epistle of Christ, ministered by Paul and his fellow-laborers, written, not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tables of stone, but on fleshy tables of the heart. Now this illustration and contrast naturally draws attention to the history of Israel and of Moses, in Exodus 34, Which we see was in the apostle's mind when he penned these sentences. And anyone who refers to the Greek Septuagint will see that the passage in that translation was in his mind, if not actually under his eye, at the moment this epistle was written.

Now there are two ministries, both of which were of God; but the difference between them is immense. Paul was a minister of a new covenant, not of letter, but of spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit quickens. A covenant which demanded obedience from man as the terms on which he could enjoy its blessings was of no avail. Man wanted life. This by the gospel was provided. Hence he contrasts the two ministries—the one was of death and condemnation, ushered in indeed by glory, but a glory which was to pass away, paling before the brighter glory attending the ministry in which he was privileged to have part. This last was of the Spirit of righteousness, and ushered in

by a glory which will never pass away. Transient then was the glory connected with the ministry of the first covenant (3:7), which itself was to pass away. (v.13) Abiding is the glory of that of which Paul, not Moses, was a minister, and which will never be annulled.

He had spoken of the ministry of the new covenant, not of letter, but of spirit. Now the Lord Jesus is the Spirit referred to. It all speaks of Him and the effect of this ministry was twofold. It set those free to whom it was ministered, and emboldened the minister to use great plainness of speech. Where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty, and we all beholding the glory of the Lord prove its transforming power. With Israel it was different. They could not steadfastly look at the glory in the face of Moses. Freedom in his presence they could not enjoy, though they had to behold his face resplendent with divine glory.

(Exodus 34:30, 31) But he subsequently veiled it, that they should not look to the end of that which is annulled (v. 13), which is done away in Christ. (v.14) But now since that which abides is ministered a veil is no longer required. There was nothing to conceal. So Paul did not use one, but spoke with great plainness of speech, not handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending himself to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Yet veiling was still practiced. The veil rested on the heart of Israel as they read the Old Testament Scriptures; and the enemy covered or veiled the minds of those to whom the gospel had been preached, but who had refused to believe it, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine forth. Thus, on the one hand, Israelites did not see that the glory of the former ministry was eclipsed by that of the latter, and that the old covenant is done away in Christ. But when Israel shall turn to the Lord, as it was with Moses in God's presence so it will be with them, the veil will be removed. For the rejecters however of the gospel, whether Jews or Gentiles, there is no such prospect. The enemy blinds the thoughts of those that believe not that the light of the glad tidings of the glory of Christ, the image of God, should not shine forth. The knowledge of Christ being in glory, the accepted One on behalf of sinners, who is the image of God, gives confidence to the soul that believes it, and demonstrates what he must be who is here styled "the god of this world (or age);" viz., the enemy of God and of man, who led men to crucify God's Son, and blinds the thoughts of the unbelievers. What malice and activity does he display! To them the gospel was veiled. That arose not from the infirmity of the messenger. Plain, indeed, was the word that was preached, and clearly was it set forth who was preached—Christ Jesus, Lord, and the apostle and his coworkers their bondsmen for Jesus' sake. Blessed, too, was the truth made known, that the glory of God now shines in the face of Christ as once it shone in the face of Moses. (4:16) The enemy then worked where God's grace was proclaimed; but the opposition was more than negative against the servants of God. Persecution was aroused, so the apostle acquaints his readers with the circumstances into which he and others were brought by the exercise of his ministry. (4: 7, 8) The treasure was in earthen vessels. Of that the laborers were fully conscious, being reminded of it by their daily experience. (v. 11) But that only evidenced that the excellency of the power was of God, and not of man; the laborers being strengthened in the inner man as they looked on things eternal and unseen. God thus enabled the vessel to bear and to serve without removing the opposition of the enemy.

Now that opposition could only extend to this life. So. Paul looked beyond its bounds, and was encouraged, and tells us how. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were

dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.” (v. 1) Two statements he here makes which deserve attention. He speaks of death as an uncertainty, of his being clothed upon with his house from heaven as that of which he was certain—language, thoughts, the exact opposite of those which are commonly met with amongst Christians. To them death is a certainty, and the future condition of blessedness at best an uncertain hope. Let us mark also the contrasts. An earthly house, a building in the heavens; a tabernacle, a building from God; dissolved, eternal. Still Paul did not desire death, but the coming of the Lord. His wish was not to be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. (v. 4) And this is the proper Christian hope, if the person knows that being clothed (i.e. in his body now) he shall not be found naked, or unfit for the presence of God. (Revelation 3:17,18; 16:15)

How near the future and the eternal state of heavenly saints seemed to him! Without passing through death, he and others might be, and some will be, clothed upon with their house from heaven. Clearly in his teaching there was no room for purgatory. The proper Christian expectation is to pass at once into the fixed and eternal condition as regards the body in which we shall dwell forever with Christ, and be at home in the Father’s house. Of this the Spirit is the earnest. Hence Paul was always confident yet willing to die to be present with the Lord; for while at home in the body he was absent from the Lord. (vv. 68) Wherefore he labored that whether present or absent he might be acceptable (εἰσπραεστος) to Him; for, though certain he was accepted, he never forgot that he had to stand before the judgment-seat of Christ to receive that which he had done. Now the judgment-seat concerns everybody. Everyone must stand before it. Hence with Paul to be accepted and to be acceptable were two different, but all—important, questions. He knew by the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that He was accepted; he labored to be acceptable. Thus the doctrines of grace were not weakened, though his responsibility was ever present to his thoughts. Nothing less than being acceptable to Christ would satisfy him. It befits a servant to be acceptable to his master (Titus 2:9), so not only for himself, but for others, did he desire this. (Ephesians 5:10; Hebrews 13:21)

But other considerations there were by which also he was moved. As he thought of the judgment-seat of Christ, knowing the terror of the Lord, he would persuade men. As he remembered who had died, the love of Christ constrained him. His death, by His dying for all, proved that all were dead; and He died for all that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him who died for them and rose again. “Wherefore,” he adds, “henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, there is a new creation: the old things have passed away; behold, they have become new. And all things are of God, who has reconciled us to Himself by Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.” But more, “He has committed unto us,” says Paul, “the word of reconciliation.” “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them.” That was true when the Lord was on earth. But He has been rejected; so now, ere judgment is poured out, God has raised up a ministry of reconciliation, and provided the message, the tenor of which the apostle sets forth. “Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech by us: we pray in Christ’s stead, Be reconciled to God. He hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”

He was not ashamed of the gospel; for it was God's power unto salvation. (Romans 1:16) He did not adulterate the message (2 Corinthians 2:17); for what more fitted to attract anyone who would listen than the story of God's love to the world, and the proof of it—the surrender of His Son to die for sinners? What more powerful motive could there be to induce a human creature to live to Christ than the knowledge that He died for him. True, all are not attracted by it; all are not won by it. True, too, it is that Christians need to be reminded of it; a witness surely of what man's wretched heart is. Nothing, however, that Paul could have urged would have made the gospel more powerful, or his ministry more successful. Hence, he only exhorts them not to receive the grace of God in vain, reminding them of the special characteristic of the present time, during the Lord's rejection by the nation of Israel, that now is a well-accepted time, now is a day of salvation. After which he tells them of his walk, and of the proofs by which he and his fellow-laborers were commended as ministers of God. (6:1-10) Then, his heart full, his mouth was opened to the Corinthians in earnest desire for faithfulness to God on their part. He had reminded them of the character of the day in which through grace they and we are living, as described by the prophet. (Isaiah 49:8) He now would remind them of a principle, enunciated in one of the precepts of the law (Leviticus 19:19), applicable to saints, though they are not under law. "Be not diversely yoked (■τεροζυγουν) with unbelievers. For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an Unbeliever? and what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?" Five important questions thus follow close one upon another, indicative of the ways of some at Corinth, but illustrative too of the immense change introduced by the gospel. After that he sets forth special Christian privileges under three distinct heads. They were a temple of the living God; they were His people; they were His sons and daughters. (6:16-18) A threefold ground of exhortation this is to holiness. (1) As God's assembly at Corinth they were His temple. Of old He dwelt in the midst of Israel in the tabernacle; now He dwells in the company of His people as His shrine; a closer association this than Israel ever knew or will know. (2) As His people, though surrounded by evil, they were, like the remnant of Isaiah 52, to be separate from it. (3) They were in a known relationship to Him of which saints in Israel could never have spoken. He was the Father of Israel as a people (Exodus 4:22); of this Jeremiah too could write (31:9); but none before the cross could say they were His sons and daughters. And who is their Father? Jehovah—Shaddai. As Shaddai He revealed Himself to Abraham. As Jehovah He made Himself known to Moses. Now the God of Abraham and of Israel is our Father if we believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Hence having these promises, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (7: 1)

C. E. S.

(To be continued, D. V)

Fragment: Christ Our Life

We are not looked at as risen with Christ in Romans, but justified, and Christ our life, as men living in natural life down here, only Christ our life in it—in Him before God, not in the flesh.

Fragment: Christ in Life

For faith the flesh is gone in death, and Christ is come in life.

The Face of Jesus

In Isaiah 50 we learn the Creator—greatness and the lowliness of the Lord Jesus. The One who said of Himself, “I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering,” also said, “The Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him that is weary: He wakeneth morning by morning, He wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned” (or learner).

The heart could not do without the two the Deity and manhood of the blessed Lord. He who is our Redeemer is very man; but also “over all, God blessed forever.” (Romans 9:5) The heart delights in this. He who lay in Bethlehem’s stable, cradled in a manger, was indeed very God; He who wept at the grave of Lazarus could say, “Lazarus, come forth,” and the dead came forth; He who sat, the weary stranger, at Sychar’s well, asking a drink of water of the Samaritan woman, was at that very moment the mighty Creator and the Upholder of the universe; He who stood as the unresisting One at man’s judgment— was in very deed the King of kings, and into whose hand all power and judgment were committed; He who hung dead upon the cross of Calvary had said, “I lay down my life, that I might take it again.... I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again” (John 10:17,18); and He who adorns the throne of heaven unites in His own glorious person Deity and Humanity.

Who could say but a Divine Being, “I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering?” And who but the same Being, become man, a man in perfect lowliness, and dependence, and obedience—could say, “The Lord God hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back. I gave my back to the smiters, and my cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not my face from shame and spitting. For the Lord God will help me; therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed?” These are the words of the only perfect man that ever trod this earth, the Lord Jesus. Having taken the place of man, in dependence and obedience, it involved the humiliation, the rejection, the shame, the spitting, the smiting; yea, above all, the cross, as the display of man’s hatred, and God’s judgment of sin. But what did He say? “I have set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed.” His holy face was set to do the will of God, though the accomplishment of that will involved for Him the deep, unutterable woes of the cross. His face was set like a flint, and He knew that He would not be ashamed. Obedience and God’s vindication go together. The two were united in Jesus. He obeyed and swerved not, and left His cause and vindication with Him who judges righteously.

What a lesson for the saints! He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. (1 Peter 2:21) Not that we can go where His unswerving obedience carried Him—to the cross as a sin-bearer, as we find Him in Isaiah 53; but we can, according to our measure, set our face like a flint, to follow His holy steps in the paths of dependence and obedience, leaving our vindication with Him who judges righteously.

But this needs the single eye and the undivided heart. No sanctified flesh or nature can tread this path; nothing but the power of the Spirit, and the energy of faith, will enable us to begin and continue in a path where mere nature meets with death at every step, and where the leaves of mere sentimentality are withered in a moment. Peter attempted it in the energy of nature, but utterly failed. Thousands have followed his steps, and have most thoroughly broken down; and, alas! mere head knowledge of the truth, however beautiful, will only make the failure the more apparent and terrible. Are we not eyewitnesses of this? An unsanctified mind, and a divided heart, dealing with God's truths, and attempting to tread the path it prescribes, must end in catastrophe.

As we have said, His path of holy devotedness led to the cross. He set His face steadfastly to go to Jerusalem, knowing well that Gethsemane, the judgment-hall, the cross, and the grave, were all before Him. His holy "visage was so marred more than any man, and His form more than the sons of men," and on the cross behold that holy face bowed in death. Here is devotedness and obedience that must ever stand alone. There is none like it. As with the ark, and the people on crossing Jordan, there must ever be a space left between what was absolutely perfect and what is in the most devoted of His devoted followers, imperfect. We are indeed to follow His steps; but we know the more we get into the presence of His life, the more are we made to feel the inconsistencies and contradictions of our own. And yet He has left us an example that we should follow His steps. Obedience to God, as we have seen, needs no human vindication. "He is near that justifieth me," the lowly Jesus could say. God vindicates those who act for Him. He vindicated His Son by taking Him out of death, and putting Him at His right hand in glory, and the face once marred in death on the cross made radiant with the glory of God. The glory of God shines in His blessed face. What a sight! Of old the people gathered from far to "behold that sight" of Calvary, and the marred face of the dying sufferer; but another sight meets the eye of faith now as it penetrates the heavens. It is the same face, but illumined with the glory of God. That glory shining in the face of the ascended Jesus is to the one who believes a divine proof that his sins are no more, and that his acceptance, as his justification, is clear, settled, and eternal. For how could the glory of God shine in His face if the sins that He made His own on the cross were not put away according to God? They were put away, and God was glorified. He therefore can have His Son at His own right hand as man, and cause His glory to shine in His blessed face. What settled conviction this gives, that our sins are no more, that they are gone forever, and we accepted in the One who is accepted of God in His own glory!

But more, "We all, with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." What a place is ours! With unveiled face looking on the glory that shines in the face of Jesus. No cloud between. Sins all gone, conscience purged, the heart at rest, the soul enwrapped as it gazes by faith upon that peerless One, and into His once marred face, now all glorious with the glory of God. Thus engaged with Him, a moral assimilation takes place. "We are changed into His image from glory to glory," and His life is seen in our ways.

But this by faith and only as faith is in exercise. Soon faith will cease, the wilderness be over, the blots and blemishes wiped out forever, and in His own likeness we shall stand in His presence, behold His face, His name shall be in our forehead, and with Him we shall reign forever and ever. Lord, haste that blessed day!

E. A.

Our Relationship to the Father and to the World

I take this chapter as fully setting us the twelve disciples, then those that believe on Him through their word—first, in our place of relationship to the Father; secondly, to the world; and both in a most distinctive way. We have something of the same character in the Ephesians; but there it is more God in relationship than the Father.

I find four different ways in which the practical path of a Christian is represented in Scripture. First, the object, a glorified Christ, in Philippians 3, giving energy and character to the Christian's race: "This one thing I do." Secondly, in Philippians 2, we get a fuller character, in a certain sense, to have the same mind which was in Christ Jesus. It is not that I am running after something; it is the proper character in everyone having a glorified Christ; not going up, but always going down, even to the cross. "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Thirdly, in Ephesians 4: 5, a very different kind of thing, which, however, coalesces with this, where, being brought completely to God, and seated there with Christ, we are sent out to bear witness to the character of God, to give testimony to Him in this world. Fourthly, here in John 17 it is a little different. The point especially is, we are put into Christ's place with the Father—put into the Son's place. My father may be a good man, a great man; it is more this, he is my father. I have a son's place, duties, &c. I have to imitate his goodness, and to learn his greatness.

The Son being glorified (He goes up to the Father), then His disciples left here, He was to be glorified in them. The Father had been perfectly glorified in Him on the earth; He went up into glory, He was to be glorified in them by their answering to what He is in glory, and they were to be carrying the Father's word as He carried it. It was holiness, because they belong not to this world at all: "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Christ belonged to the Father, was entirely His; He came down and revealed the glory of the Father; came and brought this out before the world, and was in the bosom of the Father all the while (I mean as to His eternal Sonship, of course). He brings us into that place, the bosom of the Father, and then puts us in His own place down here to manifest Him. He is not only in the bosom of the Father as "the only begotten Son," but He is there as the glorified Man. In Philippians 2, in the Son's walk on earth, we get the spirit and mind and tone and temper of Christ, always coming down (in John He is always going up into the glory of God as Son). It is the beautiful and lovely character of the descending path of a Christian on earth, esteeming every one better than himself, he makes something of them and nothing of himself, seeks nothing for himself and considers everyone else. Christ Jesus "being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant," that He might serve us and glorify God, when He could do it freely. That is what we are called to do, as set free and brought to God; we are called upon as having an immense place (the glory of Christ being ours) to go and serve God as He did. In the rest of Philippians 2 the expression of love is shown in the wonderful consideration and care for others—love opposed to selfishness, self entirely given up and all the spirit of it. One verse I refer to, to show what our walk ought to be, and how a Christian is really brought into Christ's place. (v. 15) Blameless and harmless, sons of God without rebuke, holding forth the word of life—each

member of that sentence, while it is exhortation to Christians, is exactly Christ. He was blameless and harmless; there is not a single element in a sentence of that exhortation which is not an expression of what Christ was down here: and “I am glorified in them.”

The difference in John is, He is gone up into the glory as Son. (vv. 1, 2) There are two parts, or grounds, in the way in which we are brought into this relationship with Christ. First, “The hour is come; glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son also may glorify Thee.” There is the relationship, the moment the Son was glorified as such. Then, secondly, He adds, “I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest me to do. And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” The glory is His, but He gets it because He has glorified God. The Son had been in the place of humiliation; and is now raised as man. “Glorify Thou me.” There the glory, into which Christ enters, is founded on His work. In virtue of His having perfectly glorified the Father, the Son has to be glorified with the Father. He enters on that glory in virtue of having glorified the Father. The Son had glorified the Father on the earth, and the work having been finished which the Father gave Him to do, the Father glorifies the Son with Himself. He is Son in it. The place of Christians is to be sons. We get the glory in the place of sons, in result of the perfect work which has glorified God; not merely being made sons, but put into the same place.

There are two things, the being brought to God as sons—brought with Christ and like Christ—and there is the effect of His having perfectly glorified God as the Father, that the Father puts man into the glory of God. Christ is forerunner. This has nothing to do with responsibility, it had to do with the purpose of God. As Son the work of Christ was done, which gave the title of bringing many sons into glory. It is the mystery now made manifest. Forgiven, they are accepted; but why should they be in the same glory as the Son of God? The place that we have is thus brought to the FATHER, and brought to the Father, remember, through the rejection of Christ from the world. He, speaking of the children, says “Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.” Then as regards the world He says, “Righteous Father.” It is connection with the Father in contrast with the world’s rejection. Now He was going up there as Son, and the Father had, so to speak, to decide between the world and Him; Christ or the world must be disowned. The moment of decision came—Christ must be refused by the Father, or the Father must refuse the world. A moral question is at issue. Christ had been faithful to the Father all through His life, especially on the cross, and the time had come when God must choose practically between the Christ who had glorified Him, and the world who had rejected Him.

That is done in a more dispensational way, and brought out doctrinally with Paul. The Lord appears to him on the road to Damascus “Delivering thee from the people (Jews), and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee.” Paul was not a man that belonged to anyone in this world at all. He was sent forth—where from? From Christ in glory, not as belonging to this world. The great truth that I refer to is, that he was taken out from the Jews—out from the Gentiles. Who is he? A Christian connected with Christ in glory, and sent out from Him; that is why he says, “Henceforth know I no man after the flesh,” not even Christ come among the Jews as being after promise. He sees Christ in glory, and knows that only, and goes out of the world to Him. It is just the same principle with us. We have not only been separated from the world; the message the disciples bring is to put us into the place where Christ is with the Father: the thing that puts us into this glory and blessing is in thorough contrast with all that is in the world. The Father is put in

contrast with the world always. "All that is in the world... is not of the Father;" He could not say is not of God, because it was created by Him, but "is not of the Father," it does not belong to the new order of things that is brought in by the Son being rejected here.

"While I was with them in the world, I kept them in Thy name." It is always the Father in John 17; and that is the very thing in the sermon on the mount, and in the Lord's prayer, as they are called, though they did not understand it. He is declaring the Father's name, it was the Father's kingdom they were to pray for. Of course, it is more fully now that we have the spirit of adoption. All in the chapter here especially associated the disciples with Christ's place as gone to the Father, as sons.

"I have manifested Thy name unto the men which Thou gavest me out of the world." "Now they have known that all thing whatsoever thou hast given me are of thee." Not things God had given Him; what the Father had given Him were of the Father. It was not Jehovah setting up something on earth, but as Father He gives to His Son the things which belonged to Him in that place specifically. Now He is unfolding this. Mark in verse 8 how far He goes with us. "I have given unto them the words which Thou gavest me." That is, He had so put them into the place and relationship He was in as a man upon earth with the Father, that whatsoever the Father had communicated to Him in that relationship He passes on to them; He brings them into all the blessing—into all the brightness of the hope—brings us now into all the consciousness of the relationship.

The way in which Christ took that relationship has been greatly on my mind, as illustrated in the gospel of Matthew. It is the very way you get the juice out of the gospels, if you see Christ as the perfect expression of the model of what God had made man on earth. Take the end of chapter 3, and see how wonderfully He takes that place. John says, "I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?" Of course He need not; John was His creature, but He comes and takes His place with His poor people "For thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness." Thus it becometh us! Wondrous lowliness! "You have your part, and I have mine—to fulfill all righteousness—not on my part repentance, that I have not needed." The moment He had taken this place with the poor remnant, the heavens were opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming upon Him—just what has been done to us since the rending of the veil. He was anointed with the Holy Ghost and sealed; so are we. He was the Beloved Son; we are sons, and know it. Of course, He had it in His own blessed Person, and we are brought in by redemption. He enters into every position in which He puts us through redemption.

Another thing struck me. In this wondrous sovereign grace, for the first time the whole Trinity is revealed. When the Son is there revealed as a man, the Holy Ghost cannot stop away, neither the Father. The Holy Ghost descending owns Him, and the Father owns Him from the heavens. We get the whole fullness of the Godhead identified with Christ taking this lowly place as man, and that is our place with the Father. But we have another place; that is, conflict with the power of Satan. He took our place there too in Matthew 4 when "He was led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." "Resist the devil and he will flee from you." The Lord took this place in this wondrous, blessed way. He binds the strong man. All that the Father communicates to Him in that place as man, He gives us. It is the "word" He gives them, and He looks consequently for them to be kept in His own name from all that is inconsistent with the relationship and place of which He was the pattern Himself in this world.

Mark the practical effect as regards the world in John 17:14. "I have given them Thy word;" that is, word, not words: what should He give them but the word, the Father's testimony as to the world—that is, their place as regards the world. "Christ died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." God's grace to the world has nothing to do with the Father; that is, the God whom we know in verse 3. It is the Father now, with the Son by His side, whom the world had rejected; that is why I am sent into it, as the Lord Jesus Christ was sent. "To us there is but one God, the Father." The place God has taken with us is that of the Father who has had a Son rejected on earth. The world has rejected Him, and to Him He says, "Sit thou on my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool." There is the Son with the Father who is in the perpetual consciousness that He has the rejected Son beside Him. That is the condition He sees Him in, and us in relationship to Him, and He must look as far from that world as possible—there is goodness of course, caring for poor sinners.

"I am glorified in them." He does not say the Father is glorified in them, but it is Christ, whose character we bear, is to be glorified in us. We have got the Father's word, and the Son's place on earth. This is the very way He calls His disciples His friends "All things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you;" He has brought them into the intimacy of all those things which He received from the Father as a man, and puts them into His place as sons by redemption: He gives them thus the Father's testimony to carry back into the world—the place in which they are set. Christ was the perfect expression of what the Father is, and of course the person that is faithful is the perfect expression of the One of whom he testifies.

The beginning of all evil was the devil destroying Eve's confidence in God: she must bring in her own will. In Christ we see that instead of God keeping back the tree, lest they should be like God in the knowledge of good and evil, He gives His Son, that we may be like Him in glory. What was Christ's life here upon earth? The expression of holy, divine goodness in the midst of evil; and so must you be the expression of God's nature and character in the world. Christ was not of the world, but of heaven as to His character; and so "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." Christ was in the world—labored for Joseph and His mother, till the time came for Him to be called out to minister. He was walking this world absolutely apart from all the evil in it; He was good and doing good. Then He looks up and says, "Sanctify them through Thy truth: Thy word is truth." It was the Father's truth they were to be set apart by; there is no real truth whatever without it. Now it was said by Christ, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." In our walk they ought to see everything that was in Christ.

"Sanctify them through Thy truth." The world has not truth at all. If I were to say "God is good," the world would only misconceive it; when the world says "God is good," they mean that they hope He will care as little about sin as they do themselves! The disciples came directly from Christ, bearing His character before the world. "As thou hast sent me into the world, even so have I also sent them into the world." It is not only that everyone that comes from Christ has a testimony for Christ in the world, but they have His character. We are sanctified by the truth from all evil in the world. "For their sakes I sanctify myself." Christ has set Himself apart as this model man in heaven, the spring and source of all blessing to us here—that our affections being identified with Him, our eyes resting on Him there, He might be the truth in us: but you must keep your eye on Him there. My heart gets identified with the things that He delights in. The time is coming when it will be manifested that we have this place, "The glory which thou gavest me I have given them... that the

world may believe... may know," &c. Then even the world will see that you are loved as Christ is loved.

Then there is the place of testimony. We stand in the world that Christ may be glorified in us; that is His object in leaving us here. I have referred to other of those characteristics. If we turn to Ephesians 4, 5 again it gives us the Christian character founded on the blessed truth of the place into which we are brought. There are two great subjective principles in us which are foundations of this walk. First, it is not merely that we are quickened, it is not all that the Christian has a new life, but we must be quickened together with Christ. Besides that, Christ having gone down into our place of sin and misery, gone down there and had nothing, He did not go in and glorify God in that special place without results. God's Son as risen becomes our life, we have done with the old thing, the life that is gone. I am "quickened together with Him," and I have left myself, "my old man," in the grave where Christ was. We have to learn that we have died with Christ, that is the meaning for example of the Jordon. The Red Sea is Christ alone, dying and risen, that is what saves us. But in Jordan it is my share in it with Him; it is not only that I have to see it in the Red Sea, but specifically in the Jordon. We walk through death into Canaan, the heavenly places. We have "put off the old man with his deeds." Here I get God as the measure of right and wrong, God is the measure I am to take. We have "put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and holiness of truth." God is now the measure of my conduct.

Secondly, there is another element of Christian walk here. "Your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost." Thus we get, "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God;" that is, I now get the new thing, God Himself dwelling in me, and I am sent out to walk as Christ walked. It is not here carrying the Father's word as a testimony, but go and act like God. The apostle goes on to say, "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children." My path now is to walk as one who imitates God, because I am His child. So in another place, not only forgive, but "love your enemies," as He did. Did He not love you when you were enemies? Yes. Then go and act like Him. Here it is, "And walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor."

Christ is the measure of it; you give yourself entirely up to serve other people; Christ did. If you want to learn what the character of God in a man is, go and look at Christ's life down here. He gave Himself up entirely, and to God; that is love. Well, you go and do the same. You are to be like God in love, and now in chapter 5 you are "light in the Lord." Another characteristic of God is light, God Himself is the pattern of what we ought to be in the world as love and light. "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Mark, it is "thou that sleepest," not dead, for Christians cannot be dead, but you cannot get any activity or intelligence from a sleeping man, any more than in a dead one. A sleeping man is no better than a sleeping dog; if you want to put him in a man's place, you must wake him up. Christ is the measure of your walk, and the light to lighten you in the path; wonderful measure! God has so brought us to Himself in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that He brings us out to walk through the world as the expression of what Christ is. The path of the Christian is altogether above law. The law said, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Christ says, "Do not let there be one bit of self in you." There was none in Christ. The world would be a paradise if men loved each other as they do themselves. I must get a love that is sufficiently above the evil to walk in it, to love people even if they do not love me; that is what the Lord Jesus did. I must have the character of love that can show what God is, when all the

people around me are quite the opposite. I may have Christian friends; but His was holy, divine goodness in the midst of a world that was all the opposite. As Christ was the expression of perfect goodness here, so can we be imitators of Him; there is the path, "Imitators of God as dear children." It is wonderfully blessed that He brings us into a path where we are to empty ourselves and live Christ. In Hebrews Christ is before me; in Philippians, I get Christ come down, walking in this world, not setting Himself up. It is wonderfully blessed to be so brought into the place of children of God, that we are called to imitate Him; to go out from Him in the sense that we have Christ's place; to walk through this world as the expression of Him. In John, Christ gives me the Father's word, the word of Him who has received His Son on high, because the world rejected Him.

Then the character of what man sitting in heavenly places is comes out in this world—an imitator of God, in Ephesians. If you have this place with Him, go and show what He is to the world. The flesh resists, and there is conflict; but you see it does not follow in the least that you are to act on the flesh. There may be something in which we have not detected flesh; but where we have, we are never called upon to act in it, but the contrary. There is no such thing as mending the flesh one atom. In innocence it broke down; without law it is grossly and horribly ignorant; under law rebellious, not subject, neither could be. Bring in grace, and it spits in the face of the One who brings it in; put the Holy Ghost in a man, and the flesh lusts against the Spirit; put a man in the third heavens, and when he comes down the flesh will be puffed up about it—the flesh is the same all the way down. If I have a thorough rogue in my house that I cannot trust, and I keep him locked up in the cupboard, all well. Why should I let him loose at all? I may be foolish enough to let the flesh out, but I never need. We never can excuse ourselves. If we are foolish enough to leave an open door, Satan will come in. There may be a moment when I am not able to overcome the flesh, when it cannot be checked. Why so? I have been neglecting prayer, or reading the word of God, or have been careless in some way, and then when the enemy comes, there is no power to meet him, and we are overcome, and that is as good as allowing that Christ may be overcome. If I am walking carelessly, I shall reap the consequences. Here is the difference, and it is a very real one. Suppose I am not walking in the Spirit, so that my conscience is not good, when I get into the presence of God, and have to think of myself, I am ashamed. I am not thinking of Him, and am forced to think about myself in the way of self-judgment. The effect of the light is to show me myself, make me think of what I am, and wake up my conscience (and it is well He does make me think about myself in self-judgment). But if I am walking without the least thing on my conscience, I do not think of myself, but am free to be occupied with Christ. It is not that the flesh is any better at any time. I am practically purged, have a good conscience, and when I come into God's presence I can let my heart out; and this is great blessedness—it is communion. That is where the real difference lies between a man who is walking in the power of the word of God and in constant dependence, and one who is not. Paul is not afraid of the day of judgment: "Knowing the terror of the Lord we persuade men." He brings in the power of divine judgment as a present thing: "We are manifest to God." It is having the sense of divine judgment on everything that I am doing, and everything is detected.

We are called to walk in the light, as He is in the light, without doing anything inconsistent with it; not grieving the Spirit, who consequently takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us—that is communion. We never can excuse ourselves if the flesh thinks a moment amiss. It is

not that at any given moment I have power to resist the flesh; if it acts, I have no excuse, for had I been walking with God I should have had power to resist it. J. N. D.

Yet a Moment

Yet a moment I shall be
Clothed with immortality!
By the quickening power of
God, By the covenant of blood,
Once for all in Salem spilled,
When atoning sin and guilt;
When in travail, earth and sky
Quailed at Jesus' agony.
Yet a moment I shall rise,
Meeting Him in yonder skies!
Morning Star, He comes to bless,
Bright with beams of happiness;
Coming forth from God again,
Bringing sheaves of precious grain;
Garnered saints that sleep in Thee
Join the living, changed and free
Changed to immortality:
One assembly, rapt accord,
One in glory with the Lord.
Yet a moment, by Thy grace,
In Thy likeness face to face!
Near Thee, Jesus, near to Thee,
Thine through all eternity;
Drafts of pleasure drinking in
When I with the choirs begin,
Ever singing near Thy throne

Worthy Thou, O Lord, alone,
For redemption wrought by Thee,
Wrought alone on Calvary!
Yet a moment, victory,
Jesus quickly comes for me!
Morning Star, from God to bless,
Coming forth in faithfulness,
Like clear shining after rain,
Center of the heavenly train,
In the air He comes again.
All my nights of weeping gone,
All my watching, waiting done.
But the twinkling of an eye
Bars my immortality!
Hark, the "voice" of victory!
Jesus comes "Himself" for me,
With the "trump" of jubilee.
Shouts proclaim the rapture-day,
Fetching hence His Bride away,
With Himself enthroned on high,
One in precious unity!
One assembly with the Lord,
Face to face in rapt accord,
In Thy likeness, Jesus, there
Glory hence with Thee to share!
One in everlasting day,
As the ages roll away—
One assembly, Lord, with Thee,
Glorified eternally.

C. F. C.

The Hope of His Calling

“That ye may know what is the hope of His calling God has called you;” what is the hope of the calling? What future is there in this call? We get it in verse 5: “Having been predestinated unto the adoption of children.” I know “Abba’s” heart now; I am to know “Abba’s” house then. If God says, “How beautiful my house will be with my Son in it, surrounded by those associated with Him,” is it nothing to my heart that God already has joy in the thought? It will have a separating effect on the soul from evil to God. “And what the riches of the glory,” &c.? Glory is not the same as the Father’s house. There is rest in the thought of the house, whereas in the glory we get the public expression of it. What a contrast to this beggarly world down here! Here it is all toil; but what is it all leading to? To a bright, brilliant, glorious future, now made little of by people here; then made much of by God up there. So far there is no question of life; He takes them as it were and shows them the corpse they were, the pit they were in. God loves to be Center, to have round Him a circumference of blessing. What was the pit you came from? What good was there in it? God could find none; so you cannot. Everything in it is bad, though it need not come out. As the pit was down there, and nothing but evil working in it, so the blessing came from quite a different place—from the Man up there upon the throne. Had we taken a few steps towards Him? No! it is even when we were “dead in sins.” It is not a question of bad fruits “dead in sins” (not alive in sins, as in Romans), all entirely wrong, all dead; not a correct notion of God, nor of Christ, nor the Holy Ghost, nor of ourselves.

There are three things: lifegiving, separation from the grave, and a place of permanent rest. Satan cannot rob me of blessing, because I am within Christ. The bringing into a place of blessing is a thing to be known individually; knowing it, and knowing the existence of it, are very different things. You say you believe it. Have you got it yourself? Can you say, “I have gone up from the tomb by a power that associates me with all that is dear to God? God looks on me, and says, there is an individual who has life together with my Son.” Can you say it? Is the life that you live in the flesh by faith of the Son of God?

God promised a son to Abraham; his circumstances said, “Impossible, you cannot have any children.” But Abraham said, “Let God alone, He must see to His promise.” Difficulties to believers now come in exactly the same way. Things inconsistent are brought up by conscience: if you say, “That is inconsistent with the Man up there, I am ashamed of myself,” you judge it in faith; but if you say, “I have failed, I am no Christian,” you play into Satan’s hands; you do not judge yourself, but slur over the evil. We get here three things: Abba’s heart, Abba’s house, and that the Man, the perfect Servant of God, who was obedient even unto death, has won His place up there. He went in not only as One who had a right to go in, but because He had humbled Himself. These things just mark the place that you and I are in as Christians. God wanted to show what a God He was, and the resources He had in His Son.

If God has raised us up together, &c., it is that we may have communion with Himself through this Christ dwelling in us by faith. We cannot get steadiness of works, unless with a soul abiding in communion with God. If I am in communion with God, what do I get? If a heart be right with God,

there is talking about Christ always—Christ at home in the heart. I look up and say, “There is a Man on the throne of God, and He has all power in His hand: the Son of the virgin, the seed of the woman;” and God says, “That is my beloved Son, the fullness of Godhead.” If you know Him, you may get all the fullness of God. I never shall know Him; but I know Himself. God presents in that Man, seen there by faith, what can fill the humblest mind.

God has formed in my soul such an estimate of Christ that I could not do without Him; and more than that, He cannot do without me. Nothing is good without Christ, and the presence of Christ in anything makes it a home—scene to the heart.

The valley of Baca is a precious place if Christ be there. Oh, what a height and depth in the truth that makes us one with Him! What an expression of love! What an expression of light!

G. V. W.

The Second Epistle to the Corinthians

Here this long digression about Christian ministry comes to an end. The character of it, the need of it, the message conveyed by it, and the practical effect it should have on souls, the apostle has set forth. He now returns to that about which he had been writing—the effect made on him by his meeting with Titus, who rejoined him in Macedonia, on his return from Corinth. How truly could he rejoice! Grave had been his exercise of heart about the Corinthians. Great now was his joy respecting them. “I am filled with comfort, I am exceeding joyful in all our tribulation.” (7: 4) God, who comforteth those that are cast down, had comforted him by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the encouragement wherewith Titus was encouraged through their deep expression of godly sorrow—a sorrow which worketh repentance unto salvation not to be repented of. They had dealt with the offender, and they had cleared themselves. His letter had the desired effect. He had written, not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that had suffered the wrong, but that their care for Paul might be made manifest to them before God. “Therefore,” he adds, “we were encouraged, and in addition to this our encouragement, we exceedingly the more rejoice for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all. For if I have boasted anything to him of you, I am not ashamed; but as we spake all things to you in truth, even so our boasting, which I made before Titus, is found a truth. And his inward affection is more abundant toward you, whilst he remembereth the obedience of you all, how with fear and trembling ye received him.”

Encouraged by his visit there, we can well understand the readiness of Titus to return, in order to collect their contributions for the poor saints at Jerusalem. About this Paul next writes (chapters 8., 9), acquainting them with the liberality of the saints in Macedonia, and reminding them of that readiness to help to which they had begun to give expression a year previously. The liberality of the saints in Macedonia had exceeded the apostle’s expectations—the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded unto the riches of their liberality. This outflow of real Christian love was beautiful and spontaneous. Beyond their power they gave, and even entreated of Paul the grace and the fellowship of the service to the saints. It was favor bestowed on them to be able to help, and to be allowed to help. They owned it, and desired to have fellowship in that service; for they had first given themselves to the Lord, “and to us,” writes Paul, “by God’s will.” Cheered by such tokens of love in these saints, he encouraged Titus to finish the work of collecting the alms

from Christians at Corinth. And what a motive does he bring to bear on them! Even “the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, being rich, for their sakes became poor, that they through His poverty might become rich.” (8: 9) The willing mind would produce a cheerful giver. Two points should here be noticed. The offering should be spontaneous, and according to that which a person had. Grace and righteousness were both to be displayed. God did not ask anyone to go beyond what he had. (v. 12) Being generous at the expense of others formed no part of Christian practice. On the other hand, to give grudgingly, or of necessity, could not be the true fruit of Christian love. God loves a cheerful giver, and glory flows to him by that proof of divine grace in the giver, and by the thanks which ascend upwards from those who share in the bounty. Paul had reminded them of the example of the Lord Jesus Christ. He would encourage them by the remembrance of what God can do, and will do, for His people, quoting from Psalms 112, which, the reader may see on reference to it, is the counterpart, as displayed in the saints, of the acting’s of the divine nature as seen in God.

Psalms 111 describes the state. Psalms 112 fitly comes after it, as it describes the former. One sees too how he avoided all appearance of evil, or occasion for surmises, against those engaged in such a service (8: 18-21), and maintained the full right of the almsgivers to select their own almoners. (1 Corinthians 16:3; 2 Corinthians 8:19,23)

He had written the first epistle “that your care for us,” as he tells them, “might be made manifest unto you;” for this seems to be the best attested reading. That having been markedly proved, of which Titus was the witness, he was free now to enter on the matter of his apostleship (10:13), the validity of which some at Corinth had called in question. Looking on the outward appearance they disparaged the apostle, and, it would seem, questioned the validity of his commission to concern himself with Corinth. Little did such would-be teachers know about Paul. Weapons he was furnished with by the Lord that would be used for their edification or for casting them down. Man in nature might have used these weapons for the latter purpose; Paul aimed at their edification. Powerful indeed were his letters—all felt that; but his personal appearance was not in harmony with the power of his writing. He terrified by words, but who would be afraid of him when present? His speech was contemptible. Such were the thoughts and sayings of those people. Well, as regards his personal appearance and his speech, their remarks might be true. His figure was probably not a commanding one; his speech was anything but eloquent; but as to power, what he was when absent, that he would be when present. Nor had he overstepped his commission in going to Corinth.

Looking at the outward appearance would not do. “Let him that glorieth,” he writes, “glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth.” (10: 17, 18)

From this he passes on to a comparison between others and himself. But why this line of things in an inspired epistle? He tells them he fears lest, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, their minds should be corrupted from simplicity as to the Christ. Hence he enters on a comparison as to his preaching, his Jewish descent, his endurance of trials and hardships, his sympathy with others. Then he tells them where he excelled all others, and claimed them as being witnesses of the truth of his apostleship. What could others preach of truth which he had not preached? Unskilled in speech he might be, but not in knowledge. As to correct Jewish descent, who could

surpass him? As to labors and sufferings, who had outdone him? He preached at Corinth, feebly it is true; he would continue to do it, that the false apostles should have no ground of boasting over him.

But he had been where they had not, even in the third heavens, and in paradise; and he bore in his person the marks of these favors in the thorn in the flesh, which the Lord, though thrice entreated by Paul, refused to remove. Of how much could he have boasted! But he forbore. And why? Lest any man should think of him above that which he saw him to be, or heard of him (12:6) What a reason for his reticence! Paul, who had been in the third heavens, and had heard when in paradise what he could not utter on earth, was looked down on by these really false apostles, who had enlisted the Corinthians on their behalf. How utterly contemptible they must have appeared after the bare recital of his labors and sufferings for Christ! Completely crushed they ought to have been by the mention of his visions and revelations. Before he had ever visited Corinth he had been in the third heavens, yet they apparently knew nothing of it till they forced him to mention it. "I am become a fool," he writes; "ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, by signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds." (12: 11,12) Trying it must have been for him to have to write thus. Condemnatory of them it was that he should be worked upon to do it.

Yet his love was unwearied. He could revisit them, and gladly spend and be spent for them, though the more abundantly he loved the less he was loved. (12:15) And did they think that in all this he was excusing himself to them? "We speak before God in Christ," he says, "and all things are for your edifying;" for the moral condition of some in the assembly he well knew. (vv. 20, 21) So coming again he would not spare. Did any doubt that Christ spoke in Him? They had but to examine themselves to see. By whom were they evangelized? Christ Jesus was in them unless they were reprobates. Was it then in vindication of himself that he thus wrote? Again he reminds them that it was their real edification which he sought, that he might not be called upon to use sharpness towards them.

Now, after an exhortation and salutations, he closes with, "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all."

C. E. S.

The Lord Is at Hand

This inspired, inspiriting cry was vouchsafed to the Church almost as soon as the Lord had taken His place at the right hand of God. Nay, ere He left His disciples on earth, He encouraged their drooping spirits with the assurance of His speedy return; and after His ascension, in almost every communication addressed to His own through inspired penmen, He recalled their hearts to this blessed truth, finally closing His last message with the thrice—repeated word, “Behold, I come quickly.” (Revelation 22:7,12,20)

If, moreover, the connection in which this truth is found be carefully examined, it will be seen that it has always a practical application. If the soldier is weary of the conflict, or daunted by the power of the foe; if the laborer faints in his service; if he who runs the race grows careless, by losing sight of the goal; if the oppressed, the sorrowing, and the afflicted are becoming hopeless through the fiery nature of their trials, the anodyne, the consolation, the encouragement, the stimulus administered is the hope of the Lord’s speedy return. The step of the weariest traveler becomes elastic, the thirsty soul of the pilgrim, passing over the sands of the desert, is immediately refreshed, the almost defeated combatant is at once nerved with new courage, and sufferers of every kind are cheered and sustained under the power of this blessed hope.

It is a characteristic indeed of this truth that it is never formally stated or defined, but is rather inwoven with the very essence of Christianity. Left out, therefore, Christianity is incomplete, and lapses into worldliness or Judaism. The calling and position of the Christian, the character of the church, and indeed the future of this world, would alike be an enigma apart from the second coming of our Lord and Saviour. The fact of its having been forgotten immediately upon the death of the apostles (for not a trace of it, in its Scriptural statement, can be found in any extant writings from the end of the first down to the close of the eighteenth century), explains the character of Church history. The annals of Christianity, said an unbelieving historian, are the annals of hell. Whatever abatement may be demanded from this verdict, it would yet be difficult to discover more unblushing sin and iniquity than was often seen in the bosom of the professing church during this period. Adopting the language of the prophet, it might be truly said that “darkness, gross darkness, covered the people.” There were undoubtedly, and God be praised for it, thousands who, amid the prevalent corruption, maintained, by the grace of God, holy and devoted lives—lights shining in the dense gloom that had settled down upon the Church; but these only rendered the general darkness more visible.

It was, then, a most signal mercy when God caused the hope of the Lord’s return to be revived amongst His people. And the fact can never be overlooked that this was connected with the restoration of the truth of the Lord’s table. It must have been so. The Lord Himself inseparably linked these two things the truth of His table and that of His coming—in the words given to Paul, “As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord’s death till He come.” (1 Corinthians 11:26) Thus it was that, when the simple commemorative character of the Lord’s supper became corrupted, when the eucharist was turned into a sacrament, and even into a

sacrifice, and the idea of a completed redemption was thereby utterly lost, of necessity the hope of the Lord's return was extinguished. But when the Scriptural teaching concerning the Lord's Supper exposed the superstitions of patristic and sacerdotal inventions, and the Lord's table was again duly ordered to the joy of His people, the beams of the bright and morning star immediately gladdened their hearts. There are some now living who passed through the blessed experiences of this signal period, when the Bible once again resumed its rightful place in the hearts of God's people, and when they searched it daily as for hidden treasure, while its pages seemed to glow with a light that shone down directly from the presence of God. They found in these days that the Word was both living and powerful; and they, on their parts, delighted to lay bare their inmost souls to its searching, convicting, and sanctifying power.

It was no wonder, therefore, that they lived in the power of the expectation of their Lord. This was seen in many ways. In the first place, they began to judge themselves, their houses, their surroundings, associations and pursuits in the light of His presence for whom they waited. Was this, was that, they anxiously inquired, suitable to His eye? The knife was unsparingly applied according to this test. As a consequence, they became unworldly. Their hope was fixed on One outside of this scene—on One who was coming at any moment to receive them to Himself, and perforce they assumed the place of stranger-ship in this world. Henceforward they knew what it was not to be of the world even as Christ was not of the world; they now recognized that their character and calling were heavenly, and could not, therefore, have community of feeling with the world in its ways, habits, and pleasures. Another feature of that day was, that those who received this truth were drawn together in the most intimate bonds of Christian fellowship. As in the days of Pentecost, though in feeble measure, they that believed were together, and (in principle, at least) had all things common. Together with this—and this feature should never be omitted—there was intense activity in the ministration, in various ways, of the truth of God. It is sometimes alleged that those who profess to be waiting for the Lord's return are careless as to the publication of the gospel; but the history of that, as well as of more recent times, proves the statement to be utterly unfounded.

Fifty years have passed away, and instead of hundreds there are thousands who now declare their faith in the Lord's second coming. Other men have labored, and we, without a struggle, and in many cases without an exercise, have entered upon their labors. What was revealed to them after long meditation, fervent prayers, and painful experiences, has come to us by inheritance. These witnesses have departed—departed to be with Christ, there to wait still in fellowship with Him; and their torches have been put into our hands. It is this fact, beloved, that suggests so many questions—questions which crowd upon us even as we write these lines. Do we, then, really expect, wait for, the return of our Lord? Is this our constant attitude of soul? Just as a man may read the Scriptures, and, seeing clearly, assent to the truth that all are guilty sinners, and yet never take the place of such before God for himself, so is it possible to hold the doctrine of the second coming of Christ without being influenced by it. Indeed, we might be able even to state the truth to others without one particle of response to its claims. We need to challenge ourselves on this point. Are we, then, we again ask, in the power of the expectation of seeing our blessed Lord? Is this blessed hope daily before our souls? Does it govern our actions? mold our conduct? Does it detach us from the world and worldliness? Show us the vanity of the world's distinctions, manners, and ways? Paul could write of some in his day, "In every place your faith to Godward is spread

abroad; so that we need not to speak anything. For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God; and to wait for his Son from heaven, whom He raised from the dead, Jesus, which delivered us from the wrath to come.” (1 Thessalonians 1:8-10) Would this description in any measure be true of us? Do our ways before the world proclaim that we have no resting-place here? that we are only sojourners waiting to be fetched by our Lord? Do our homes and households, in their ordering and arrangement, proclaim this blessed truth? In a word, is this the testimony of our lives, of our walk and ways?

Questions like these may soon be answered, if we are honest with ourselves, and the very attempt to answer them would lead to blessing. For in how many instances would it lead to the painful discovery that with this truth on our lips we have been denying it in the life; that while we have been saying that we are but strangers and pilgrims here, we have been settling down in ease and comfort, making plans for worldly advancement, if not for ourselves yet for our families, seeking to raise ourselves higher in the social scale, and striking root in every direction in the soil of this world? Is it not possible that God has a controversy with us on this account? That this will explain the sorrows that have befallen us—the sicknesses that have so often visited ourselves and our families? For God must have reality with His people. He loves them too well to permit them to go on in self-deception—deceiving themselves and deceiving others also. Therefore He is speaking to us by His manifold dealings and chastenings, warning us of our danger, and recalling us to the sense of our responsibility as His witnesses in the world. May He Himself give us the opened ear to His voice, that we may humble ourselves before Him in lowly abasement and self-judgment, and seek His restoring grace, so that in all the fervor of our first love we may testify once again in living power to the truth of our Lord’s return.

Another observation may be permitted. Nothing so tends to obscure our vision of the bright and morning star as the thought that signs are to be expected before He descends from heaven. We have been plied with temptations of this character. Voices other than that of the Good Shepherd have beguiled even saints. Pyramids and conjunctions of planets (which after all were of no extraordinary kind) have been adduced to prove that the Lord is at hand. The carnal wisdom of men has thus been allied with the teachings of the word of God. If we build upon such things our faith will soon be rudely shaken. God needs no confirmation from, nor will He be indebted to, men. These things, indeed) are a wile of the enemy to divert our gaze from the Coming One to circumstances or to earthly events. No; our hope rests alone on Christ and His word. According to the words of a French hymn “He has promised, He will return.” this, and this alone, is the foundation of the “blessed hope.” It is quite true that the moral characteristics of the “perilous times” will be discerned by the instructed soul; but these are detected by a knowledge of the word of God. Our danger lies in being lured from the voice of our living Lord to listen to the words of men. The more we are shut up to the Lord Himself and His own word, the more intense will be our expectation of His coming.

To some it may seem that He has long tarried. But if He yet wait, it is but while God is still working in the activities of His grace to gather in His elect—the coheirs with Christ. While therefore He would have us to be ever waiting and ever expecting, it must be in full fellowship with His own heart. If we wait, He also waits; if we desire His return, much more ardently does He look forward to the moment when He will rise from His seat to claim His own. But the moments of waiting, will

soon now be over. Louder and louder the Spirit and the Bride say, Come; and it is He Himself who puts this word into our lips, while He responds, "Surely I come quickly." What then can we do but bow our heads in His presence as we reply, "Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus?"

"And now, at length, behold, He comes

To claim thee from above,

In answer to the ceaseless call,

And deep desire of love.

"Go, then, thou loved and blessed one

Thou drooping mourner, rise!

Go; for He calls thee now to share

His dwelling in the skies.

"For thee, His royal Bride—for thee,

His brightest glories shine;

And, happier still, His changeless heart,

With all its love, is thine."

E. D.

The Purposes and Desires of the Heart

The Spirit of God has been pleased to state two grounds upon which God brought the judgment of the flood upon man. First, because of what he had done “The wickedness of man was great in the earth;” and further on we read that this had assumed the twofold form of corruption and violence, those parent sins of Genesis 3 and 4, which will find their full consummation in the day of the Lord, the former in Jerusalem and the antichrist, and the latter in Babylon and the beast. Second, because of what he was “Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually;” or, as the margin reads, “The purposes and desires of his heart” were such.

On account of these two things, then, “it repented the Lord that He made man on the earth, and it grieved Him at His heart.” How little are we impressed with the degree to which the heart of God is affected by the sin of His creatures! Now, after the flood, when man was about to get a new start on the earth, after having been sheltered for a hundred and fifty days from judgment, from Satan, and from the world, what does God say? (Genesis 8:21) Has His estimate of man risen? Has His judgment become modified? Not in the least. He utters not a word about man’s conduct, for as yet no space had been given for it to be manifested under His new conditions. But as to the deeper question we read, “The imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth.” He who “searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts” (1 Chronicles 28:9), needs no waiting for their doings; for He knoweth what is in man, and that He cannot commit Himself to him.

But there is here a point of deepest interest; viz., that because of what He saw in man, or, if you please, in spite of it (see margin), He declares that He will not again smite the earth any more for man’s sake. And why this comforting word, this assuring promise, as undeserved as it was unsought? The answer is surely obvious to every student of the word; it was simply and solely because of the incoming between Himself and man of all that was signified in the altar and the holocaust of Noah. The first erection on the typically new earth was an altar unto God, probably the earliest ever constructed, and upon this a mighty sacrifice, whole-burnt offering, ascended to Him, definitely referring God’s heart to the excellency and the efficacy of Christ’s person and work. He is met, as it were, on the threshold of the renewed earth by Him who is the beginning of the creation of God!

Thus, as man’s entrance upon the antediluvian world (driven forth from the garden) was as carrying the curse by which he had inaugurated his relations to it when his former relations to God were suspended, so now his entrance upon the typically new creation was marked by restored relations to God, inaugurated by promise and by covenant; so benignant, too, in their character that from that moment to the present his material condition has been substantially and continuously ameliorated. And again we ask, Why was this? Is it not evident that He who saw the end from the beginning so knew, on the one hand, that judgment would work no change in the human heart, and so found, on the other, full and deep satisfaction in what Noah’s altar and sacrifice expressed as denoted by the words, “The Lord smelled a sweet savor, or savor of rest” (margin), that He proclaimed, as it were, an amnesty to man, and retired with profound delight to

rest in the Son of His love?

Look we on now to Christianity, and again these thoughts and imaginations of man's heart come before us (2 Corinthians 10:4,5); for, be it as left alone in lawlessness, or under and after divine judgment, or when brought upon Christian ground, man as man is unchanged, no matter what be his dispensation or the character of his calling. But see how the Spirit of God deals in holy peremptoriness with these hidden activities of man's heart in the case of believers. Does grace give license to the flesh and its works? By no means. On the contrary, not satisfied with rigorously controlling all that is overt, we have here the deepest springs of fleshly activity torched in the core. The "strongholds" are to be scaled and pulled down; the "imaginings" with every high thing in their train are to be cast down, and "every thought" is to be brought down, "into captivity to the obedience of Christ."

Nothing less than this is what Christianity proposes to effect for the believer; for you, dear reader, and for me. Is it so with us? Has the Spirit of God achieved this noiseless and unseen conquest over what He finds in us, for the glory of Christ, as captives in His train? How far-reaching and how deep-searching is that word "every thought" subjugated to Christ! May His grace lead us into real exercise of soul as to the purposes and desires of our hearts, that His eye may behold those hidden springs, which only He surveys, working with true fidelity to Himself under the ceaseless control of His Spirit unto the joy and delight of His own heart. Says the apostle, "I am jealous over you with godly jealousy; for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

W. R. D.

The Shepherds of Bethlehem

All intelligence of the things of God comes from His revelation, and not from the reasonings of men. Hence, the simple go farther in spiritual understanding than the wise and prudent of the earth. God acts here so as to set aside all appearance of human wisdom. Happy he who has so seized the intention of God as to be identified with it, and to want none but God! This was the case with the shepherds. They little entered into the great intent of the registration; but it was to them, and not to the prudent, that God revealed Himself. Our true wisdom is through what God reveals.

But we never get God's fullest blessings till we are where the flesh is brought down and destroyed I speak as regards walk. We cannot get into the simple joy and power of God till we accept the place of lowliness and humiliation, till the heart is emptied of what is contrary to the lowliness of Christ. These shepherds were in the quiet fulfillment of their humble duty, and that is the place of blessing. Whoever is keeping on terms with the world is not walking with God; for God is not walking with you there. From the manger to the cross all in Christ was simple obedience. How unlike a Theudas, who boasted himself to be somebody! Christ did all in God's way; and not only so, but we must come to this too.

The glory of the Lord shines round about the shepherds; the angel speaks to them; the sign is given, and what a sign! "Ye shall find a babe wrapped up in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God; "and for what?" The mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh." The hope of Israel is revealed to them; glad tidings of great joy to all the people; for Jesus is the pivot of all God's counsels in grace. Adam himself was but a type of Him who was to come. Christ was ever in the mind of God. Such displays of glory are not shown to mortal eyes every day; but God sets them before us in His word, and we must every day follow the sign given, follow Jesus, the babe in the manger. If He filled the eye, the ear, the heart, how we should see the effects in person, spirit, conversation, dress, house, money, &c.

Such, then, is the sign of God's accomplishment of promise, and of His presence in the world "a babe in a manger" the least and lowest thing. But God is found there, though these things are beyond man, who cannot walk with God, nor understand His moral glory. But God's sign is within the reach of faith; it is the token of perfect weakness; a little infant who can only weep! Such born into this world is Christ the Lord; such is the place God chose—the low degree. God's intervention is recognized by a sign like this; man would not have sought that. The heavenly host praise God, and say, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward (in) men." Nothing higher nor more astonishing (save the cross) for those who have the mind of heaven. The choir above see God in it—God manifested in flesh, and praise God in the highest. They rejoice that His delights are with the sons of men. Of old God had displayed Himself to Moses in a flame of fire without consuming the bush, and here, still more marvelously, in the feeblest thing on earth; infinite thought morally, though despicable in the eye of the world. How hard it is to receive that the work of God and of His Christ is always in weakness! The rulers of the people saw in Peter and

John unlearned and ignorant men. Paul's weakness at Corinth was the trial of his friends, the taunt of his enemies, the boast of himself. The Lord's strength is made perfect in weakness. The thorn in the flesh made Paul despised, and he conceived it would be better if that were gone. He had need of the lesson, "My grace is sufficient for thee." It is God's rule of action, if we may so say, to choose the weak things. Everything must rest on God's power, otherwise God's work cannot be done according to His mind. One can hardly believe that one must be feeble to do the work of God; but Christ was crucified in weakness, and the weakness of God is stronger than men. For the work of God we must be weak that the strength may be of God; and that work will last when all the earth shall be moved away.

J. N. D.

Jubilation

Hark! what symphonies are ringing
Round about the throne of God;
In His love at rest, and singing
Through the One who shed His blood.
Praise eternal thence abounding,
Melody, O God, divine;
Hallelujahs sweetly sounding,
All proclaim the glory Thine.
Jesus leads the Jubilation
With rapture—songs in glory,
Strikes the chorus of creation
With Salem's ransom—story.
Hallelujah, homage, blessing,
All harmonious round the throne,
Every knee and tongue confessing
Jesus Lord and Christ alone.
Countless chorals ever ringing
In the universe of God,
Heaven and earth their glory bringing
To the Lamb who shed His blood.
C. F. C.

Weakness and Strength

Immediately upon redemption weakness comes in “He was crucified through weakness.” “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground, and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.” He could have gone up to heaven as the Son of David, but then He would have had no one with Him.

If the Spirit were given where atonement was not known it could only produce fearful conflict in the soul. There was no such thing as redemption, bringing back, except by the humiliation of His Son. If He had not become Man, He could not have gone to death, He could not have been the Head of the Gentiles, He could not have been the One amongst men meeting every need. He came down to measure out everything in His own personal presence in grace. He did not stay in heaven and do the work; He said, “I choose to recognize Satan’s power, but I will go down and worst him on his own ground.” But He was not only crucified through weakness; the great point is, He was raised from the dead—Himself the Resurrection and the Life; and we can look into the grave and say, “I know Him as the resurrection and the life.” How does this power work in us? It is resurrection from the dead; when known it brings in the taste of death into everything connected with ourselves. Look at Saul of Tarsus; he had everything planned in his own mind for his service, and the Lord Jesus speaks to him from heaven. His first word, “Who art Thou, Lord?” shows that he was conscious of the entire end of everything connected with self. Then the next thing was, “What wilt Thou have me to do?” You will not find until Christ really looks into you that you will look at Him as the revelation of the glory of God. Then you say, “There is a Man up there in heaven raised from the dead, the One in whose face all the glory of God shines. If I want to know anything connected with God, I must learn it from that Man; the answer to every question, above, around, within, is found in the face of that One. God centralizes all in that Person!”

We often think of this passage as the experience of the apostle. True, it was so; but in it we get the principle of Christ’s dealing with a soul. God shows me the Man in the glory, but after that I look up and see that One bearing me on His heart before God, and that He never forgets me. We get here the principle of God’s dealing with a man down here. There is more than one principle on which the apostle was quite willing to have the fare of a pilgrim down here; but this is one, “My grace is sufficient for thee.” If it be a question of service, of suffering, of any power at all, where do I get it? In Christ.

We get another ground in Philippians 3 There his heart was so entranced with Christ, that he wanted in everything to be like Him; because Christ suffered, he wants to bear the marks of suffering too; to be like Him in every possible way, in moral character, in suffering, even in “being made conformable unto His death.” Christ was down here as a pilgrim and stranger, and so he wanted to have the marks of one of His disciples, in being conformed to His sufferings; and why? For the love he had to Christ.

But here it is another thing, “My grace is sufficient for thee,” &c. I mean to conform you as My disciple to that principle of death and resurrection that was made good in Me before you got any

blessing from it, that in everyday life you may have My strength. Look at the bearing of this on a person down here, the light it casts on his face. It was not only a question of the danger Christ saw, but He used Satan. People lose much when they forget that Christ uses Satan to guard them from sin; he is one of the powers by which He works. Satan gave Paul the thorn in the flesh. Christ's purpose is to perfect His strength in His servant's weakness. The whole scene down here is under His hand; and not only are the difficulties here for us to get through, but they are arranged by Christ that He may glorify Himself by taking you through them. Who made the wilderness? God. And had He any special purpose in making it as it was? Why did He not make it like Canaan? Because He wanted a place for His people where He would have to supply their need every day. The secret of quietness and peace of heart is not to look at things and say, I have got to face them; but Christ has prepared the things as they are that I may not be able to get along a single day without Himself. Have I no bread? no work? Am I sick? Where is Christ? All the things are not only overruled, but used by Him that we may learn His strength of love that cripples us that He may be able to say, "My grace is sufficient for thee; for My strength is made perfect in weakness."

As I go along and see in my path a large rock, what do I think? How can I ever get over it? No; Christ has allowed it. He has put it in my path to try my faith, and somehow or other He will get me over it. You cannot say in ease and prosperity, there is Christ; but directly the storm begins, the weakness is felt, the sickness comes, we can certainly count on Christ. An extremity never takes Him by surprise, though often it may be an extremity entirely opposed to His moral character. If He leave a person to himself, it is not that He gives him up, but to prove his heart. If He see a man full of himself, even though his face may be beaming with the glory, He must leave him to himself a little. If the heart will not bow to Christ it must be left to itself. If we do not learn in the quiet of the sanctuary, we shall find ourselves outside to learn what poor things we are. Christ would rather have His name dishonored and Peter brought low, than keep him in the ranks of the Church, "making a fair show in the flesh."

Look at John in Revelation 1. There, an exile in Patmos, he might have thought his apostleship ended; but Christ comes and gives him a book to write, unfolding things of deep moment to the Church in all ages. What should we do without the Revelation? We get another instance in Romans 8. I know not what to ask, but the Spirit makes intercession with groanings, and He that searcheth the heart knoweth it. Do I know what I want? No; but we present our desires before Him, often unable to form them into sentences, but Christ is up there, He knows what the Spirit wants for us. It is only an instance of redemption, working through Almighty power, connecting God, Christ in heaven, with me, a little insignificant individual down here. That God is so occupied with me that He brings me into desires after spiritual things connected with the glory of Christ. I present the desire, Christ understands (take the figure in Psalms 107; the sailors at their wits' end, then they learn the poverty of nature) I am brought to a sense of weakness by this character of communion, by His "strength made perfect in weakness." A great deal of the defective Christianity nowadays is owing to the Lord's people coming short in seeing that. Do we understand that the whole wilderness is to be a book of death and resurrection to us? Very often sorrow is taken up from love to Christ; but here it is my lifetime all developed by Christ, and He acting upon all to develop the principle of death and resurrection, and that to let me know "My grace is sufficient." If you look at Satan as one of the powers by which God works, at the wilderness as the place prepared by Christ, where the tokens of His love are shown out, and at yourselves, crippled by

Christ in order that you may have no strength but His to act on, you will find sweetness and refreshing of soul.

G. V. W.

Fragment: Display of His Glory

If we are in communion with God, every difficulty becomes the occasion for the display of His glory.

Fragment: Strength in God

We are often overwhelmed because our strength is not in God, who would have His grace sufficient for us, which is more precious than the removal of the thorn in the flesh.

The Epistle to the Romans

The epistle to the Romans was written from Greece, and probably from Corinth (16:23), during Paul's third missionary journey, which terminated abruptly at Jerusalem, whither he went with the collection raised by the churches of Galatia, Macedonia, and Achaia for the poor saints in that city. The immediate occasion of his writing appears to have been to commend to them Phebe, a deaconess of the church in Cenchrea, the eastern port of the city of Corinth, and distant but a few miles from it. (16:1)

By whom the Church was planted in Rome, the metropolitan city of the empire, is to us unknown, but it owed not its origin to the personal labors of any of the apostles, though when founded it naturally came to be cared for by the apostle of the Gentiles. (1:13; 15:15, 16) Paul was as yet a stranger to Rome, and to the bulk of the saints in that city (1:10, 11; 15:23, 24), though there were those among them with whom he was well acquainted. (16) Purposing to visit them on his way to Spain, which we know not that he ever reached, he wrote this letter, which treats at some length of the gospel of God.

At the outset, as was fit, he describes himself, and presents his credentials. He was a bondsman of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God; and from the Lord Jesus Christ he received grace and apostleship for the obedience of faith among all nations, on behalf of His name, amongst whom were the saints in Rome, the called of Jesus Christ. Hence, he writes to them as beloved of God, called saints, wishing them grace and peace from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Then, telling them for what he can give thanks on their behalf, and of his desire to see them, to impart unto them some spiritual gift, he proceeds to enter upon his great theme of the gospel, which he was prepared, when the opportunity should present itself, to preach to the saints in Rome; for there is a gospel for saints as well as one for sinners. How Paul preached to the unconverted the Acts of the Apostles teaches us. (13) What he would preach as gospel for saints the epistle to the Romans in part unfolds to us. Now of the gospel he was not ashamed; for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth—to the Jew first, and also to the Greek, for in it is the righteousness of God revealed from, or on the principle (■κ) of, faith to faith, in accordance with the prophetic declaration, "The righteous shall live by faith." (Habakkuk 2:4) And the reason for this revelation of God's righteousness in the gospel becomes apparent, when it is understood, that God's wrath from heaven is revealed against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness. God having revealed this latter has provided His glad tidings to be preached, to deliver all who believe them from the judgment they have richly deserved.

Having introduced the revelation of God's wrath from heaven, the apostle proceeds to show the moral condition of Gentiles (1:19-32) and of Jews (2:1-7 3: 20), which proves that all were liable to endure it, because of that which they had done—the former being ungodly, the latter found guilty, in addition to holding the truth in unrighteousness. Further, both were without excuse; for though

the' Gentiles had not the law, God's written revelation, there was a testimony to God's eternal power and Godhead in the works of creation sufficient, if man had wished it, to have kept him from idolatry. (1: 19, 20) Thence the downward path of the human race is traced out for our instruction. Men once had the knowledge of God, but glorified Him not as God, nor were thankful. So darkness came upon them, and folly was displayed by them as they turned to idolatry. (v. 23) With that they became debased and vile, God giving them up to the vile practices which accompanied idolatry. But more; they did not like to retain God in their knowledge. God then gave them over to a reprobate mind to do those things which 'are not convenient. Hence the lawlessness, selfishness, and injustice which are so rife upon earth. A state of savagery then is the fruit of man's will, and not the primeval condition of the race. Of the fall we read in Genesis 3 Of the causes which led to man's debasement after the flood, we learn about in Romans 1 Concerning the apostasy, which will characterize Christendom and the ungodly among the Jews, we read of in the Psalms, the Prophets, 2 Thessalonians, and Revelation 13 Such is man's wretched history as traced out in the Word. The state of the heathen world cannot then be laid at God's door. He gave them up to uncleanness only when they turned to idolatry; He gave them up unto vile affections; He gave them over to a reprobate mind. The state God permitted, but He did not create man in such a condition, nor force him against his will to be debased. The true history of man therefore only magnifies the grace of God, in that He should provide good news, and at such a cost, for His willful and vile creatures.

This is now set forth. Departing from God, as man did after the flood, he had nevertheless a conscience, by the light of which he judged others for sins which he also committed, and hence condemned himself, and owned thereby that he deserved the judgment of God, judgment which will be executed in the day of God's wrath, and the principles of which the apostle plainly sets forth. (2:1-16) And this judgment will take knowledge of the secrets of men, and will deal with Jews as well as Gentiles. Whereupon the apostle proceeds to prove, from the Old Testament Scriptures, the Jew guilty not only of ungodliness, but also of unrighteousness. 2:1-7 3:20) For man, then, to escape God's wrath from heaven there was, as far as he was concerned, no hope. "All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (3:23), is the sweeping but true verdict pronounced by God upon the human race.

All then brought in guilty, and by One whose judgment is just, and from which there is no appeal, we are cast upon God for any door of escape from our righteously deserved doom. It is here the gospel comes in, the teaching about which runs on from 3:21 to 8:39, and is arranged under three great heads; viz., freedom from the guilt of sin, freedom from the power of sin and from the law, and freedom from the presence of sin.

As to the first of these heads, we learn that God is perfectly righteous, by virtue of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ, in justifying the ungodly, and has set forth Christ as a mercy-seat, or propitiatory (not propitiation), through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness for the passing over through His forbearance of the sins done aforetime, the sins of the Old Testament saint—stand to declare at this time His righteousness, that He might be just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. The reader should remark how God is first thought of in the gospel. His character is first vindicated, His nature too cared for, in that His righteousness and holiness are both met by the blood of Christ sprinkled, as it were, upon the mercy-seat. Boasting on man's part is thereby excluded, and the law is established. (21-31)

The ground on which God can righteously act in grace having been set forth in chapter 3., we next learn on what principle souls can be justified, as illustrated in the history of Abraham (4:15), and the moral class which can share in this favor, of which David is the example. (69) Then, returning to Abraham's history, the apostle reminds us that he was justified before God instituted the rite of circumcision for him and his descendants; so Gentiles as well as Jews can share in it. He was justified by faith; so are we. But the testimony given to us to believe differs from that given to him. He believed God who quickeneth the dead, and calls those things which be not as though they were. We believe upon Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification. (9-25)

Consequences great and blessed flow to us from being justified by faith. We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; we have access by faith into the grace, or favor, wherein we stand, as pardoned and justified ones, before the throne of God; and we rejoice, or boast, in hope of the glory of God. And more than that, we boast in God Himself through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the reconciliation. (5:1-11) This part of the gospel treats of the result of the atoning death of Christ for us, and the value of His blood before God. And believing God's testimony about it, we know what it is to have the love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us. Thus far we learn from the gospel what it is to have, and how it is we can have, freedom from the guilt of sin. Forgiven—but of this the epistle does not treat, for it supposed that the saints knew it—they learned they were also justified, or reckoned righteous by God Himself; hence there was no barrier to their standing in holy boldness before the throne, and the blessings enjoyed, as the consequence of justification by faith, could not, they are shown, in their special line be surpassed.

But something else is needed, and this forms the second part of this gospel; viz., freedom from the power of sin and from the law. Now here the doctrine of headship of a race can apply. We have learned something of it experimentally, inasmuch as being descendants of Adam, in him, as head of the race, his condition, the fruit of his fall, and consequences of that fall, we all share in. But another Man has appeared, the head of a new race; so all who are ranged under Him, as their head, are viewed as in Him, and share in His present condition as regards sin and the law, and in the consequences of His act of obedience to death, the death of the cross. (5: 12-19) Would any charge God with injustice for making Adam's posterity to share in the fruits of his act of disobedience? It is on this very principle that any one of us can really be blessed; for we who believe share in the consequences of the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have to share in the temporal results of Adam's sin; we do share in the everlasting consequences of the perfect obedience of the Lord Jesus Christ. Thus the ground is cut away from under the feet of an objector in hostility of heart to God, and the believer has cause to thank Him that, if suffering because of his forefather's sin, on that same principle he shares in the blessed results of the obedience unto death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

But between Adam's fall and the death of the Lord Jesus Christ the law has come in, and that in order "that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound, in order that as sin has reigned in the power of death, so also might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord." (5: 20, 21) The apostle here mentions the law and sin. He will now treat of them somewhat at length, but in an inverse order, showing that by the death of the Lord Jesus Christ believers can enjoy present freedom from the

power of sin, and that those once under law are set free from it by that same death. As far as chapter 5:11 the apostle has written of sins. He now treats of sin.

“What shall we say, then?” he asks. “Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?” Antinomian teaching might encourage that. But the answer is ready and decisive: “How shall we, who died to sin, live any longer therein?” If we have died to it, we cannot go on in it, that is clear. But when? and how? some might ask. “Are ye ignorant,” he adds, “that so many of us as were baptized unto Christ Jesus, were baptized unto His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him by baptism unto death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.” What had they professed by their baptism? They had not died to sin by it. They were buried by it with Christ unto death. They professed, however, by that rite to be disciples of Him who had died, and died to sin. The apostle then proceeds: “For if we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, we shall be also of His resurrection.” The condition of the head of the race as to sin is the condition of everyone who is ranged under that head. Christ has died to it. Christians, therefore, have died to it. Thus we have been planted together in the likeness of His death, and now await that of His resurrection. “We shall be of His resurrection.” But whilst awaiting that, when we shall be free from the presence of sin, God has judicially dealt with our old man in the cross of Christ, that we should now know deliverance from its thralldom. And since Christ, who has died to sin once for all, now lives to God, we are to reckon ourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God in Christ Jesus. (6:1-11) Here for the first time in this epistle do we read of our being in Christ. This flows out of the truth of headship treated of, as we have seen, in the previous chapter. Exhortations now follow (6: 12-14), after which the subject is pursued one step further. If we may not continue in sin, may we sin? some might ask. We have changed masters, says the apostle, so that even cannot be allowed. We were servants to sin, but have become servants to righteousness and to God. Hence comes the exhortation, “Yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness,” and so be fruitful to God. (6:15-23) Paul had spoken of the entrance of the law and the purport of it. (5:20) He will now point out how souls get free from being under it, and that is by death. But if free, as we have already learned (6:22), we are not our own masters, that we may live to ourselves; for though we have died to the law, we are still here on earth. Hence, he adduces the illustration of a woman set free by death from her first husband, able to be for another husband. “So,” he writes, “ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be for another, even Him who is raised from the dead, that ye should bring forth fruit to God.” (7:14) That is the doctrine and the purport of it. The need of such a deliverance, and the experience of a quickened soul under law, is now set forth in verses 7-25. What believer has not known something of this in the process of learning himself? Yet it is not true Christian experience. Nor are we to rest contented never to advance beyond it upon earth; for there are three defined steps by which the believer gets out of it. First, he learns that in himself there dwells no good thing. (18) Next, he discerns the difference of the natures within him. “It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.” (20) Then looking round for a deliverer, for it is that he wants, he finds he has deliverance through Christ Jesus his Lord. (24, 25) He has not to hope for it.

C. E. S.

(To be continued)

The Lamb of God

There is no character in which Christ is presented more precious to the believer than that of Lamb of God. Our hymns of praise—indeed the hymns of all ages—bear witness to this. The reason is evident. It brings before us, in one word, both the beauty of His character, and His sacrificial work. The very term is redolent of the cross, and consequently of His sufferings and death. It therefore appeals to the deepest affections of every true believer; and, at the same time, when rightly understood, conserves the doctrines of grace which center in and radiate from the cross of Calvary.

It is not a little remarkable that John the Baptist should be the chosen instrument thus to describe his Lord. The herald of the kingdom, “the voice of one crying in the wilderness,” “Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias,” it is yet he who proclaims the victim character of Him who was presented to Israel as the King; and thereby, consciously or unconsciously, he foretold His rejection and death. This is in harmony with the gospel in which this utterance of his is recorded. In the synoptical gospels Christ is presented to Israel for acceptance, and His rejection is seen in the course of their narrative. John begins with His rejection, as he says, “He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.” (John 1:10) We have consequently the glories of the person of Christ described in a way that would not otherwise have been possible.

The first chapter indeed covers almost the whole field of His dignities and exaltation, whether essential or acquired. It commenced with His eternal existence as the Word “and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; it exhibits Him as Incarnate” the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us “as the only Begotten of (with, *παρὰ*) the Father, the only begotten Son in the bosom of the Father, Lamb of God, as the One who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, as the Son of God (as born into the earth according to Psalms 2 and Luke 1:35), and it concludes with His title as Son of man—the character in which, consequent upon His rejection by the Jewish nation, He will assume universal dominion.

The Jews had sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask John, Who art thou? He told them that he was not the Christ, but the voice of one crying in the wilderness, &c. (vv. 19-27) “The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” (John 1:29) The Jews had failed to understand the mission of John; their eyes could not discern in him the forerunner of the Messiah, and consequently John now proclaims the Messiah, in His suffering character, as the altar victim, God’s Lamb.

The question is often asked, what is the origin of this appellation? Of what especial lamb is Christ the antitype? There is very little doubt that there is a tacit reference to Genesis 22. When Abraham was on his way to mount Moriah to offer up Isaac, in obedience to the divine command, Isaac said, “Behold the fire and the wood: but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering? And Abraham said, my son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt-offering.” (vv. 7, 8) And this is the point here. The Lamb of God is the Lamb of God’s own providing, and now to deal once and forever with the question of sin, and the sin of the world. In Abraham’s case it was for a burnt-offering, for the

question of sin was not yet raised; but every Jew would be familiar with the thought of sacrificing for sin. The Passover lamb, while not exactly a sacrificial victim, told them of the need of blood to screen them from the judgment of a holy God, while the daily sacrifice of a lamb morning and evening would remind them of their need of atonement; for the burnt-offering was accepted for the offerer "to make atonement for him" (Leviticus 1:4), and its blood was sprinkled "round about upon the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of the congregation." There should therefore have been no difficulty in the mind of a Jew from this description of Christ; for it really embodied the essence of their own economy. The Lamb of God was the one sacrifice to which all their own directly pointed—the one sacrifice, provided for them in the grace of God, which, since provided by Himself, would meet His own mind, and abrogate the necessity of their continually offering those sacrifices which could never take away sin. What godly Jew, moreover, could have read: "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 everyone to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth: He is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so He openeth not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:57) what godly Jew, I say, could have read this chapter without expecting Christ to suffer for sin? The announcement therefore that He was the Lamb of God should have filled their hearts with gratitude and joy.

There are two things in these words of John which demand attention. He cries, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." We have, then, to consider what He is, and what He does. To whom did John point when he said, "Behold the Lamb of God?" It was Jesus. And who was He? That wondrous Person whose manifold dignities and glories are displayed in this chapter. He is the Word who was with God and who was God; He is the Creator of heaven and earth; "for all things were made by Him; and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life; and the life was the light of men." He is the only begotten Son of the Father, and the only Revealer of the Father. On the other side He was man, and on earth He was known as Jesus of Nazareth; but as born on earth, He was heir to all the rights of David, and hence the Christ, the Son of God, and the King of Israel.

Such was the Lamb of God as to His Person. Not that all this could have been discerned by the natural eye. Nay, He stood among those who came to John for baptism, as One whom they knew not. Outwardly, He was but a man amongst His fellowmen; but faith discerned His true character, and His exalted dignity. "We beheld His glory," says the evangelist, "the glory as of the only Begotten of the Father." To the anointed eye, therefore, Jesus, the Lamb of God, stood revealed as God manifest in flesh. And had he been less, He could not have been the Lamb of God. There was no other in the heaven or earth that could have answered to the mind of God, or, as the sacrifice for sin, have met all His holy claims. Nor was there any other that could have undertaken the cause, and stood in the place of sinners. As the perfect Man—without spot or blemish—He could offer Himself as the holy victim upon God's altar; as God, He imparted such infinite value to His sacrifice that it could avail for the whole world. We may well, therefore, take up the language of John, and, repeating his cry, say, Behold Him; yea

"Behold the Lamb! 'Tis He who bore

My burden on the tree;
And paid in blood the dreadful score,
The ransom due for me.
“I look to Him till sight endear
The Saviour to my heart;
To Him I look who calms my fear,
Nor from Himself depart.
“I look until His precious love
My every thought control,
Its vast constraining influence prove
O'er body, spirit, soul.”

We must also inquire what is meant by taking away the sin of the world. Two errors in connection with this passage have to be noted in order to be avoided. The first consists in the simple addition of a letter, making it “sins” instead of sin, an error which has been widely propagated in well-known forms of prayer. Now trifling as the question of a letter may seem, if it were true that Christ as the Lamb of God taketh away the sins of the world, universal salvation apart from faith would be the necessary consequence—a doctrine which undermines the fundamental truths of Christianity. It must be, therefore, urgently insisted upon that it is the sin, not the sins, of the world which is here mentioned. Nor does it say, secondly, that He has taken away the sin of the world. He taketh it away; that is, as we shall see farther on, He has done the work which will secure this result, but its accomplishment will not be reached until the end of all things.

It may help us to apprehend the meaning of these words if we compare another Scripture. “Once,” says the writer of the Hebrews, “hath He appeared in the end of the world” (in the consummation of the ages) “to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.” (Hebrews 9:26) The sacrifice has been offered, but the sin has not yet been, though it will be, put away. This is very obvious. Even the believer, though he is perfectly cleansed, and has no more conscience of sins, has sin in him “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8) He is to reckon himself dead to it, but actually it is still in him. There remains, however, nothing more to do for its abrogation. The sacrifice of the Lamb of God so glorified God in every attribute of His character that, on the ground of its eternal value, He will eventually put away sin forever from His sight. The blood of Christ has such infinite value in His eyes that righteously—yea, He can glorify Himself in the total putting away of sin, and the new heavens and the new earth will be the everlasting witness that it is done. Then He that sits upon the throne will say, “Behold, I make all things new” (Revelation 22:5); and every trace of sin and its defilement will be gone forever. Such is the force of this Scripture. It is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world; for it is He who has laid the foundation for the accomplishment of this glorious result by the sacrifice of Himself. Blessed be His name!

But it is not only as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world that John indicates Him. He declares Him more fully: "This is He of whom I said, After me cometh a Man which is preferred before me: for He was before me. And I knew Him not: but that He should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come baptizing with water. And John bare record, saying, I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and it abode upon Him. And I knew Him not: but He that sent me to baptize with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, the same is He which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." (John 1:30-34) No sooner have we been invited to behold Christ as the victim—the sacrificial Lamb—than we are directed to gaze upon Him in His exaltation—as the One baptizing with the Holy Ghost from His place at the right hand of God. This is the way of the Holy Spirit. If He delights to dwell on the lowly, suffering aspect of the works of Christ, to unfold to us the wondrous character of His death, and its far-reaching and comprehensive results, it is no less His joy to point Him out in the glory whence He sends forth the Holy Ghost, and to declare that He who was thus sealed as man by the descent of the Spirit is no other than the Son of God. The cross and the throne are ever connected. If the Lord Jesus humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, it is on that account that "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:9-11)

Having thus unveiled His coming exaltation and glory, John again presents Him as the Lamb of God. "Again, the next day after John stood, and two of His disciples, and looking upon Jesus as He walked, he saith, Behold the Lamb of God." (vv. 35, 36) In the former passage it was Christ in His sacrificial character—the meek and gentle victim—offering Himself for the sin of the world; in this it is the display of what He is in Himself that excites the wondering admiration of His forerunner. Looking upon Jesus as He walked, his heart is filled with adoring praise, and he says, Behold the Lamb of God; behold Himself, the beauty of His ways, the perfectness of His walk, the unfoldings of a divine-human life, which was in itself a full and perfect moral presentation of God to man. It was indeed an object that might rivet the gaze of all beholders. For that lowly Man, whom John thus designated, was the only One on earth who fully answered the desires of the heart of God, the only One on whom He could look, and in whom He could rest with complacency and delight. John therefore was in the current of God's own thoughts when he pointed his disciples to this beautiful Lamb of God.

This, at the same time, helps us to understand the significance of this second cry of the Baptist. John himself was arrested as he looked upon Jesus as he walked; and in utter forgetfulness of self, knowing that his lesser light must fade away and be extinguished by this heavenly luminary, he desires that his own disciples should be occupied with the object that had drawn forth and absorbed his affections. He had first proclaimed Him as the sacrifice for sin; for we can never know the Person of Christ until the question of sin has been settled, and then he pointed Him out to his disciples as the object for their hearts, as the One who was entitled, in virtue of His sacrifice and what it accomplished, to claim their allegiance and affections. And very blessed is it for us all when the claims of Christ are fully acknowledged. Under the pressure of our sin and guilt we are all willing, nay, often driven, to seek relief through His blood; but our danger is, when the relief is

obtained, of forgetting that He who has borne our sins in His own body on the tree, has by that very fact the right to all that we have and are. The right? Most surely the right! But how it evidences the feebleness of our conceptions of what He is, and what He has done, when we have to argue and enforce it. Who would speak of a mother having the right to the love of her child? In like manner to speak of Christ having the right to our love, is only to prove the hardness of our hearts. To behold Him as the One who has taken away our sin should be enough to bind us forever to His service, to keep us at His feet as His willing servants, to melt our hearts to gratitude and praise.

Certainly a great effect was produced upon the two disciples of John. It was like the presentation of a strong magnet to them; for when they heard John's word they followed Jesus. It drew them away from their beloved master, the Baptist, and constrained by the attractions of the Lamb of God, they followed Him, and became His disciples. And it is ever so. Nothing but the Person of Christ can wean us from earthly things, detach us from all our surroundings, disentangle us from our most intimate ties, and make us His willing-hearted and delighted followers. Hence the great loss of those who stop short at His work. Indeed His work can never be understood aright until after we have known Himself; and then in fellowship with His own heart, because at perfect rest in His presence, our own hearts completely satisfied, we shall behold, as we contemplate the cross, blessings and glories we had never dreamed of, rising up before our souls as the fruit and consequence of the work which He finished on Calvary.

But there is another thing. If the two disciples are drawn after Jesus, His heart goes forth to them. "Then Jesus turned, and saw them following, and saith unto them, What seek ye? They said unto him, Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, Master), where dwellest thou? He saith unto them, Come and see. They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day: for it was about the tenth hour." (vv. 38, 39) Nothing more delights the heart of Christ than the desires of the soul after Him. Attracted to Him, these two disciples would learn more of the One whose beauty had begun to dawn upon their souls, though as yet their apprehensions were so feeble and inadequate. The Lord knew their weakness, and thus He allures them on by His gentleness and grace. In their timidity they might have been repelled by reserve; but He who does not quench the smoking flax will intensify their interest and desire; and thus He turned, and seeing them following, said, "What seek ye?" He knew what they sought, their hearts lay bare before His eyes; but by this simple question He was but leading them on, throwing around them the cords of His love to bind them to Himself. Emboldened, therefore, by such grace, they respond, "Master, where dwellest thou?" It may be that they little understood the largeness of their request, yet surely the Spirit of God animated their words. The home of the Lamb of God! To discover this is to learn the whole secret of redemption; yea, to know the Son as the Revealer of the Father. For we read in this very chapter, "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." (v. 18) No earthly dwelling could claim the honor of being His home. On earth He had not where to lay His head; but even while a stranger here, and walking this weary scene, He could speak of Himself as "in heaven" (John 3:13); and from the Scripture just cited we learn that in heaven the bosom of the Father was His home.

Nor will He withhold this secret from His own. Hence He replies, in answer to their question, "Come and see." They came and saw where He dwelt, and abode with Him that day; for it was about the tenth hour. He thus led them into His own dwelling, and in the intimacies of this secret

fellowship unveiled His glories and satisfied their hearts. And surely we may see in this a figure of the final gathering of His own into His presence. Taking, indeed, the narrative in its connection, we cannot fail to apprehend this deeper significance; for, first, as pointed out, we have the Lamb of God as the sacrifice—the One that taketh away the sin of the world; then, after announcing Him as the One who was sealed, and who baptizeth with the Holy Ghost, we have the two disciples following Him, and finally the goal of discipleship is discovered; viz., the home of Jesus. He Himself said, “Father, 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,” (John 17:24) This is the consummation of all His desires for His own, to have them with Himself, and to see them entering into His joy in His exaltation and glory—all the fruit of His own travail on the cross. It is, therefore, the highest expression of the blessedness of the redeemed, to be forever with the Lord. He laid the foundation for this in His sacrifice; He presents Himself to their hearts as meeting all their needs as sinners, and then by His grace and love He attracts them to Himself, and last of all He comes to receive them unto Himself, that where He is, we may be also.

The Scriptures lead us on still further. They permit us to obtain glimpses of the place the Lamb of God occupies in the glory. In the book of Revelation we behold the Lamb as it had been slain, in the midst of the throne, and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders. We behold Him there as the center of God’s ways in government on the earth, the unfolder of His counsels, and the object of heaven’s worship and praise. The elders, the angels, “every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth,” and the four living creatures, alike acknowledge His worthiness and supremacy, and render their willing homage. The Lamb that was slain is now confessed to be worthy “to take the book and open the seals thereof,” on the ground of the redemption effected by His precious blood; and the angels likewise proclaim His worthiness “to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.” (Revelation 5:6-14) Still further revelations of His exaltation and glory may be gleaned by those who desire to follow out the subject. May the Lord so entrance the hearts of His own with the glories of the Lamb that it may be a relief to them to fall before Him in worship and praise.

“Worthy, O Lamb of God, art Thou,
That every knee to Thee should bow.”

E. D.

The Baptism of Jesus

This history opens with verse 21, and how wonderful and full of grace! “Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus being also baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased.” One may have looked and listened mournfully as one reads of John Baptist and his testimony. We might have asked, as the dying record of men passed before us, What is man? But now my eye rests on Jesus, I find the Lord from heaven a Man. All is to begin again. Do I ask again, What is man? At once Christ comes out. Do I look at myself? at all around? What do I see? Enough to break my heart, if there is a heart to be broken. The only thing which prevents people being utterly broken down is that they have not a heart to feel things as they are.

But a rest is here! I have got a Man now who satisfied God this blessed Man on earth in the presence of God, looking to God, and an object to God! not Messiah purging His floor, but Him in whom God’s thoughts and purposes are all folded up; not man perishing before the moth, but Jesus the Son of man; not merely coining down from Abraham and David, but traced up, “ which was the son of Adam, which was the Son of God” the second Man, the last Adam, the quickening Spirit. What a relief! for what is man? What one’s self when the heart’s sin is known—giving up God for an apple from the beginning hitherto! But now a Man, a blessed Man, appears, “and praying.” We are not told this elsewhere, and why here? Because Luke presents man in his perfection the dependent Man; for dependence is the essence of a perfect Man. Truly we see God shining all through; but yet in Jesus the dependent Man, in the place and condition of perfectness as Man. The root of sin in us is self-will, independence. Here my heart has rest! A dependent Man in the midst of sorrow, but perfectly with God in all. See Luke’s account of the transfiguration also—in humiliation or in glory, it makes no difference as to this; the perfect is ever the dependent One.

And when that blessed heart thus expressed its dependence, did He get no answer? “The heaven was opened.” Does heaven open thus on me? It is open to me indeed, no doubt; but I pray because it is open; it opened because He prayed. I come and look up because the heavens were opened on Him.

It is indeed a lovely picture of grace, and we may be bold to say that the Father loved to look onto look down, in the midst of all sin, on His beloved Son. Nothing but what was divine could thus awaken God’s heart, and yet it was the lowly perfect Man. He takes not the place of His eternal glory, as the Creator, the Son of God. He stoops and is baptized. (Psalms 16) He says, “In thee do I trust.” He says to Jehovah, “Thou art my Lord; my goodness extendeth not to thee.” He says to the godly remnant in Israel (that is, to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent), “All my delight is in them.” He needed no repentance, yet is He baptized with them; just as when, later on, He puts forth His sheep, He goes before them. He identifies Himself in grace with Israel, even with such as were of a clean heart. And the Holy Ghost descends like a dove on Him—fit emblem of

that spotless Man! fit resting-place for the Spirit in the deluge of this world! And how sweet, too, that Jesus is pointed out to us as God's object. I know the way the Father feels about Him. I am made His intimate, and admitted to hear Him expressing His affection for His Son, to see the links reformed between God and man. Heaven is opened, not on something above, but upon a Man on the earth. Thus I get rest, and my heart finds communion with God in His beloved Son. It is only the believer who enjoys it; but the link is there. And if I have that in and about me which distresses the soul, I have that in Him which is unfailing joy and comfort.

The genealogy quite falls in with the thought that God is showing grace in man and to man. Jesus, the beloved Son of God, is traced up to Adam, and to God. Jesus is Son of man; He is heir in this sense. He takes up the inheritance God gave to man. Oh, what a truth! Where could one—turn for rest if it had not Jesus to rest in? With Him let heaven and earth be turned upside down, and still I have a rest. What blessedness for the heart to have the object God Himself is occupied with! May our hearts also be more and more occupied with Him.

J. N. D.

Ransom

The Lamb for my ransom

(Provided above)

Came down to my rescue

Himself in His love.

No sacrifice greater,

More costly or free,

Than the Lamb “lifted up”

In payment for me.

The Lamb to the rescue

For Eden’s great loss,

When He took on Himself

The curse of the cross.

The Just for the unjust,

For man, and for God,

When He spared not His Son

The cost of His blood.

Oh, Center of sorrow!

Desertion and cry,

Golgotha demands Him

To suffer and die.

My sins there—exacting

His most precious blood,

The Lamb by remission

Has brought me to God.

Oh, Center of glory!

I gaze on Him there,

Whose body once offered
Has quelled my despair.
No sacrifice greater,
Lord Jesus, than Thine,
Arid Thine be the glory,
Eternal—divine.

C. F. C.

The Epistle to the Romans

The two natures now clearly discerned, the special blessings connected with the teaching about sin and the law are enumerated, and in the order in which the subject has been taken up. First, there is now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus. (8: 1) This answers to the teaching in chapter 5: 12-19.

Next, "The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." (2) This corresponds to the subject of chapter 6. And third, "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, has condemned sin in the flesh: that the righteous requirement (δικαιοσύνη) of the law should be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (3, 4) This corresponds to the subject of chapter 7. After this the different acting's of the two natures are set forth; for there is, and there can be, no change in them (57); and we are taught the sad lesson that those in the flesh cannot please God.

"But we are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwells in us." Without the Spirit of Christ we are not of Him; i.e. do not belong to Him. If Christ be in us the body is dead, because of sin; and the Spirit is life, because of righteousness.

This is to be practically true in the present; and for the future, "If the Spirit of Him who raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies because of His Spirit that dwelleth in you." (8:11) But this leads on to the third great division of the gospel—freedom from the presence of sin. Freedom from its guilt, we are taught, flows out of the value of the blood of Christ in God's sight. This for us is a question of faith. Freedom from the power of sin and of the law comes from the death of Christ, and is a matter of experience. Freedom from the presence of sin will be the result of divine power on our behalf. This is a matter of expectation, and the indwelling of the Holy Ghost is to us the earnest of it.

The teaching about the Holy Ghost is now introduced; for till we reach this part of the epistle the apostle, except in chapter 5: 5, has kept silence about it. What has been done by the Lord Jesus Christ for us, and what His death is to be to us, these have been the themes. And though it is only in the power of the Spirit that we can profit by the latter subject, we can see the wisdom of keeping the death of Christ before us, to be learned in an experimental way, before teaching about the Spirit, who is the energy of the new man, is entered upon. Now, however, the apostle, guided of the Spirit, turns to instruct the saints about the Holy Ghost, as dwelling in them and being with

them. So he proceeds to point out some blessed results of this. Led by the Spirit we are sons of God, having received the spirit of sonship, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. Besides this He also witnesses with our spirits that we are children of God, and as such heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together. (14-17)

The thought of suffering with Christ introduces the subject of the inheritance which we shall share with Christ. But in what condition is that now? Creation sharing in consequences flowing from the act of its head Adam—was made subject to vanity, not indeed willingly, and groans, bowed down under the incubus arising from the presence and workings of sin. And we too groan who have received the first-fruits of the Spirit, awaiting adoption, the redemption of our body. Nor are these groans in vain. Creation will be set free from the bondage of corruption, and brought into the liberty of the glory of the children of God. But there is no deliverance for it till that blessed consummation is effected for the heirs of God. Thus we who are now saved are saved in hope, and meanwhile as we see and feel the wretchedness around us, the fruit of sin, the Spirit, the other Advocate or Paraclete (John 14:16), intercedes when we know not what to pray for as we ought, with groanings which cannot be uttered. And the Searcher of hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because He intercedes according to God. But one thing at least we do know that all things work together for good to them that love God. For His purposes concerning them will infallibly be fulfilled, and where it is a question of the divine purpose all can be viewed as if already carried out, so that it can be said, "Whom He justified them He also glorified." (30)

God is then for us. Wondrous thought! And here closing the direct teaching about the gospel of God, Paul stands forth and asks three grand questions—first, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Next, "Since He justifies us, who shall condemn us?" And thirdly, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ, or from the love of God?" No circumstances can deprive us of the enjoyment of the former; no power can hinder the outflow to us of the latter. Far-reaching then are the results of the death of Christ. A blessed and full gospel assuredly goes forth on the strength of it. Creation is deeply interested in His death, but men, both sinners and saints, how much more! Yet all to whom the gospel was preached did not receive it, and some thought that it clashed with God's ways with, and promises to, His earthly people; for they are His people who enjoyed special privileges, and have had made to them special promises. (9: 15) To a consideration of this point—a most important one—the apostle next turns, in chapters 9.11.

Under three heads does he treat of this: 1, The ways of God with Israel in the past (9: 6-24); 2, The word of God about Israel and the Gentiles (9: 25, 10: 21); 3, The purposes of God about Israel in the future. (11)

Now if God was acting in sovereignty, saving whom He would, whether Jews or Gentiles, natural descent it is clear could be no ground on which to count for blessing.

Yet Israel prided themselves on that. But had God dealt in the past on that principle? "They are not all Israel which are of Israel." For on the principle of natural descent the Samaritans, who called Jacob their father, might put in a claim to stand on common ground with the Jews, and the Ishmaelites, Abraham's descendants, as well as the children of Keturah, would then stand side by side with the chosen people. (9: 6-9) What Jew would have relished that? Would they quarrel then with God's undisputable right to choose whom He would? Then the Edomite must be admitted to have part with Israel. (10-13) Was God unrighteous in dealing in pure grace? It was owing solely to

His grace and mercy that their fathers were not cut off in the wilderness, and the nation had not begun again its existence in the offspring only of Moses. (15-18) So Israel must own that in the past they owed all to God's sovereignty, election, and mercy, on which grounds God was now bringing in those once Gentiles to share with those once Jews in the fullness of His grace. (19-24) And all that He was now doing was in strict accordance with that prophetic Word which had also foretold Israel's rejection of grace. (9: 25,10: 21)

Thus far then as to God's ways with Israel in the past, and His dealing with souls in the present. Looking at the future, Paul asks, "Has God cast away His people which He foreknew?" No; for Paul, who was one of them, was saved—a sample, with the rest who then believed, of the remnant according to the election of grace. There had been such a remnant in the darkest days of Israel's history, when the ten tribes had apostatized under Ahab. There was such a remnant in Paul's day. There is one still. (11: 1-10) Have they stumbled that they should fall? Was that the purpose to be carried out by their fall? No; but that, through their fall, salvation should come to the Gentiles, to provoke them to jealousy. But here the Gentiles need a caution. The people of Israel being naturally, as it were, off the scene, and the Gentiles partaking of privileges which once were exclusively Israel's, as branches of the olive tree, let such beware that they abuse not their privilege, and fail to continue in God's goodness, as Israel failed before them. (11-24) For blindness in part has happened to Israel, till the fullness of the Gentiles be come in. Then all Israel shall be saved, as the prophet Isaiah had said (25-29), "Thus God has concluded all in unbelief, that He might have mercy upon all." For on the ground of mercy He can bless in a way and in a measure none of us could ever claim. Having stated this, the apostle closes with an expression of admiration of the wisdom and knowledge of God, and ascribes to Him glory forever. Here the second great section of the epistle ends, the first having terminated with the close of chapter 8.

Exhortations now follow, 12, 13, based on two considerations—the mercies of God, as taught in 1.8., and the character of the time in which our lot is cast. We are to present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is our reasonable service (12:1); and to put away the works of darkness, and to put on the armor of light. (13:12) Now these exhortations apply to the various relations in life in which saints may be found, whether as members of the one body (12:38), as brethren (9-13), as men on earth having to do with others (14-21), as citizens in the world, in subjection to the powers that be (13:17), or as neighbors. (8-10) And since the night is far spent, and the day is at hand, it behooves us to wake up out of sleep, and to put on the Lord Jesus Christ; and not to make provision for the flesh to fulfill its lusts. (11-14)

After these exhortations, which we have but briefly glanced at, the apostle turned to another subject, and one of great importance in his day. God was calling out from Jews and Gentiles a people for His name. The former had received a revelation from Him, in which distinction of meats and observance of days had a prominent place; the latter had previously received no written revelation, and so had nothing of that kind to unlearn when they became Christians. The believer, formerly a Gentile, was free in his conscience as regards meats and days. With some who had been Jews it was different. They had still conscientious scruples about them. To both these classes a word was now addressed. (14.15. 7) Paul himself, once a Jew, a Pharisee of the Pharisees, was as free in these things as any Christian who had been a Gentile. (14: 14, 20) But conscience in each was to be respected. This he inculcates. The strong one was not to despise the weak one; and the weak one was not to judge the strong. "To his own master he standeth or

falleth.” (4, 5) Further, both were brethren. “Why then,” asks Paul, “dost thou judge thy brother? why dost thou set at naught thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of God,” according to Isaiah (45: 23) Would we judge? “Let us,” he adds, “judge rather not to put a stumbling-block in a brother’s way, and let us follow things which make for peace, and things wherewith we may edify one another.” (13-19) If free for one’s self, one’s brother’s interest is to be taken into account. And the ways of Christ, who pleased not Himself, is the model put before us, as an example and encouragement. His example, here adduced, guards the teaching of this part of this epistle from abuse. Would any point to this portion in vindication of what is wrong, whether moral or ecclesiastical? They could not plead the example of the Lord in vindication of such a course. The question here raised had to do with ceremonial observances instituted by the law, to which, however, as Christians, we have died, as we have already seen.

The epistle now draws to a close. Paul was hoping to visit them at Rome. Meanwhile he sends his salutations to those he knew there, and they were not a few. (16: 3-15) Many here mentioned are otherwise unknown to us. But the chapter is interesting, as it shows that service done for God and for Christ is not forgotten, nor are those, who from some physical cause are past service, ignored. The beloved Persis, who had labored, is remembered, as well as Tryphena and Tryphosa, who were still working for the Lord. (12) After that he warns them to mark those which cause divisions and offenses contrary to the doctrine they had received, and to avoid them, and for themselves he would have them wise concerning that which is good, and simple concerning evil. Satan would be bruised under their feet shortly by the God of peace. Now he closes, “To Him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest, and by prophetic writings, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith: to the only wise God, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.” (25-27)

With this epistle the canonical writings of Paul before his imprisonment at Rome are completed.

C. E. S.

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